



R. N. Rogers -
from E. S. Lewis -
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Division

SCC

Section

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P R E F A C E.

ONE of the Reverend Authors of these SERMONS has endeared himself to me by some POEMS, which he published under the Name of *Gospel-Sonnets*. This being a Word very old in the *English* Tongue, and never, as I remember, used in *religious Matters*, I cannot but fear, that as the Title was not well understood, that *excellent Work* will be less enquired for. I would therefore take this *Opportunity* of recommending what I have so much admired, those HYMNS and SPIRITUAL SONGS, for the *Sweetness* of the *Verse*, the *Disposition* of the *Subjects*, the *Elegance* of the *Composition*, and, above all, for that which animates the whole, the *Savour* of *divine and experimental Knowledge*. As Poetry has very often no more in it than *great and swelling Words of Vanity*, distorted Images, and monstrous Allusions; so it is a *Pleasure* to see the Things of another World delivered without any heathenish Figures and Phrases, but in such an *Adorning* as becomes the Gospel of JESUS CHRIST.

These SERMONS were printed at several Times in *Scotland*. They are collected from a greater

Number, and I could have wished they had been ranged in such an *Order* as would agree to the Times of preaching ; and had I seen them before they were committed to the Press in *London*, I would have taken the *Liberty* either to have *alter'd* or *explained* some *Phrases* that are never heard in the *South*, tho' not only common but very expressive in the *North*.

The Reader may be surprized at the *familiar Enlargements* that seem to draw out these *Discourses* to a greater Length ; but that will be no Offence, if he considers, that not one of them was ever designed for the Press, nor writ out by the *Author* in that view. These are only a *Transcript* of his *original Preparations* by some that were able to read his short-hand, which he looked over, and then left them to the Disposal of *particular Friends*. He himself never made a *Collection* of them, though without his Knowledge they have had *several Editions*.

The same Account may be given of Mr. *Ebenezer Erskine's* SERMONS. They, with several others, were designed for a large unlearned *Audience*, and have been greatly blessed to the *Edification* of many, especially *the Poor of the Flock*.

I am told by the *Author*, (Mr. R. E.) that he and his Colleague have their *Work* among *Seven Thousand Persons*, whom they examine.

And

And as these SERMONS were preached on *Sacramental Occasions*, it may be proper to acquaint the Reader with their *Method*, because it is so different from what obtains among us here. For almost a Year, there is a *particular Examination* of all *those* who propose themselves to be *Communicants*; and, after the Ministers are satisfy'd about their *Knowledge*, the Names of the *Persons* are read over, that there may be a *proper Enquiry* into their *Conversation*; and so they are either rejected or received by the *Voice of the People*.

In most Places the *Ordinance* of the LORD'S-SUPPER is administer'd but once a Year, in the Summer, which makes a *great Confluence of Hearers and Communicants*, and especially where the Solemnity is served by *those* who have *contended earnestly for the Faith once delivered to the Saints*; so that by a *Circulation* of these Meetings, they have an Opportunity of frequent *eating that Bread*, and *drinking that Cup*, during the Season. The People who live in neighbouring Congregations do usually meet their own Ministers in the Place of general Concourse, or otherwise they bring Tokens along with them from those who are satisfy'd in them.

The Numbers on these Occasions are oftentimes so great, that they are obliged to have a tent set up on the outside of the church, for
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the Service of such as could not find Room within.

The first of these *Discourses*, as they now stand, was delivered in three SERMONS ON *Saturday*, LORD'S-DAY, and *Monday*; and thus it was in most of the rest. As to the little *Preface* before the second *Work*, it might have been dropt in this Edition, as it relates to an *Affair* not known in *England*, and happened some-time ago in *Scotland*. These Things I thought proper to be mentioned, which I do upon the best Information.

The SERMONS have no need of my *Recommendation*. You will find in them a *faithful Adherence* to the Design of the Gospel, a *clear Defence* of those *Doctrines* that are the *Pillar and Ground of Truth*, a large Compass of Tho't, a strong Force of Argument, a happy Flow of Words that are both *judicious* and *familiar*.

May the LORD *of the Harvest* long continue such faithful Labourers, and encrease both their *Numbers* and their *Successes*; that though it is not likely I shall ever *see the Faces* of these Brethren *in the Flesh*, I hope our Hearts may be comforted, being knit together to the Acknowledgement of CHRIST JESUS; to whom be Glory for ever and ever.

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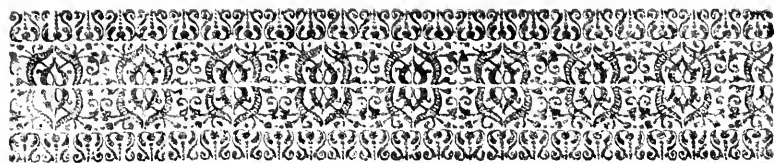
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BEING

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By the Reverend RALPH ERSKINE, M. A.

MATTH. XXII. 42.

What think ye of CHRIST ?

Y friends, if you have any regard to the voice of the Son of God, speaking to you in this text, then, to be sure, the application of it is begun, before ever we come to the explication of it. And indeed, if the Lord himself would open and apply it to you, you would see more in it than we can tell you. Perhaps many that are here, when the minister reads his text, turns up their Bibles, and put a mark upon the place of Scripture: Very well, but then they think there is the minister's text, and so no more of it; as if it were only the minister's concern, or at most, that it is only the minister's business to speak to his text, and their business to hear what he says. But, my friends, you ought to know, that you have here more than a text; and it is my business at this time, not only to read you a text, but to ask you a question; and I cannot resume my text, without proposing it, *What think ye of Christ?* And it is your business, not only to hear seriously what is said, but to answer solemnly before
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God what is ask'd, namely, *What think ye of Christ?* If you understand it only simply as my text, you will think your selves little concerned with it; but if you apprehend it as Christ's question to you, then your Concern is great. It is not my question only, but as Christ propos'd it to the *Pharisees* here, so your hearing it repeated to you in Christ's name, and from his word, makes it his question to you, *What think ye of Christ?* At such solemnities as this, you have occasion to hear much of Christ; but now the question is, *What think ye of Christ,* of whom you hear so much? Many people, the more they hear of Christ, the less they think of him; like *Israel*, when they had the manna so plentifully rained down about their tent-doors, they thought very little of it: But woe will be to you, who hear much of Christ, and yet think little or nothing of him. If any man love not our Lord Jesus Christ, says the Apostle, if he hath no esteem of him, let him be *Anathema Maran-atha*. If you have the sacramental supper in view, you know Christ hath ordered you to search and try before-hand, saying, *Let a man examine himself, and so let him eat*. And now, if you would examine to purpose, I cannot see a more short and substantial question in all the Bible, to try yourselves by, than this is, *What think ye of Christ?* Solomon says, *Prov. 23. 7. As a man thinketh in his heart, so is he*; where he declares the man's state to be according as the thoughts of his heart go. Now, so it is here; truly according as you think in your heart, especially concerning Christ, so are you, and so is your state in God's sight: According as you think highly and duly of Christ or not, so are you either a gracious or a graceless man, either a believer or unbeliever, either a man fit to go to a communion-table or not; and therefore inquire into it, *What think ye of Christ?* The trial here comes to a narrow point, wherein God only can be the witness, who will be the judge. You may deceive men with your words and works, which is all we have to know you by; but here you are called to try your selves by your thoughts, before that God who searches the heart, and sees the thoughts, *What think ye of Christ?*

The occasion of Christ's propounding this question, was this, the *Pharisees* had propos'd several questions to him concerning the law, by which they thought to have expos'd him, while yet they did but expose themselves; particularly from *verse 15*, and downward, thinking to intangle him, they sent forth their disciples with the *Herodians*, saying, *Master, what thinkest thou? is*

it lawful to give tribute to Cæsar or not ? what is lawful ? or, what says the law concerning this ? Christ answers the question to their astonishment and confusion. Again, from *ver.* 23. and downward, the *Sadducees*, who denied the resurrection, come to him with a question on that head ; and they start a difficulty out of the law of *Moses*, which they thought was irreconcilable with the doctrine of the resurrection : But Christ answers that also, and puts them to silence. Again afterwards, from *verse* 34, and downwards, the *Pharisees* finding that the *Sadducees* were silenced by him, they gather together their forces to puzzle and tempt him ; and one of them that was a lawyer comes with another question to him, saying, *Master, what is the great commandment in the law ?* Now, they having asked so many questions of him, and he having answered them all, it was time for him to ask them a question ; and he does it while they are gathered together in confederacy against him : Tho' their forces were unite, and every one present to help another, yet he puzzles them ; for God delights to baffle his adversaries and conquer his enemies, when they think themselves strongest, and have all the advantages they can desire. Now Christ asked them a question, which they could easily answer : It was a question in their own catechism, What think ye of Christ ? and, Whose Son is he ? They answer truly according to scripture, that he was the Son of *David*. This they were taught from *Psal.* 89. 35, 36. and several other places, shewing, that the *Messias* was to be the seed of *David*, the rod out of the stem of *Jesse*. But now Christ starts a difficulty upon their answer, which they could not easily answer ; nay, which silenced them, and all that sought occasion against him, *ver.* 43, 44, 45. If Christ be *David's* son, how then is he *David's* Lord ? Christ did not hereby intend to insnare them as they did him, but to instruct them in a necessary truth which they were to believe ; namely, that the expected *Messias* is God as well as Man, *David's* Lord as well as *David's* Son, and so both the root and offspring of *David* ; *Rev.* 22. 16. Now, herein they were puzzled, and put to silence. Many are proud of their knowledge, because they can answer some questions of their catechism, as the *Pharisees* here did in general ; but yet they have reason to be ashamed of their ignorance : When the question is opened up, they cannot abide by the truth which they assert, nor reconcile one truth with another, no more than the *Pharisees* here could ; by which it was evident, that tho' they answered, yet they did not understand his question, which he proposed, (1.) More generally, What think ye of Christ the *Messias* ? (2.) More

particularly, Whose Son is he? It is the question, as proposed in general, that I confine myself unto, yet not excluding the other branch of it, as the subject may bring it in. When Christ proposed this question to the *Pharisees*, *What think ye of Christ?* no doubt they reckoned their thoughts of the *Messias* were sound and right every way, while they thought he was the Son of *David*; but like the damnably deluded *Arian* doctors of our day, they did not think so highly of him as to apprehend him to be the Son of God; they did not think so honourably of him, as to own his being the supreme God, equal with the Father: for all their knowledge, there was more in that question than they understood, *What think ye of Christ?*

The *Pharisees* had asked Christ several questions concerning the law, the great precepts of the law; and now it was fit that Christ should ask them a question concerning the great promise of the Gospel: They were so taken up with the law, they had no tho't of the Gospel; they tho't so much of *Moses*, that they had no thought of Christ; therefore says he, *What think ye of Christ?* Many are so full of the law, that they forget him, who is the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth. Here is a question to check the pride of Legalists, *What think ye of Christ?* There is a depth in every place of Scripture, which tho' it seems to be very plain to the carnal eye, yet the spiritual depth thereof cannot be sounded without the help of the Spirit of God: There is also a great depth in this question; Angels cannot sound the depth thereof, they pry into it, and cannot think enough of Christ; they can never think too much of him: And what shall men say in answer to it, *What think ye of Christ?*

To divide this text too critically, would, I suppose, be the way to confuse it; but I think every word of it hath an emphasis in it. 1. There is an emphasis in the interrogative particle *what*, *What think ye of Christ?* what place do ye give him? what value do you put upon him? what grandeur and glory do you ascribe to him? what esteem have you of him? And so, 2. There is an emphasis in the verb *think*: Some think not of him at all; God and Christ is not in all their tho'ts; some think meanly, some think basely, some think dishonourably, some think hardly of him: But what think ye? what is your judgment of Christ? what is your opinion of him? what is your sentiment about him? what is your apprehension of him? how stand you affected towards him? and what consideration have you of him? 3. There

is an emphasis in the pronoun *ye* : What think ye of Christ ? ye *Pharisees* and *Sadducees*, What think ye of Christ ? ye that are so busy in starting of questions about the law, what think ye of Christ, the end of the law ? ye legalists and self-righteous persons, what think ye of Christ ? Yea, though it was put to the *Pharisees* in particular, yet it concerns all in general. The trying question that is proposed for the conviction of hypocrites, and to find them out, is useful for the consolation and confirmation of believers, and for discovering their uprightness. While the daughters of *Jerusalem* think no more of Christ than of another beloved, saying, *What is thy beloved more than another ?* the spouse of Christ thinks him to be the *chief among ten thousand*. Therefore it comes to you all, What think ye of Christ, believers and unbelievers ? Surely *to them that believe, he is precious*. 4. There is an emphasis in the object or matter of the question *Christ* : What think ye of Christ ? what think ye of the *Messias* ? what think ye of the anointed of God, the Christ of God ? It is remarkable, Christ says not here, What think ye of me ? but, What think ye of Christ ? that is, God's anointed, and the *Messias* promised to the Fathers : And hereby it is intimated to us, that as Christ loves to magnify his office, as the sent, and sealed, and anointed of God ; so we cannot have right and becoming thoughts of him, unless we apprehend him in his saving offices, to which he is authorised of the Father : And so, when he says not, What think ye of me ? but, What think ye of Christ ? he does not simply commend himself, but his Father also, who anointed him to that office ; and himself, as bearing his Father's commission, and invested with his authority to save sinners : What think ye of Christ ? Here is the proper object of esteem of rational creatures, and especially mankind-sinners, on whom their thoughts ought to terminate. It is not, What think ye of God absolutely considered ? for God out of Christ is a consuming fire. It is not, What think ye of *Moses* ? You magnify *Moses* and the law ; but a greater than *Moses* is here, even he by whom the law is magnified and made honourable. It is not, What think ye of ministers and their sermons ? O ! they are nothing but the image of death without him ; but the question is, What think ye of Christ ? The word itself is but a dead letter without Christ. It is a remarkable saying that Christ hath to that same purpose, *Job. 5. 39, 40. Search the Scriptures, for in them ye think ye have eternal life, and they are they that testify of me : And ye will not come to me that*

ye might have life. You think you have eternal life in the Scripture, but the Scripture testifies of me; yet ye will not come to me, tho' the Scripture testifies that eternal life is only to be had in me. Christ is *the true God and eternal life*, 1 Joh. 5. 20. *And this is the record, that God hath given us eternal life, and this life is in his Son*, ver. 11. Seeing then that the Scripture testifies of Christ, that eternal life is in him, in vain do men think to have eternal life, even in the Scripture, while they will not come to Christ that they may have life. People may think respectfully of the Scripture, and yet perish in their ignorance, and die in a delusion, while they do not think respectfully of Christ, in a suitability to the testimony that the Scripture gives of him; therefore the great question is still, What think ye of Christ?

OBSERVATION.

That the great question of the Christian catechism, by which the people are to try themselves, is this, What think ye of Christ?

Here you see, Christ, who is the catechist that puts the question, is also the catechism, the matter of the question. It is to this same purpose that Christ demands an answer to this question, both with respect to the people in general, what they thought of Christ; and also with respect to the Disciples themselves, what they thought of him, *Luk. 9. 18, 19, 20. Whom say the people that I am?* What is the sentiment and opinion of the people about Christ? It is answered for the people, that some took him for *John the Baptist*, some for *Elias*, some for one of the old Prophets: They had an esteem of Christ, but not according to his worth and excellency, his grandeur and glory. Well, but says Christ to his Disciples, *Whom say ye that I am?* What is your thought and judgment? *Peter* answers in the name of the rest, saying, *Thou art the Christ of God.* Believers only can answer this question to purpose, *What think ye of Christ?*

The method which I would here endeavour, as the Lord may assist, to prosecute, shall be, I. To premise some general remarks for clearing of this doctrine. II. To shew what is the import of this question in the several parts thereof. III. Offer some reasons of the doctrine, shewing why this is the leading and trying question in the christian catechism. IV. Deduce some Inferences, and so make application of the point, for informing of our minds, trying of our state, and directing of our thoughts and affections concerning Christ.

The first head proposed is, to offer some general remarks for clearing of the doctrine.

1st Remark. That man is a thoughtful or a thinking creature. God created him with a thinking faculty, capable of discursive thoughts and ratiocination; capable of rational cogitation concerning God, and spiritual objects, and celestial things, which beasts, that have some sort of thoughts, yet are not capable of. I need not insist upon this; for some of you know, than even pagan Philosophers are acquainted with this, and that heathen Poets have infer'd it from the very frame and structure of the human body; as Ovid,

*Pronaque cum spectent animalia cætera terram,
Os homini sublime dedit: Cælumque tueri
Jussit, & erectos ad sidera tollere vultus.*

Man was endowed above beasts with a faculty capable of celestial contemplation. It is peculiar to the creatures called Men and Angels, to think of God, and to think of Christ; other creatures are not capable of such thoughts: This is plainly supposed in this question, *What think ye of Christ?*

2d Remark. That man's thoughts, together with all the faculties and powers of his soul, have got such a dash by the fall of Adam, that they were set a wavering after other objects besides God, the chief good: Yea, the fall in a manner dash'd out his brains; and his head being broken, God went out of his head, and the creature came in. Since that time, he could never have a right thought of God in his head, yea, *God is not in all his thoughts*; but innumerable other things fill up the room which God should have. He created man upright, but they have found out many inventions, insomuch that now every imagination of the thought of his heart is only evil continually, Gen. 6.5. The world, and the lusts thereof, do monopolize and ingross all the thoughts of the children of men, and God is thrust out of them; there is no room for God or the Son of God. This wrong set of the thoughts is also here supposed in the question, *What think ye of Christ?*

3d Remark. That whatever confused thoughts and dark apprehensions men may naturally have, now in their fallen state, concerning God and his law, like the confused Chaos, Gen. 1. 2. without form and void, and darkness upon the face of the deep; yet thoughts of Christ, or of God in Christ, are what no man could ever have had the least glimmering idea of by nature, without divine Gospel-revelation. Adam fallen retained some

awful and terrible thoughts of God; but no thought could he ever have had of Christ, unless God had revealed him as the seed of the woman that was to bruise the head of the Serpent. This is the mystery that was hid from ages and generations. The *great mystery of godliness, God manifested in the flesh, God in Christ reconciling the world to himself*, could not enter into our thoughts. Some natural impressions men have of God as a lawgiver, standing upon terms of obedience with them, according to the first covenant, namely of works made with the first *Adam*; but God in Christ, as the end of the law for righteousness, and fulfilling the righteousness of the law in the sinner's room, is such a hidden mystery, so far above the natural thoughts of man, that even where the objective revelation of this mystery is made, without the subjective, internal, saving illumination in the knowledge thereof, men cannot have or entertain any due apprehensions of it, but remain doting upon their legal dreams and imaginations concerning God, as in the old covenant-relation to them. This was evident in the *Pharisees* here, notwithstanding of the gospel-light they had both from the old testament prophecies and promises of Christ, and from the rays of the Sun of righteousness himself now arisen among them; still they were doting upon the law, and had some dark thoughts of God with relation thereto: therefore Christ, to direct their thro'ts in the only way to God, he leads them to himself. And as the Disciples themselves, being but partly inlightned herein, need to be directed in their faith and spiritual thoughts of God, that they be not legal, terminating upon God absolutely, but evangelical, upon Christ, or God in him, *Joh. 14. 1. Ye believe in God, believe also in me*; so much more do blind *Pharisees* need to be directed to the right road, as here our Lord does. Ye think of God, but, What think ye of Christ?

4th Remark. When Christ is revealed, people may think of him, and yet think amiss, unless their thoughts be spiritualised by a supernatural change of the mind, and a saving illumination of their understanding in the knowledge of Christ. Tho'ts may be considered as either rational and speculative, which is just the work of the brain, and lies only in a bare theory of divine things; or as practical and spiritually operative, which does not rest in the head, but affects the heart, and sets the affections in motion towards divine things, and raises the spiritual estimation thereof. Now, whatever tho'ts of Christ the natural man

man may have in the former sense, yet no suitable tho'ts of Christ can he have in the latter sense, till a supernatural change be wrought by saving illumination. It is as impossible for a man in a black state of nature to think upon Christ or spiritual things in a spiritual manner, as it is for a man that was born blind to judge of colours, or to be taken up with their beauty and lustre; 1 Cor. 2. 14. *The natural man receives not the things of the Spirit of God, they are foolishness unto him, neither can he know them, for they are spiritually discerned.* This discerning he cannot have, till he be translated out of darkness to God's marvellous light, and till the God, who commanded light to shine out of darkness, shine into his heart, &c. 2 Cor. 4. 6. People then may think of Christ, and yet think amiss, without this saving illumination. This is also supposed here in the question; for the *Pharisees* did not want some thoughts of Christ the *Messias*, and partly right thoughts too upon the matter, while they thought he was the Son of *David*; yet they were so far from being right thoughts of Christ, as God-Man, and as to the manner of their thinking of him, that they had no due esteem of the true Christ; nay, he was despised and rejected of them, as a root out of a dry ground, and as having no form or comeliness, *Isa.* 53. 2, 3. And thus he is still undervalued of multitudes, who yet judge they have right enough tho'ts of Christ; they think of him, but think amiss: And therefore the question is not merely concerning the act of thinking, but the quality thereof; it is not, Have you any thoughts of Christ? do you ever think of him? but it is, What think you of him?

5th Remark. That man's thoughts are within God's jurisdiction, and under his authority. The commands of God extend not only to the outward, but the inward Man of the heart, and consequently further than ever any earthly command could go. Where was there ever a monarch that could give out such laws, as would bind the heart and thoughts of men? If any mortal should make a law, that his subjects should not dare, upon their peril, to welcome a traitorous thought against his royal person, otherwise he would be avenged upon them; really such an one would deserve to be laughed at for his pride and folly more than *Calligula*, who threatned the air, if it durst rain when he was at his pastime, and yet durst not look upon the air when it thundered. It were the height of madness, for any crown'd head in the world, or potentate on earth, so far to forfeit their reason, as to think, that the thoughts of mens hearts were within their

their territories or jurisdiction : But behold, they are all under the authority of God ; for his name is *Kardiognôstees*, the searcher of the heart, and the trier of the reins of the children of men. Think not that thoughts are free, any more than your words or actions before God. It is his prerogative to lay bands upon the inner man, and to judge the secrets of men, *Rom. 2. 16.* by Jesus Christ, who is here the catechist, putting the question to you ; and he is the fittest hand, for he knows what course your thoughts are driving : He is the witness, and will be the judge of your thoughts, which are all under his jurisdiction. Therefore it is his unquestionable right, to call you to an account for your thoughts ; thoughts are as visible and evident as actions to him, *Heb. 4. 12, 13.* *The word of God, the essential word, the word that was made flesh, is quick and powerful, &c. a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart ; neither is there any creature that is not manifest in his sight, but all things are naked and open to the eyes of him with whom we have to do.* He knows our thoughts afar off, even before we think them, and thoughts are actions before him ; heart-thoughts are heart acts, and real deeds in his sight ; the adulterous thought is adultery before him, and will be judged as such ; the covetous thought is idolatry before him, the malicious thought is murder, and the unbelieving thought is unbelief, the contemning thought of Christ is contempt itself : He is an infinite Spirit, that sees your thoughts better than men see your actions ; and therefore answer for your thoughts to him, *What think ye of Christ ?*

6th Remark. That as men may expect to be catechised and examined of God, with respect to their thoughts, as well as their actions ; so especially about their thoughts of Christ. And as God will judge us by the thoughts we have of Christ, so we ought to try and judge our selves by this rule ; for as our thoughts are, so are we ; yea, God's thoughts of us are according to our thoughts of Christ. If we think nothing of Christ, God will think nothing of us ; if we think highly of Christ, God thinks highly of us in him : For, as God's thoughts of Christ are very high and honourable, he being the Father's darling and delight, *Isai. 42. 1.* so, when our thoughts of Christ in some measure agree with God's thoughts of him, and we think highly and honourably of him, as God does ; surely it is evident, that we have the Spirit of God, and that as God is well pleased with Christ, so he is well pleased with us in him. Now, if our thoughts and hearts condemn us in this matter, God is greater than our hearts

hearts, and knows all things; but if our hearts and thoughts condemn us not, then we have confidence towards God, 1 *Job.* 3. 20, 21. It is true, the natural consciences of men, and their thoughts, may accuse or excuse, and so condemn or justify them, according as they do good or evil, *Rom.* 2. 15. and to be thus condemned or justified, is no evidence of the man's state before God; for this only shews the work of the law, written in our hearts by nature, even the covenant of works, which says, That the doer of the law shall be justified, *ver.* 13. and the breaker of the law shall be condemned. These are some of the beams of nature's light. All men may find themselves condemned here; and they that think themselves justified here before God by their good deeds, they but discover their ignorance of the law, which condemns all vain and evil thoughts, as well as evil deeds; and therefore no man can have his heart and thoughts justifying him before God, nor a good conscience or confidence towards God, till once he come to think duly of Christ, from whom the law hath got full satisfaction to all its commands and demands, and by whose blood the fiery law is extinguished. The conscience being sprinkled with that blood, and so purged from dead legal works to serve the living God, the man hath confidence towards God according to the measure of his faith, and regular thoughts of Christ. The more a man thinks upon the law, the more his thoughts condemn him, if he understands the spirituality of the law: But the more he thinks of Christ as the end of the law for righteousness, the more will his thoughts and conscience smile upon him, and give him confidence towards God; for we have boldness to enter into the holiest, and come to a holy God, by the blood of Jesus, *Heb.* 10. 19. They that think much of themselves and think little or nothing of Christ, they are least in the kingdom of heaven, yea they are not of that kingdom at all; they despise Christ, and God despises them: But they that think little of themselves, or think nothing of themselves, but think of Christ, and think every way highly and honourably of him, they are great in the kingdom of God; Christ is great in their eye, and they are great in God's eye, being accepted in the Beloved: Therefore the great question is, *What think ye of Christ?*

The *second* Head proposed, was, To shew the import of the question, *What think ye of Christ?* That people may not deceive themselves with transient thoughts they may have of Christ, I

would

would more closely open up the meaning and import of the question; and this being the main head upon the doctrinal part, we must explain the several branches of the question, and so shew the import of it, I. *Objectively*, with respect to the *object*, Christ. II. *Actively*, with respect to the *act* of thinking. III. *Formally*, with respect to the *quality* of the act, what sort of a thought it is; *What* think ye of him? IV. *Subjectively*, with respect to the subjects, *ye*; What think ye of Christ?

First then, I am to consider the import of this question, with respect to the *object* or matter of our thoughts, namely, Christ; *What* think ye of Christ? And here I own it is impossible for me to go through all that I thought might be said here. There are so many things in Christ that I found to be the matter of the question, he being All in all, and all the fulness of the Godhead being in him, that, before ever I was aware, there were more than a hundred questions occurred to me, that might be put upon this one particular; and therefore I found a necessity of restricting myself. And though, if the time will allow, in the application I may thro' grace insist upon some of these; yet at present I shall confine myself to what I judge precisely to be the scope of the text and context, and the intent of the Spirit of God in this question, *What* think ye of Christ? That is, 1. What think ye of his righteousness? 2. What think ye of his pedigree? 3. What think ye of his person? 4. What think ye of his anointing? These four, I suppose, we shall find to be the special import of the question here.

First, What think ye of his³ righteousness? This I place first, because I judge, from what goes before as the occasion of this question, that the great design of Christ therein was to lead off these self-righteous *Pharisees* from the righteousness of works and of the law, about which all their questions were put to him, and to lead them to another righteousness, even to himself as the Lord their righteousness, the end of the law. You think to be justified by the deeds of the law; but how is that possible, since by the law is the knowledge of sin? *Rom. 3.20.* If ye will stand close to these old covenant terms with God, then let the law itself catechize you; Where is your righteousness of nature and practice, that the law requires? Where is your righteousness of thought, word, and deed, that it requires? Where is your righteousness of affection and action, that it requires? Where is your perfect, personal and perpetual obedience, your righteousness internal in heart, external in life, and eternal in duration, which
the

the law requires? For, *cursed is every one that continues not in all things written in the book of the law, to do them*, Gal. 3. 10. The law will tell you, that tho' you keep it wholly, and yet offend in one point, you are guilty of all, *Jam. 3. 20*. Now is there no point wrong in your state, nature, heart, or thought all your days, not to speak of your Words and actions? If there be, then you're guilty of all; and since by the law is the knowledge thus of your sin and guilt, how can you be justified by the law? Can that holy righteous law pronounce you just and righteous? No, no; in vain do you think of righteousness by the law: therefore what think ye of Christ the Messias, who is called *Jehovah Tsidkennu, the Lord our righteousness*, Jer. 22. 6. It is he that came to fulfil the righteousness of the law in his own person really and actively, that the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us imputatively and passively, *Rom. 8. 4*. Is not this the only righteousness that magnifies the law, and makes it honourable? You magnify your own righteousness, which does but disgrace and dishonour the law; but what think ye of Christ? Do you magnify and honour him, as the Lord the righteousness? Ought not you to magnify that righteousness that magnifies the law, seeing it is more than an angelical righteousness? It is not the righteousness of a man only, or of *David's Son*; but the righteousness of God, and of *David's Lord*. If you think no more of Christ, but that he is *David's Son*, no wonder then you be hankering after the law, and a poor pitiful righteousness of your own; you have never seen the glory of Christ's righteousness: But if you think duly of Christ, you'll see him to be the Lord Jehovah, and his righteousness to be a glorious divine righteousness, so as you will *count all but loss and dung for the excellency of the knowledge of him, and to be found in him, not having your own righteousness that is after the law, but the righteousness which is of God in Christ by faith*, *P'sal. 3. 8, 9*. Let all your questions about the law then, might Christ say, give way to this great question, What think ye of Christ, and his law-binding righteousness? Your righteousness will not abide the first fire of the law, when it comes to be discharged against you, and to exact obedience and satisfaction; but Christ's obedience unto Death answers the whole charge of its precept and sanction both to the full: Therefore, what think ye of Christ, and what think ye of his righteousness? This is the first thing imported in this question, as it stands here.

Secondly, What think ye of his pedigree? That this is imported

ported in the question, appears from the connection also, *Whose Son is he?* What think ye of his pedigree? They thought it was easy to answer that question, by saying only, he is *David's Son*. They might have known it was not so easy to answer that question, if they had considered the question of the prophet *Isaiab*, ch. 53. 8. *Who shall declare his generation?* And the description which that prophet gives of him, *Isai*. 9. 6. that the name of the *Messias*, the child born and son given to us, should be *wonderful, counsellor, and the mighty God, the everlasting Father, the Prince of peace*. What think ye of his pedigree as he is a man? No doubt this was partly implied in the question; for Christ did not disapprove their answer, tho' it was but to the least part of the question: He is *David's Son*, say they; and it is right to think of him as the Son of *David*, clothed with our nature. Here was the *great mystery of godliness, God manifested in the flesh*. It was no mystery for the *Pharisees* to think only that he was the Son of *David*; *David* had other sons, and a numerous seed: And if that be all, that he was the Son of *David*, they might thus think of Christ, and yet think nothing of him. But it is another thing to think of him as God in our nature. If we think duly of Christ as the Son of *David*, or in his humane nature, then must we not think that God is come very near to us, so as that there is a natural relation betwixt him and us, he being *bone of our bone, and flesh of our flesh*? Must we not think, that he wonderfully emptied himself of his divine glory, and humbled himself unto death? Tho' *he thought it no robbery to be equal with God*, yet he suffered himself to be divested of his glory, clothed with rags of our flesh: God calls him the Man that is his fellow, yet he was made a fellow to thieves and malefactors, and a murderer preferred before him. Tho' he was the Prince of life, yet, as the word may be rendered, he evacuated or emptied himself unto death; and yet, to them that know him, he is most lovely, even in his greatest abasement. What think ye of Christ as man, as the son of *David*, the Son of man, a man of the same infirmities with us, except sinful infirmities? He was made in all things like unto us, sin only excepted: He became a poor man in all outward respects, a distressed man, a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief; a tempted man, tossed and tempted of the devil sometimes, he going thro' all the ages of a man, first conceived, then born, then a babe, then a youth, and at last the perfect stature of a man: He became a mortal man, and accordingly was put to a painful and shameful death; yet a holy

holy man, a wonderful man, a God-man: What think ye of the man Christ Jesus? But the main thing imported in the question here, with relation to his pedigree, is, what think ye of his pedigree as he is God? What think ye of Christ, in this respect? For to separate Christ from God, is to make him no Christ; therefore the question is, What think ye of Christ, whose Son is he, with respect to his divine nature, as well as his human? That this was the import of his question, appears from his reply to their answer, *How then does David call him Lord?* He is Lord JEHOVAH, the only-begotten Son of God, the brightness of the Father's glory, &c. by whom all things were made; *John* 1. 3. *Heb.* 1. 2. It is the *Arian* blasphemy, to affirm him to be no more but *Homoiousios Patri*, but not *Homoousios*, that is, like unto the Father, but not the same essence and substance with him. He is, according to his Godhead, arrayed with all glory. All the creatures are to him as the drop of a bucket; yea, as nothing, and less than nothing and vanity; he hath a name above every name, and all the creatures are but shadows to him, who is the substantial image of God: He is the eternal Son of God, by an ineffable generation; whatever *Arians* and *Atheists* think of Christ, yet Christ himself tho't it no robbery to be equal with God, *Phil.* 2. 6. therefore, What think ye of Christ? Is he no more but the Son of *David*? The *Jews* looked upon Christ as an ignorant clown will look upon the sun, and, it may be, will think it no bigger than his bonnet, or at most, no larger than a millstone; so did the *Jews*: The *Pharisees* looked upon the Son of God, saying, *Is not this the carpenter's son?* But their highest tho't was, that he was the Son of *David*, they did not see him to be the Son of God. What think ye of Christ? Do ye see all the attributes of God to be in him, and all his actions, as mediator, to be dignified with infinite virtue and value; that he was able to satisfy infinite justice; that he is able to save to the uttermost; that he is the adequate object of divine worship, and a full suitable portion for an immortal soul, because he is the Son of God as well as the Son of *David*? All this is imported in the question, *What think ye of Christ?*

Thirdly, What think ye of his Person? This question is plainly imported in that, *What think ye of Christ*, namely, as he is God-man in one Person, and the second Person of the glorious Trinity? It is plain that Christ speaks of himself here as personally considered, and as having two distinct natures in one Person. Now, the humane nature of Christ is not a Person distinct from the

the divine; tho' the natures are distinct, the Person is one. But the answer of the *Pharisees* to this question shewed they had no distinct knowledge of this mystery; for they answer, He is the Son of *David*, without knowing that he was the Son of God, as well as the Son of *David* in one Person; which made Christ here to declare his sovereign Lordship and Godhead, as well as his manhood. The mystery of the question then, which they did not understand, was, What think ye of that wonderful person God-man, in whom the humane nature is advanced to such an unspeakable dignity, as to be united to, and of the same personality with, the Son of God? Here is matter of tho't, to the intelligent mind: What think ye of the wonderful manner in which sinful men may come to be partakers of the divine nature, even by the holy Son of God his being a partaker of the human nature? Here is a glorious subject for thought and contemplation. What think ye of the wonderful way that God in his infinite wisdom hath taken, to bring God and men together, even in and thro' him, who is both God and man, and partaking of both natures in one person, is fit for bringing both God and man into one, and to lay his hand upon both parties? What think ye of such a glorious Person as Finite and Infinite, Time and Eternity, Creator and Creature joined together? *John 1. 14. The word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, and we beheld his glory, as the glory of the only-begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth.*

Fourthly, What think ye of his *unction* or anointing? This I suppose must also be the import of the question objectively considered, as it is here generally proposed; for Christ signifies *Anointed*, in the *Hebrew* it is *Messias*, in the *Greek* it is *Christ*, and in our language it is the *Anointed*: And this being the main word on which the weight of the general question itself lies, it is the more necessary that this be particularly opened. The question then comes to this in general, What think ye of his Father the Anointer? *John 6. 27. For him hath God the Father sealed; How? See Psal. 45. 7. God, thy God, hath anointed thee with the oil of gladness above thy fellows.* How much pains is Christ at, in the gospel, to recommend his Father, as sending and authorising him to his mediatorial work! Again, What think ye of his office, to which he is anointed? He hath not taken the honour of the mediatorial office upon him, without being called of God, and anointed of God thereunto, *Heb. 5. 5.* We do not think honourably enough of any of his saving offices, unless we at the same time apprehend his divine unction thereunto. Again it comes to this, What think ye

ye of his Spirit, the ointment wherewith he is anointed? *Iſa.* 61. 1. *The Spirit of the Lord God is upon me, for he hath anointed me.* *Iſa.* 42. 1. *I have put my Spirit upon him, and he shall bring forth judgment to the Gentiles.* There is the meaning of the question in general, with respect to this *Christ*, who is the subject-matter of the question: But there is much in this name *Christ*, and more than we can tell; I only name some particulars further here imported. (1.) What think ye of his prophecy and teaching? For, as *Christ*, he is anointed to be a Prophet: *Who teaches like him, says Elibu?* *Job* 36. 22. Other prophets and teachers have no wisdom but what he gives them; but in him are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge: Other prophets may err, but he teaches infallibly; for he is truth itself, full of grace and truth; Other teachers may be dashed, but he teaches authoritatively; he speaks as one having authority, and not as the Scribes: Other teachers may fail in their design, and prove unsuccessful in their work; but he teaches efficaciously: Men work upon a capacity, but he can give the capacity; the entrance of his words giveth light, he gives understanding to the simple. The excellency of his teaching is singular, if we consider his ability and fidelity; the matter of his teaching is singular, if we consider it as the whole will of God for our Salvation; the manner of his teaching is singular, if we consider it is by his Word and Spirit, and even by a human voice, he can convey his divine power; the extent of his teaching is singular, if we consider it extends to all sorts of persons, *Jews* and *Gentiles*, and to all sorts of things necessary to eternal life: This anointing teaches all things, 1 *John* 2. 27. In a word, none have authority to teach, but by commission from him; neither can any other teacher preach himself: We preach not our selves, but *Christ Jesus* the Lord, and to him gave all the prophets witness; but it is his prerogative alone, to preach himself, saying, *Come to me all ye that labour, &c.* Look to me and be saved; I am the rose of *Sharon*, I am the light of the world, I am the way, the truth and the life. O then, was there ever any prophet or teacher that could compare with him: The Spirit of the Lord God is upon me, says *Christ*, for he hath anointed me to preach glad tidings to the meek: He is the *Christ*, the anointed Prophet; and what think ye of *Christ*? (2.) What think ye of his *Priesthood*? For, as *Christ*, he is anointed to be a Priest for ever, after the order of *Melchisedeck*. All the Levitical Priests were but shadows and types of him, who was the true priest, the true temple, the true altar, the true sacrifice, all in one. What high thoughts may we have of his oblation, or obedience unto

death, even the death of the cross? For here was the grand condition of the covenant of redemption or grace fulfilled. The covenant of grace was all grace with respect to God, who of his grace found out the ransom, and with respect to us who are saved by grace: But with respect to Christ, it is a covenant made upon terms and conditions; namely, his obedience, righteousness, passion, and oblation; whom God hath set forth to be the propitiation thro' faith in his blood, &c. *Rom. 3. 25.* O what a free, full, perfect, holy, sweet and satisfying sacrifice did he offer up of himself, even a sacrifice of a sweet-smelling favour unto God, whereby justice was satisfied, wrath appeased, sin expiated, God atoned, death vanquish'd, hell quenched, heaven purchased, and the devil's kingdom destroyed; for by death he destroyed him that had the power of death, that is, the devil. What may we think of his intercession, grounded upon this oblation? for he is able to save to the uttermost all that come to God by him, because he ever lives to make intercession. Here is the antidote against all charges and accusations, *Rom. 8. 33, 34.* the antidote against all temptations, *Heb. 2. 17, 18.* and *4. 14, 15.* an antidote against all the snares of the world, *John 17. 15.* against all sins, failings and infirmities, *1 John 2. 1, 2.* against all fears, through sense of unworthiness, to draw near to God's throne of grace, *Heb. 4. 15, 16. 10. 19, 20, 21, 22.* and against all fears of apostasy and falling away, *John 17. 11.* O his promise, his power, his prayer, give great security, and greater cannot be given: He hath prayed for the Spirit, and the constant abiding thereof, *John 14. 16, 17.* See *John 4. 14.* Christ's intercession is founded on his oblation, and the Father is so well pleased with the oblation, that he cannot refuse his intercession; nay, he hears him always: Therefore, What think ye of Christ? 3. What think ye of his kingdom and royalty? The question, *What think ye of Christ?* imports this also; for, as Christ, he is anointed to be a king, *Psal. 2. 6. I have set my king,* or as it is in the Hebrew, anointed my king, upon my holy hill of Zion. Is not all power in heaven and earth committed unto him, having on his vesture and thigh this name written, KING of KINGS, and LORD of LORDS? He is the King eternal and immortal, the government is upon his shoulders, and of the increase of his kingdom and government there shall be no end. His delivering up the kingdom to his Father, at last, is but a changing the manner of his administration, and delivering up all his members, of whom his kingdom consists, unto his Father, to be eternally crowned and glorified; he will reign through eternity, and the children of Zion will be joyful in their king, and sing thro'

thro' eternity. I might here shew, what a powerful and peaceable, mild and merciful, wise and holy, just and righteous King our Lord Jesus Christ is; and then ask you, What think ye of Christ? But it is not possible to give so much as a hint at the thousandth part of his glory and royalty: His kingdom is spiritual and internal. If you be his spiritual subjects, his kingdom is within you; yea, tho' you be yet subjects to the devil, he hath power over all hearts, and can soften the hardest, and bind the stoutest, and make the people fall down under him: Yea, as he is able, so is he willing; for he is not only the God of power, but the Prince of peace, *Isa. 9. 6.* and therefore, as a *Prophet* he preaches peace; as a *Priest*, he purchases peace; and as a *King*, he proclaims peace; yea, *creates the fruit of the lips, peace, peace to him that is afar off, and to him that is nigh.* As a powerful potentate, he is able, and as prince of peace he is ready, to save to the uttermost. As he is full of power, so he is full of pity; and his power & peace both are joined together, for the encouragement of sinners to come to him, *Isa. 27. 5. Let him take hold of my strength, that he may make peace with me, and he shall make peace with me.* Perhaps, some poor soul is thinking, O but I have no strength to take hold of his strength. Well, it is right so to think of your self, and of your own weakness and wickedness: But no strength comes in by that thought, while poring on your self only; that is, but the half of what you are to think, when you think right of your selves, as weak and wicked. But what think ye of Christ our glorious King? If you can think honourably of him, as able and willing to help you, O you would find strength coming in with such a thought: And high thoughts of a powerful and merciful King Jesus, is one of the ways of taking hold of his strength. If you suppose that you think he is able and ready, and yet you find no strength coming in, O suspect your own thought of him, that it is but a misbelieving and dishonourable thought: For I assure you, right thoughts of Christ will set the heart all in motion towards him. But now, O there would be no end in speaking of the royalties of King Jesus, his royal throne, his royal crown, his royal victories, his royal triumphs, and the royal entertainment that he gives to his subjects at his table above, and even below, when he brings them to his banqueting-house. I shall only add, that as it is said of *Solomon*, there was no king like him, so behold a greater than *Solomon* is here: There is no king like him who is the king of *Zion*; he hath all other kings under his check and controul; and what think ye of Christ then? Other kings have their dominions,

for the most part, by usurpation, by incroachment; but Christ is king constitute of his Father, *Psal.* 89. 27. *I'll make him my first-born, higher than the kings of the earth;* and all this for the good of his people, *Eph.* i. 22. *He hath put all things under his feet, and given him to be head over all things unto his church.* This leads to another import of the question; that is,

(4.) What think ye of his authority and ability, commission, fulness, furniture, and fitness for executing of these saving offices? For all this is implied in the designation of CHRIST, the anointed; that is, one commissioned and qualified of God, by a supereminent unction, *John* 3. 34. Behold his excellency here, above all that ever had the like offices. Behold he is anointed, for the concurrence of all these offices, whether general, as saviour, surety, redeemer; or particular, as prophet, priest, king. Some have been prophets, some priests, some kings anointed, but never any was anointed to all these but Christ: What think ye of Christ? Behold the matter of his anointing; others have been anointed with material oil, but he is anointed with holy oil, the Holy Spirit: And whereas others have had the Spirit in some respects, therefore behold the measure of his anointing; others were anointed in measure, but he without measure: They may have a fulness of sufficiency, but he hath a fulness of redundancy; they a fulness like the fulness of a vessel, but his the fulness of an ocean; they a plenitude, but he a fountain. Behold and view the duration of his anointing: his saints and servants may have the Spirit sometimes working, sometimes ceasing, sometimes flowing, and sometimes ebbing; but Christ is anointed with an enduring unction, *Joh.* i. 33. The Spirit that descended on him, did remain and rest upon him; see *Isa.* 59. *last.* Hence behold also the equality of his anointing with himself: The Spirit given to others, that were invested with any office in God's house, did work with them as mere men; there was no equality betwixt them and the Spirit given to them: But as Christ is anointed with the Spirit, as he is Mediator God-man, so as God he is co-equal with the Spirit wherewith he is anointed; yea, the same in substance, equal in power and in glory with the Father and the Holy Ghost. And what think ye of Christ, his authority, ability, and furniture for his work? In a word, behold the *efficacy* of his anointing, and the communicable nature thereof: He is anointed above his fellows, yet so, as he hath fellows to whom he allows fellowship in the same anointing: He hath not received the Spirit of all grace, and gifts for himself only, but he received gifts for men, even

for thee rebellious, *Pfal.* 68. 18. Hence, according to his pleasure, he allows the oil to drop down to the skirts of his garment ; yea, like rain upon the mown grass, or showers that water the earth, *Pfal.* 72. 6. It is true, ministers anointed with the Spirit, are said to drop, *Ezek.* 20. 46. *Son of man, drop thy words towards the south* : And *Moses* says, *My doctrine shall drop as the rain*. But as the clouds from whence the rain descends have not their water originally in themselves, but from the sea, and moist places of the earth, exhaled and drawn up by the heat of the sun ; so no minister of Christ hath a faculty of teaching heavenly and divine things, and saving gospel truths of himself ; but it is drawn up out of Christ, as out of a full sea and ocean of all wisdom and knowledge ; and is conveyed unto them, by the heat and vigour, not of their own spirit, but the Spirit of Christ, who is anointed, to anoint others. And O for a liberal share of this anointing among us at this occasion ! In a word, the name CHRIST imports such an anointing, as that he is qualified with all authority and ability, all furniture and fitness for his work of saving sinners ; with all fulness of divine perfections, and all fulness of mediatorial gifts and graces : And all this is imported in the question, *What think ye of Christ ?*

(5.) What think ye of his aromatical favour ? For this is in his name, *Christ the anointed*. His ointment casts a perfume thro' heaven and earth. How favoury is he to God ? Why, his sacrifice was of a sweet-smelling favour unto his Father, *Eph.* 5. 2. The stinking smell of sin is extinguished thereby, and the persons and performances of believers perfumed ; and hence, how favoury also to believers, *Song* 1. 13. *His lips are like lillies, dropping sweet-smelling myrrh*. What think ye of his favoury name ? *Song* 1. 3, 5. *Because of the favour of thy good ointments, thy name is as ointment poured forth ; therefore do the virgins love thee*. Were it no more but the name JESUS a SAVIOUR, may it not be so delightful to sinners, as to cause their hearts to leap within them when they hear it, as *John* leapt in his mother's womb for joy, at the voice of the blessed Virgin's salutation, *Luke* 1. 44. O what think ye of the sweet name JESUS ! It should even pluck your heart out of your bosom, and transplant it into the bosom of Christ. How delightful is the very naming of a temporal Saviour to them that are in misery, when they hear his ability and readiness to deliver them ? And may not your hearts even dance within you for joy, when you hear us speak to you of such a Saviour as saves from sin and wrath ? O sweet-

smelling name! O have you no sense of smelling: *What think ye of Christ?*

(6.) What think ye of his beauty and comeliness? This is also imported in his name CHRIST, and so in the question, *What think ye of Christ* the anointed? Ointment and perfume rejoice the heart, says Solomon, Prov. 27. 9. Now Christ is anointed with the oil of gladness, Psal. 45. 7. and a glad heart makes a cheerful countenance; yea, oil makes the face to shine, Psal. 104. 15. A saint, that hath but a sprinkling of this oil, how will his face shine, and his countenance, like *Hannab's*, be no more sad; How did *Moses's* face shine when some of this oil was upon him! But O what think ye of the shining glory and comeliness of Christ, who is anointed from head to foot! Is he not *altogether lovely*? Is he not *white and ruddy, the chief among ten thousands*? Is he not a perfect beauty? All God's fulness is in him, all God's beauty is in him, all God's glory is to be seen in the face of *Jesus*, 2 Cor. 4. 6. O then, *What think ye of Christ?*

(7.) What think ye of his worth and preciousness? This is also imported in the name CHRIST, and so in the question, *What think ye of Christ*, the anointed? for it is *precious ointment*, Psal. 133. 2. Ointment was reckoned of great worth and esteem among the *Jews*; it was among the precious presents that were sent unto kings, *Isa.* 57. 9. *Hof.* 12. 1. O how great is the preciousness and worth of Christ! It is the delight and recreation, the study and occupation of elect Angels, to pry into the preciousness of Christ, to look upon the frame and fabrick of salvation to mankind-sinners by Christ, that they may therein observe the glorious attributes of God, his wisdom, power, holiness, justice, truth, mercy, all shining and glittering in it, like bright stars in the firmament. Let a profane world think what they will of Christ; let them slight him and his gospel; let them scorn him, and cast him at their heels; let them trample on his blood and passion as their manner is, making it a common and worthless thing; let them despise his high and celestial mysteries; we need not care for their thoughts; it is enough that God the Father hath honoured and exalted him, that the holy Angels do reverence and worship him, and that all the Saints do magnify him. *To them that believe, he is precious*: O his blood is precious blood, his promises are precious promises, his love is precious love, and every thing about him is precious: *What think ye of Christ?*

(8.) Again, to add no more here, What think you of his virtue and usefulness? This, I suppose, is also imported in the name *Christ*,

Christ, and in the question objectively consider'd, *What think ye of Christ the anointed?* For as ointment was and is of manifold usefulness, so is Christ. Especially oil hath a twofold vertue, 1st, A mollifying vertue, and a softning quality; such is the vertue of Christ. Were the heart never so hard, he can soften and mollify it; a drop of that oil with which he is anointed, I mean the smallest saving motion of his Spirit, can melt and dissolve the heart, tho' it were harder than a stone or adamant, *Ezek.* 36. 26. 2^{dly}, It hath a medicinal vertue. Hence it is said of the *Samaritan*, *Luke* 10. 34. that he poured oil into the wounds of the distressed man. Christ is the tender-hearted *Samaritan*; his Blood and Spirit is the ointment for curing all the wounds that we got by the old serpent. What wounds, what plagues, what deadly diseases and desperate maladies are among you? Behold, there is no disease out of hell that surmounts the medicinal vertue that is in Christ! O then, *What think ye of Christ?* Is there none here to think highly of him? Now, these particulars that I have mentioned are imported in the very name CHRIST, and so implied in the question objectively considered, or with respect to the object thereof; *What think ye of Christ?*

The *Second* thing here proposed, was, To shew the import of this question *actively* considered, or with respect to the act of thinking; *What think ye of Christ?* Now the full import of this question, thus viewed, may comprehend more than people are ready to imagine. It is not a transient thought, or fleeting imagination; we ought not to explain the words of Christ by the motions and notions of our own spirit: We need the Spirit of Christ to explain the words of Christ according to the mind of Christ, *1 Cor.* 2. *last*. We may be sure, as the Apostle says, *2 Cor.* 2. 5. that *we are not sufficient of ourselves, to think any thing as of ourselves; our sufficiency must be of God*: And if we can think of nothing aright of ourselves, far less can we think of Christ: And as none can speak duly of Christ, nor call Jesus Lord, without the Spirit; so neither can we think duly of Christ, without the Spirit of Christ. What then is the meaning of this question relating to its act of thinking; *What think ye of Christ?* There are these following particulars, which I suppose are implied therein, and which I shall also propose by way of *query*, that you may still search yourselves and make application as we go along.

(1.) *What think ye of Christ?* that is, What know ye of Christ? what understand ye of Christ? Surely ye cannot have a right thought of that which ye do not know or understand. Have you

got the *Spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of Christ?* Eph. I. 17. Hath the God, who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, shined into your hearts, to give you the light of the knowledge of his glory in the face of Jesus Christ? Hath God revealed his Son in you? Gal. I. 16. Have you seen the Son? He that sees the natural sun in the firmament, hath a thought of it suitable to the sight he hath thereof; but a man that hath been born blind, and never saw the light, he cannot have a right notion or thought of the sun, tho' you should speak never so much of the glory of it to him. I have heard of a man born blind, on whom a great deal of pains was taken to let him understand what a glorious creature the sun was, and what bright beams and rays it sends forth thro' all the world; but he was so far from having any right thoughts about it, that, after all the pains taken on him that was possible, he cries out, *O now (says he) I know what it is, it is just like the sound of a trumpet.* Poor man! there was the best notion he could frame about it, for he never had eyes. So it is here, Sirs, we are all born blind, having no spiritual eyes, 'till God opens the eyes of the understanding, and enlightens the mind in the knowledge of Christ: We may speak of his glory and excellency; but the best you make of him is, *O he is like a very stately and majestic person as ever you saw or heard tell of; and so you frame the image of a great man, sitting on a lofty throne, compassed about with so many sparkling attendants in fine robes: And what you have heard with your natural ears of any person, or seen with your natural eyes, or can conceive with your natural understanding or reason, helps you to, or furnishes you with materials for framing such a notion of him. But what is all this? It is nothing but an image of your own brain, a carnal, fantastical thought; the true Christ is the image of the invisible God, the wisdom of God, and the power of God, God-man in one person. Now, have you got a spiritual discerning? for the natural man receives not the things of the Spirit of God; they are foolishness to him, neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned.* The world cannot think of Christ, far less think much of him, because they do not know him: Like *Æsop's* cock, contenting himself with, and thinking more of a barley-corn than a pearl, because he knew not the worth of it; so the world think more of the barley-corn of temporal good things, than they think of the pearl of great price, because they know it not: Therefore the question imports, *What know ye of Christ?*

(2.) *What think ye of Christ?* that is, *What believe ye of Christ?*

Knowledge

Knowledge and faith are like the two eyes of the soul; knowledge is the discerning and apprehending eye, faith is the applying and appropriating eye. And as saving knowledge is objective faith, and saving faith fiducial knowledge; so without knowledge we cannot think duly of Christ, with respect to what he is in himself, and without faith we cannot think of Christ with respect to what he is to us, so as to receive the record of God, namely, *That God hath given us eternal life, and this life is in his Son,* 1 Joh. 5. 11. which record *whosoever believeth not, hath made God a liar,* ver. 10. That the question concerns this believing tho't of Christ, is plain from the context, wherein Christ shews they had but unworthy thoughts of him, if they did not see him to be *David's Lord*, that is, the *true God, and eternal life*; in and thro' whom, as the God-man, this life was to be conveyed from God to man. This question then is a trial of our faith, which *faith is the evidence of things not seen*. And, I suppose, one of the reasons why Christ here says, *What think ye of Christ?* and not, *What think ye of me?* is, because, tho' now they were speaking to him and seeing him with their bodily eyes; yet their faith was not to terminate on what was the object of their sense. We have no more faith than an ox or a horse, if we believe no more than we see and feel. The brute-beasts think they have what they find they have by seeing and feeling; but what do you, that are rational creatures, think of things that cannot be seen or felt? *Faith is the evidence of things not seen*. The *Pharisees* here, they saw Christ, they saw his miracles; but yet, for all that, they saw not the true Christ by Faith, while they saw not his invisible Glory, his invisible Godhead, nor the invisible seal appended to his commission for saving sinners. Therefore it is not, *What think ye of me?* Your eyes see me, as if I were no more but a man like your selves; but, *What think ye of Christ?* Do you believe no more of Christ than you see? If so, then you have no right thoughts of Christ at all, because you have no faith. My friends, the question concerns you also: It is not, *What see or feel you of Christ?* but, *What believe ye of Christ?* There is a threefold seeing or feeling, that is to be separate from believing. The *first* is a *corporeal* seeing or feeling: *Thomas* tho't it a better way to believe Christ to be risen, by seeing and feeling him, than by running to the promises without sight of him; and we all naturally follow him: But Christ tells him, that the best and most blessed way was quite contrary to that, *John 20. 29. Blessed are they that have not seen, and yet have believed*. Again, 2. There is a *rational* seeing, that is to be separate from believing. Tho' none can believe, without the exercise of their rational faculties spiritualized,

tualized, and tho' it be the highest reason to believe what God speaks; yet to make natural reason the rule or ground of faith, is not to believe at all, but the way to doubt of all that ever God said. *Thomas* consulted with reason, and reason consulted with death and the grave, whether they could send their guests away back and alive again into the world; and so he believed not. If *Abraham* had not separated the sight of reason from his faith in the promised seed, where would his faith have been? Natural reason might say, Hark you, *Abraham*, Is it possible that you and *Sarah* can now have a Son betwixt you, when you're both come to such an age, that you're but dead stocks? But, when reason began to speak, *Abraham* stopt his ears; he considered not the deadness of his own body, nor of *Sarah's* womb, *Rom. 4. 19, 20, 21. He staggered not at the promise of God through unbelief, but was strong in the faith, giving glory to God, being fully persuaded that he that had promised was able to perform.* It may be, reason is whispering into the ears of some here, saying, O man, woman, you're but a dead stock, a dead stone; do you ever think to be a child of *Abraham*, or that you'll bring forth fruit unto God? But, if you believe with *Abraham*, you'll say, Hold your peace, carnal reason; you're but a blind fool in the matters of God: Cannot God out of stones raise up children to *Abraham*? And as he is able, so he hath given me many promises in his word, which he allows me to build upon, and commands me to believe. Unbelief builds always upon sense and reason, but faith builds upon the power and promise of God; What believe you of Christ? 3. There is a spiritual seeing, that is to be separated from faith. It is true, there is a spiritual seeing of sanctified knowledge and understanding, which I spoke of already, that is essential to faith; there can be no believing without this seeing: *He that sees the Son, and believes in him, hath everlasting life.* But there is a spiritual seeing of experience, or experimental sense and feeling, which is to be separate from believing; such as spiritual mourning, spiritual joy, spiritual enlargement, or such like workings of the Spirit. Where these are, they should indeed be cherished with thankfulness, as being a taste of heaven, and a comfortable means of glorifying God on earth: But it is dangerous to make them the ground of faith; for they are always ebbing and flowing up and down, it may be twenty times in the space of one sermon; and your faith that is built thereupon will be up and down therewith. If you believe no longer than you see and feel, no wonder that you are always doubting when you are not feeling. And so you're never living
by

by faith; for you're not properly believing, when you're feeling: faith is one thing, and feeling another. Or, if you build partly on the feeling of God's work within you, and partly on the truth of God's word without you, then you're like one that would build a house partly on the thawing ice, and partly on a firm rock; surely that part of the house that was built on the ice, will tumble down whenever the ice melts: But, were the building of faith wholly upon the firm rock, that changes not with the changes of your sense and feeling, you would find no more cause of doubting when you have, than when you want these changeable things; you would be thankful when you have them, and yet not doubtful when you want them. Unbelief, which builds upon things seen and felt, says and thinks, in the want of these, O all is gone, and so razeth the foundation; but faith, which *is the evidence of things not seen*, says, even in the want of these, All is yet well and secure; Christ is what he was, the promise is what it was, the truth of God is what it was, however I be changed. These are the different thoughts of faith and unbelief; and what think ye? I true, when the meaning of the question is, What believe ye of Christ? the most part will find, that either they have no faith, or very little.

Thus *Paul* believed contrary to sense and feeling, when he got the promise of his own life, and the life of all that were in the ship with him, *Acts* 27. 25. *I believe God*, says he, *that it shall be even as it was told me*. See in what circumstances he was, when he thus believed, *verses* 15, 18, 20. their light was gone, the tempest was on them, and all hope from outward appearances was gone; yet *Paul* was assured and persuaded, that God would do as he had said. Why, might unbelief say, if the sun were shining, and a fair wind blowing, if the Sun of righteousness were shining on me, and the wind of heavenly influences blowing, and I were fair before the wind, than I would believe: But now, when there is nothing but darkness, tempests, how can I believe? No indeed, you cannot, while you make sense and feeling the ground of your faith, and not the truth and veracity of God in his word of grace and promise. Thus it is in the matter of Justification before God. The believer is to look upon himself as righteous, through the righteousness of Christ; to believe himself perfect in Christ, and fiducia- lly to think himself righteous in Christ; No, says unbelief, I cannot think that, because I feel the contrary; I feel my own unrighteousness, sin and corruption. Why, if there were no sense or feeling of sin, there would be no room for faith; If you had.

had a righteousness of your own, and a feeling thereof, then you would have no need of Christ's righteousness; but, now, that you have a feeling of your unrighteousness and sin, there is room for faith; according to such a word as that, *2 Cor. 5. last, He hath made him to be sin for us, that we might be made the righteousness of God in him.* The very essence of faith here is to believe the quite contrary to what we see and feel in ourselves, saying, In my self I have no righteousness, no strength; but surely in the Lord have I righteousness and strength. Now, tho' I should shew no more of the import of this question, *What think ye of Christ?* but these two, namely, *What know ye of Christ?* and *what believe ye of Christ?* surely it is a matter of eternal consequence to answer this question, thus explained; for if you miss the right answer to these two branches of this question, your doom at the great day will be dreadful, *2 Theff. 1. 7, 8. He will be revealed from heaven in flaming fire, taking vengeance on them that know him not, and obey not the Gospel;* that is, who never had such thoughts of Christ, as to know him, and believe in him as the Christ of God. Again,

(3.) *What think ye of Christ?* That is, what love ye of Christ, and what favour have ye for him? As they that know him will believe, and put their trust in him; so they that believe in him will love him, for faith works by love. It must be a loving tho't, that Christ here intended by this question, while in the context he sets forth himself not only as *David's Son*, but *David's Lord*, a God-man, and so a glorious object of love, altogether lovely. Were our affections enlarged wider than the highest heaven, there is loveliness enough in a God-man to fill it; and could our hearts hold an ocean of love, there is infinite loveliness in Christ to bestow it all upon. Every thing in Christ is lovely; and therefore the question, *What think ye of Christ?* must be, *What love ye of Christ?* If any man love not our Lord Jesus Christ, let him be *Anathema Maranatha*, says the Apostle. Surely they are not believers that are not lovers of Christ. It is true, Christ hath many pretended lovers, that love him only for his bounty, but not for his beauty, and that say they love him; but it is not so, if you consider the qualities of their love. *1st*, It is an *easy* love, they came easily by it, without ever getting their natural enmity discovered or broken: They were never humbled for their want of love; such a love is not worth a farthing. Or, *2dly*, It is an *idle* love, it does not lead them to his service, nor draw them to their prayers; his commands are still grievous to them. Or,

3dly,

3dly, If it be not an idle, it is a *legal* love: It may be the law comes to them, and says, as *Pharaoh* said to the *Israelites*, Ye are idle, ye are idle, *Exod.* 5.17. and so they fall adoin'g for their life, according to the DO and LIVE of the first covenant. But it is not doing from love to Christ: It is not a Gospel-love to him as a *law-fulfiller*, but a legal love to him as only a *law-giver*, and as if he was still standing upon the old covenant terms with them. Or, 4thly, If it be not a legal love, it is a *loose* and *licentious* love they have to him: It is a love with a latitude, allowing as much room for the Devil as for Christ, as much room for the world as for Christ, and as much room for lusts. Surely they that have no other love to Christ, but such an easy, idle, legal, loose or licentious love, they are not true lovers; nay, they are true haters of him, and enemies to him. Let them say as they will, that they love Christ, yet they think nothing of him. But, believer, What think ye of Christ? When the meaning of the question to you is, Simon, son of Jonas, *lovest thou me more than these?* O, can you answer it with an appeal, *Thou, that knowest all things, knowest that I love thee?* or at least, can you answer it with a sigh, *Wo's me that I cannot love him as I ought?* Surely, if you have not a love of delight, rejoicing in him, you have a love of desire, lamenting after him. Sometimes the loving soul goes to a communion, and the secret groan is, *O let me find Christ at this occasion!* *O I must have him, I must have him!* Why *must* you have him? even because he must have you, *John* 10. 16. *Other sheep I have, which are not of this fold; these also I must bring, and they shall hear my voice.* He hath said first, *I must have you,* and that hath brought you to say, *I must have him.* Here are two necessities meeting, his necessity and your necessity, his necessity indeed is a pure necessity of *love*, but your first necessity was the necessity of *want*: But, since he from *love* hath a need of you, as well as you from *want* have a need of him, you must of necessity meet together in love. You love him, because he first loved you; you seek him, because he first sought you: Therefore henceforth, as he seeks you from love, so do you not only seek him from want, that is too selfish; but also let your way of seeking him grow up to more conformity to his way of seeking you, namely, from love, saying, *Saw ye him whom my soul loveth? Tell him that I am sick of love.* O what think ye, what love ye of Christ? Again,

(4) *What think ye of Christ?* that is, What esteem ye of Christ, or what estimate and valuation have you for him? This is plainly imported in the question here. Why, might Christ say, ye Pharisees

Pharisees are shewing your ignorant esteem of the law, by all the questions you are proposing about it; but what think ye of Christ, who is the Lord of the law, as well as *David's Son* and Lord? You have an ignorantly high opinion of *Moses*, but what think ye of Christ? what honour and respect do you put upon him? Surely, *to them that believe, he is precious*, or as the word imports, he is *honourable*. Where there is true knowledge of Christ, there is faith; where there is faith, there is love; and where there is love, there is a high esteem. Some things, the more they are known, the less they are esteemed; But it is not so with Christ; they that know him most, do esteem him most. God the Father knows him best, and he esteems him most highly, *Isa. 42. 1.* Saints and Angels in heaven know him next best, and how they esteem him, you may see, *Rev. 5. 8, 9, 10, 11, 12.* The more that any on earth knows him, the more do they esteem him; and only these that do not know him, do not esteem him, *1 Cor. 1. 21, 22, 23, 24.* They that are best judges, think highly of Christ. What judge ye, what esteem have ye of him? There is a fourfold lodging or room that the esteem of Christ hath in the souls of them that duly esteem him. 1. In their *intellective* faculty, that is, in their understanding this esteem lodges, saying, O! I determine to know nothing but Christ! O, Sirs, if a man had the knowlege of all the univerlities in the world concenter'd in him, and yet knew not Christ, he is but a poor silly sot. *Paul*, bro't up at the feet of *Gamaliel*, had a great deal of knowlege and human literature; but as soon as he came to know Christ, O, says he, *I count all but dung for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord.* 2. In their *elective* faculty, that is, in their choice does this esteem lodge. O they that esteem Christ, they select and single him out for a head and husband, with whom they resolve to live and die, saying, *Whom have I in heaven but thee? and there is none upon the earth that I desire besides thee.* 3. In their *profecutive* faculty, that is, in their affections does this esteem lodge, these do ardently and vehemently pursue after him. As nothing can satisfy a hungry man but food, so nothing satisfies such a soul but Christ; hence proceeds their industry in the use of means and ordinances. 4. In their *retentive* faculty, that is, in their memory will this esteem also lodge; while their esteem of him makes them remember him, and their meditation of him to be sweet. *When I remember thee upon my bed, and meditate on thee in the night-watches, my soul shall be satisfied as with marrow and fatness, and my mouth shall praise thee with joyful lips, Psa. 63. 5, 6.* What we love and esteem, will have

have a lodging in our minds and thoughts. And, where does the strain of our thoughts and meditations run? is, no doubt, implied in the question, *What think ye of Christ?* What room do you give him in your heart and thoughts? Now these four particulars, namely, 1. What *know* ye, 2. What *believe* ye, 3. What *love* ye, 4. What *esteem* ye of Christ? are here implied.

The *Third* Thing here proposed, was, To shew the import of this question formally considered, with respect to the quality of the act. I have shewed what may be implied in the question, with relation to the act of thinking: Now the interrogative particle *What*, pointing at the quality of this act, may furnish us with some further thoughts about the import of the question, formally considered. It is the *What* in the text that now I am especially upon; and besides the general *What* is your opinion of Christ? *What* is your judgment about Christ? there is a four-fold *What* here implied. (1) *What good* do you think of him? You *Pharisees* think much good of your selves? who but you, and your righteousness, your alms, your sacrifices, your temple, your zeal for *Moses* and the law? But, *What think ye of Christ?* Is he no more in your view than a mortal son of a mortal man? No wonder then, in this case, you think little good of him. Can you ascend no higher in your contemplation to apprehend him as the immortal Son of the immortal God, the eternal Son of the eternal Father, the righteousness of God, the gift of God, the true sacrifice, the true temple, the antitype of all the types, the substance of all the shadows, the fulness of all the prophecies and promises? *What*, do you think him good for nothing, but to be despised, debased, and trampled upon? *What good* do you think of him? (2.) *What glory* do you think to be in him? Do you not darken his glory, when you look upon him only to be the son of *David*, and not also to be the Lord of *David*, and the Lord of glory, the root and offspring of *David*; not only the offspring of *David* as man, but the root of *David* as God? *What think ye* of him as the glory of God, and the God of glory, bringing in a dispensation much more glorious than that of *Moses*, which glory was to be done away, 2 *Cor.* 3. 7, 8, 9. Christ as the sent of God, being anointed with the Spirit for that end. If the ministration of death written and engraven on stones was glorious, how shall not the ministration of the Spirit be rather glorious? If the ministration of condemnation be glory, much more does the ministration of righteousness exceed in glory. And *what glory* do you think to be in Christ, who is the glory of all this glory? Do you see Christ

to be thus glorious, and me to be the Christ? Tho' now, might he say, this glory is under a veil of flesh, a veil of exinanition and humiliation; yet this mean appearance that I'm making now, as if I were no more but a frail mortal man, was clearly foretold to you by the prophets concerning Christ, even that he should be a man, and a man of sorrows: Can you see nothing of my glory and excellency under this veil? Is there no glory in the sun, because there is a cloud betwixt you and it? (3.) What *use* do you think he is of? For, if he were only the Son of *David*, he could be of no great usefulness to a perishing world of sinners: But, do you think and consider, that herein is the mystery of divine grace; *God so loved the world, that he sent his only begotten-Son, that whosoever believeth in him, might not perish, but have everlasting life*? If the brazen serpent, which was but a type of Christ, was of use to the stung *Israelites*, What think ye of Christ? can any thing in the world be so useful to sinners as Christ? Of what use is the law, whereof you're boasting? It is but a dead letter, a killing word, a sentence of condemnation, a death-summons, a dead-warrant against them without Christ, who is the *end of the law for righteousness*. Who but Christ can reconcile God to man, & ingratiate man with God? Who but he can fulfil the law and satisfy justice for them, pay their debts, heal their diseases, justify, sanctify, and save them, vanquish sin, death and hell for them, and at last raise the mouldered carcase from corruption to incorruption, and invest it with a state of everlasting glory in the highest heaven, with *fulness of joy, and pleasures for evermore at his right-hand*? Is he an useless Christ to you, tho' he fills all in all, and alone can give abundant satisfaction to the immortal soul; whereas all things else are but dry and empty without him, and leave men destitute? O dry means, dry ministers, dry ordinances, dry sacraments, dry sermons, and dry prayers, if Christ be away! O dry breasts if he be not the milk, dry branches if he be not the sap, dry clouds, dry wells if he be not the water! O what use think ye he is for? What work and service have ye for him? (4.) What *worth* do you think he is of? Your thoughts are employed, might Christ say, how to tempt me with your questions about the law, undervaluing that Lord God that gave the law, and that now is come in the person of the *Messias* to fulfil the law; & is he unworthy to have a room in your thoughts? or what worth do you think him of? If you judge rightly, and think duly of him, you'll find he hath more real worth than all the world beside: For, put all the creatures in heaven & earth in one scale and Christ in another, you'll find them all to be lighter than vanity.

vanity. This is plain, if you consider, that when all the world of men, angels & creatures were weighed in the balance with divine justice, they were found too light to counterpoise it, or give satisfaction to it; all they together could not make up the full sum or value that should satisfy that justice: It cost more to redeem a soul, than all that they were worth: *The redemption of the soul is precious, and ceases for ever,* says the Psalmist. But Christ, having unsearchable riches, is a mass of treasure big enough for the purpose; & therefore, when he was laid in balance with infinite justice, he was found of weight enough to poise it, without any creature's help to hold down the scale: Nay, *he looked and there was none to help, none to uphold; therefore his own arm brought salvation; and he trod the winepress alone, and of the people there were none with him,* Isa. 63. 3, 5. Who among the creatures could go thorow, conquering and to conquer, as Christ did, when he had heaven, earth and hell to grapple with? What think ye of Christ then? What worth do you think he is of? Upon the whole, before I leave this point, let me ask these two questions, to bring home this one, concerning what worth you think Christ is of. The first Question is, What price would you buy him at, if you were to buy him? Surely, if you had a due tho't of Christ, and a discovery of the pearl, you would for joy sell your *all* to buy it; *Mat. 13. 44, 45, 46.* And when all is done, you would see your *all* to be nothing at all, and the pearl to be *all in all*. Indeed this treasure is so great, this pearl is so precious, that it cannot be bought at any price; and therefore the price of it is, *no money, no price*, altogether free, *Isa. 55. 1.* To buy here, is to beg, and take freely: yet if the question be, *What would you give for him, if he were to be bought?* Surely, if you knew your own need, and his infinite fulness and suitability for you, the question will suggest some great thought of Christ. O a thousand thousand worlds, if I had them, would I give for him! Yea, but there are some that hold him at a very low price, they would not give a groat or a sixpence for Christ or his interest; they would not part with a shilling or a crown for Christ or his cause, Christ or his Gospel; nay, they will not part with a beastly lust for him, their idols and the world are of greater price to them. But there are others that know his worth better, and are willing to forsake all for him, *Mat. 19. 27. We have forsaken all and followed thee.* The holy martyrs thought not their lives and their hearts blood too dear for Christ, *Rev. 12. 11. They loved not their lives unto the death,* i. e. they despised their lives in comparison of Christ; they exposed their bodies to horrible and

painful deaths, their temporal estates to the spoil, taking joyfully the spoiling of their goods, and exposing their persons to all manner of shame and contempt for the cause of Christ. O but a soul that by faith apprehends the worth of Christ, will cheerfully and willingly give all for him; and, having won a Christ, will go away rejoicing, and think his pennyworth to be very good, very great. The second Question is, *What rate would ye sell him at, if ye were to sell him?* Judas sold him, and the high priests bought him, for thirty pieces of silver, *a goodly price that I was prized at of them*, Zech. 11. 13. It is ironically spoken, *a bonny price indeed for a God-man, Cast it to the Potter*, says the Lord. Men of darkened understandings, corrupt minds, and depraved affections, will sell Christ and his cause, Christ and a good conscience, for a trifle; yea, many betray his cause for some poor worldly consideration. O for such a Spirit as I read of in the forty martyrs, that suffered so valiantly under *Licinius, anno 300*, that when *Agricolaus* his deputy, one of the devil's agents, set upon them several ways to draw them to deny Christ, and at last tempted them with an offer of money and preferment, they all cried out with one consent, ----- *O eternity, eternity, give us money that will last to eternity, and gold that will abide for ever, such as Christ can give us*: They slighted that pitiful wealth which was current only in this beggarly world, when coming in competition with Christ and his durable riches; they would not sell Christ for a world, nay not for a world of worlds. O at what rate would you sell Christ! Surely, if you think duly and highly of him, you'll buy him at any rate, but sell him at no rate. It is easy indeed to frame a transcient thought, O who would put Christ in the ballance with any thing! But stay till a day of trial come, and the question be brought close home, *Now, will you quit Christ and his cause, or will you quit with father and mother, and wife and children, and estate and fortune, houses and yards, and life and all?* I believe that would be a hard question; *skin for skin, and all that a man hath, will he give for his life, he will quit all before he quit with his life.* Surely, if Christ be your life, you would quit all other lives for him, a natural life, a temporal life, a life of pleasure, a life of honour, a life of ease and worldly accommodations; and if you think much of him, there is some life you have quit for him already, at least in part, and in desire and endeavour; namely, a life of sin, a life of self, a life of legal righteousness, that the life you live may be a life of faith on the Son of God. Now, I suppose all these *Whats* are imported in the question, 1. What *good* do you think of him? 2. What *glo-*

ry do you think to be in him? 3. What *use* do you think he is for? 4. What *worth* do you think he is of, when he is to be bought or sold? This question bears all these in its bosom, *What think ye of Christ?*

The *Fourth* and *last* thing proposed upon the explication of the import of the question, was, to shew the import of it subjectively considered, or with respect to the persons that are the subjects thereof, or to whom the question is put, in the pronoun, *ye*, *What think ye of Christ?* And under this consideration we may take a fourfold view of the question, (1.) View it as it was put to the *Jews* in general, for so were these to whom Christ is here speaking; Ye that are *Jews*, What think ye of Christ? Ye are the people, of whom, concerning the flesh, Christ came, for (as ye own concerning Christ) he is the Son of *David*; and ye are the people to whom he and his Gospel behoved first to come, for salvation is of the *Jews*, *Joh. 4. 22.* Ye are his own people, and what think ye of Christ? Alas! *he came to his own, and his own received him not*, they thought nothing of him when he came; and therefore, as *Paul* says, *Acts 28. 28.* *The salvation of God is sent to the Gentiles*, and he adds, *They will hear it.* Now, of consequence, Christ and the Gospel, and this question with it, comes to you *Gentiles*, saying, What think ye of Christ? O will ye think nothing of him, or will ye make *Paul* a liar, who said ye shall hear it; or rather will ye give the lie to the *Spirit of God*? Nay, whatever the most part do, yet *as many as were ordained to eternal life*, will be brought to think highly of Christ, by getting the saving knowledge, faith, love and esteem of him. (2.) View the question as it was put to the *Pharisees*, a set of hypocrites and self-righteous persons: Ye that are *Pharisees*, What think ye of Christ? Ye are strict observers of the letter of the law, and think much of your long prayers, your giving alms of all that you possess, your fasting twice a week, your being no open drunkards, whoremongers, extortioners, nor like this or that publican; but while you think so much of yourselves and your own righteousness, and think nothing of Christ, *publicans and harlots go into the kingdom before you*; therefore, what think ye of Christ the Son of *David*, the Lord of *David*, the Lord of the law, by whom alone *everlasting righteousness is brought in*, answering the spirit, and not the letter of the law only? The question then comes to be proposed to all of the same kidney with these Pharisees; Ye that are hypocrites and self-justifying persons, What think ye of Christ? Ye that are thinking, O you're an honest

man, you have been a good neighbour, just in your dealing, civil in your carriage, and so you fancy yourself to be touching the law blameless; What, man, are you contented to be judged by the law? then to *Cæsar* let us go, 'to the law let us go: But only look the law broad in the face, look not only to the out-side of the law, like a man looking only to the back and outside of a looking-glass, or to the frame and edge of it, where he does not see himself, but look to the inside of the looking-glass of the law, to the spirituality of it; set your face to the face of the glass, and as you will see what a deformed filthy creature you are, so you will find it cursing you to your face, and cursing you to hell for every wicked thought as well as action, saying, *Cursed is every one that continues not in all things written in the book of the law to do them*; therefore you have need to think again, and think better than ever you did, about a law-justifying righteousness, and to think there is need of this question, What think ye of Christ? (3.) View the question as it was put to the *Sadducees*; for it seems they were combined with the *Pharisees* here against Christ, if you compare *verses* 23 & 34. Now, these *Sadducees* were a set of people that denied the immortality of the soul, the resurrection of the body, the existence of the spirits and angels, *Acts* 23. 8. in a word, they were half atheists, if not wholly so, like the graceless wits of our day, that call themselves *Free-thinkers*: Well, says Christ, What think ye of Christ? Whose Son is he? If you could view him as not only *David's* Son, but *David's* Lord and God; and as the God of *Abraham*, *Isaac*, and *Jacob*, not the God of the dead, but of the living; would you persist in these atheistical tenets, concerning the resurrection of the body, the being of souls? No, no. The question then is applicable to all that sort of people: Ye that are *Atheists*, *Deists*, and damnably erroneous *Free-thinkers*, O what think ye of Christ? No doubt, with *Herod* and his men of war, you set him at nought: But, O, will you think again, and recal your thoughts: Let them fix upon Christ a while, and you shall find all the truths of the Bible cleared and vindicated by him who is the truth itself; and that this eternal Son of God is sent from the Father, on purpose to confirm them by his doctrine, death and resurrection. Again, (4.) View the question, with respect to its general design, which is (together with all other Scriptures) the profit of all to whom it comes, for their reproof, correction, or instruction in righteousness, *2 Tim.* 3. 16. and for convincing of sinners, or confirming of saints: And so it comes to all and every one of us, ministers or people, high and low, rich and

and poor, What think ye of Christ? And here I have occasion to look round about me, and ask the question at all and every one that hears me; and indeed we may begin first at ourselves. O we that are ministers, what think we of Christ? Is he the Son and Lord of *David*, the eternal Son of God? Surely we cannot think, or speak, or preach too much of Christ. It is our honour, if we can say, we preach not ourselves, but Christ Jesus the Lord; and that to us, who are the least of all saints (may some of us say) should this grace be given, to preach among the *Gentiles* the unsearchable riches of Christ: But, while we speak of Christ to others, what do we think of Christ ourselves? To be sure, if we do not think of Christ as we ought, we will not speak of Christ as we ought: Christ in the heart, and Christ in the mouth, make right preaching. If any preach Christ out of envy, as the Apostle says, it is well that Christ is preached; but as it must be but melancholy bungling work to such, so they would do well to consider, that the question is not, What preach ye of Christ? but, What think ye of Christ? Again, O ye that are the people, what think ye of Christ? Whatever be your state or condition, sex or quality, the question comes to you; and let none of you dare to neglect the pondering on it: When Christ himself is putting it to you, *what think ye of Christ?* Ye that are magistrates, or in places of power, trust, authority, *what think ye of Christ?* Are you employing your power for Christ, and his cause and Interest? Ye that are masters or mistresses of families, *what think ye of Christ?* Is it the language of your soul, *As for me and my house, we will serve the Lord?* Are you desiring, with *Abraham*, to command your children, and your household after you, to keep the ways of the Lord, and praying for them, and instructing them in the knowledge of Christ? Again, Ye that are children under your Parents, *O what think ye of Christ? Whose Son is he?* Do you know him to be the Son of *David*, and the Son of God too? And would it not be your great happiness, to be sons and children of God in him? Your father and mother may die and leave you, therefore it is your best to seek an interest in him to be your everlasting Father.

Ye that are servants, what think ye of Christ? Would you have him for your Master and Lord? Is it not the greatest honour to be his servants, who is *David's* Lord? He that was *David's* Son, was *David's* Master; and as *David* in Spirit called him Lord, so should not all that is within you call him Lord? Serve your masters honestly, but let him who is Lord of Lords be a master a-

bove all masters to you. Ye that are tradesmen, what think ye of Christ? Have you no trading with heaven? Does your civil trade in the world take up all your thoughts? Surely it is either an unlawful trade, or unlawfully used, that cannot consist with this Christian trade, of giving the chief of your thoughts to him, that is the chief among ten thousand. Ye that are husbandmen, what think ye of Christ? Do you think more of your ploughs and oxen, or corn and cattle, and barns and goods, than of glorious Christ? Do you not know, whether you be tenants, lease or freeholders, that you are tenants to him, and hold your all of him? Are you more taken up in thinking of a great crop, or a good harvest, than of him who is the Lord of the harvest, both in a natural and spiritual sense, and Lord of all that you have? Ye that are mean cotters, what think ye of Christ? Wo's me, does your cote-house, and your cow, and your kail-yard, lie nearer your heart than precious Christ? O! if you were acquainted with communion with him, you would find a mean cottage with Christ better than a princely palace without him. Ye that are poor beggars, what think ye of Christ? To the poor the Gospel is preached; to you is Christ and his unsearchable riches offered; but I fear there are some of you think more of a halfpenny than you think of Christ: Everlasting poverty and misery will be your portion, if your thoughts be not changed and renewed. You come to communion-occasions only to beg alms, not knowing that then you are at the *beautiful* gate of the temple, where you might get an alms that would enrich you for ever. You have the art of begging from men, and from door to door, but perhaps you never think of begging at Christ's door: O will you begin to think, and to think of Christ, before the door of mercy be shut! Again, ye that are rich, and wealthy in the world, *what think ye of Christ?* Hath he given you riches, think you, to steal away your hearts from him, or rather to improve them for, and consecrate them to his honour, and for the good of others, especially of the household of faith? Men may court your favour, but you are to be pitied, as a poor miserable wretch, if you have your portion only in this life, tho' you had all the gold of *Ophir*, without Christ you have nothing but a shadow, you are destitute of the true substance. You that are wise, mighty or noble, *what think ye of Christ?* May it not startle you a little, that he hath said, Not many wise men after the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble are called; but God hath chosen the foolish, weak, base and despicable things of the world: You have no reason to despair, for
he

he hath not said *not any* of them; but yet you have reason to think where you are, for he hath said *not many* of them. And indeed, as an evidence of this, look to the great men of our days, you'll see, that the generality of the nobility and gentry of *Scotland* and *England*, they think very little of Christ. You that are scholars, and students, *what think ye of Christ?* What will all the wisdom and literature, liberal arts and sciences, and best accomplishments in the world avail you, without Christ? They will qualify you to be more eminent servants to the devil, and his interest, if you learn not Christ together with them. You may be students of *Latin*, *Greek* and *Hebrew*, students of philosophy, astronomy, astrology, geography and mathematicks, yea, and students of divinity too, and yet lose all your pains, if you do not study Christ. Ye that are ignorant and illiterate persons, *what think ye of Christ?* It may be ye cannot read the Bible; you were never at a school; your parents died when you were young, or else were poor, and could not, or graceless, and would not, set you to the school; or if you can read, that is all: You know not so much as the first principles of the doctrine of Christ, and can hardly tell whose Son he is. If you could be brought this day to think highly of Christ, then should you know, and follow on to know the Lord. O neglect not henceforth the means of the knowledge of Christ; if you learn of him, he will make you wiser than the rest of the world, for as far behind as you are, even wise unto salvation. Ye that are old men and women, *what think ye of Christ?* How many thousands and millions of thoughts have you bestowed upon the devil, the world, and your lusts, and idols, in your time, which would have been better bestowed upon Christ, and the concerns of your eternal salvation? And now, that death, judgment and eternity are hard at hand, O, how can you think of going down to the grave, and into an everlasting state, without being able to answer this question to purpose, *What think ye of Christ?* You that are young men and women, *what think ye of Christ?* You are now in the flower of your age; O, shall not Christ have the flower of your thoughts, that, according to the Father's promise to him, he may have the dew of his youth, by your dedicating to him the dew of your youth, and fleeing all youthful lusts? Ye that are children and little-ones, young men and women, boys and girls, capable to think, O *what think ye of Christ?* Alas, children (I would speak a word to you) you may see what ill hearts you have, that make you think more of little plays and trifles, nignays and butterflies, than you think of Christ:

You mind any thing sooner than your Creator or Redeemer, whom God calls you to remember in the days of your youth. Therefore, after this, when you are playing, will you think more of praying; for God says, *I love them that love me, and they that seek me early shall find me*: And think more of reading the Bible, like young *Timothy*, who, from a child, knew the holy Scriptures. In a word, if there be any body here that thinks I have mist them, know that the question is to all and every one of you, *What think ye of Christ?* O graceless world! how unworthily do you think of Christ? The covetous man thinks more of a groat than of Christ, like *Demas*. Ambitious men think more of a hat, than of Christ; like *Haman*, or as *Saul*, who said to *Samuel*, Honour me before the people. The voluptuous man thinks more of a base lust, than of Christ. The drunkard thinks more of a hearty cup, than of Christ. The glutton thinks more of a hearty meal, than of Christ. The proud man thinks more of himself, than of Christ. Pride of righteousness thinks more of prayers, and attendance on ordinances, than of Christ. Pride of grace thinks more of a good frame, than of Christ. Pride of wisdom thinks more of a witticism, or a fine discourse, than of Christ. Pride of beauty thinks more of a skin-deep complexion, than of Christ. Pride of apparel thinks more of a fine suit of clothes, than of Christ, tho' the silly sheep wore it on her back before them. Behold how Christ is villified and undervalued in the world! But, O believer, What think ye of Christ? Surely, if you be a gracious person, Christ will be to you a precious person; and you'll wonder at the folly and madness of the world, that sets every thing above Christ in their thoughts and esteem. Why, they are ignorant of Christ, and ignorant of themselves: if they were convinced of their sin and misery, they would think much of a Saviour and Redeemer; if they knew their disease, they would think much of such a physician to heal them; if they knew their nakedness, they would think much of such a garment to clothe them; if they knew their pollution, they would think much of such a fountain to wash them in; if they knew their deep arrears to divine justice, and insolvent state, they would think much of such a surety to pay their debt. Surely, if they knew, they would not thus despise the Lord of glory. However, be it known to all and every one of you, that this question is put to you; and you ought to put it to your selves, before God, for discovering what you are, and where you stand. And now, having opened the import of the question, in the several branches of it, I proceed next to

The *Third* general head proposed, namely, to offer some reasons of the doctrine, why this is the great leading question in the Christian catechism, by which people are to try themselves; or why this question is put as a touchstone for discovering what metal we are of, *What think ye of Christ?* Why,

1. This question is put, *What think ye of Christ?* because without right thoughts of Christ, there is no right thoughts of God; and without the knowledge of Christ, there is no true knowledge of God. God is an invisible God, and Christ only *is the image of the invisible God*, Col. 1. 15. There are three ways to know, see and apprehend God. One is, by the creatures he hath made, Rom. 1. 20. *The invisible things of God are clearly seen from the creation of the world, even his eternal power and Godhead*; another is by the Scriptures, for they make God known; but the third and only saving way of knowing and apprehending God, is by Christ. Now, the knowledge of God, that we have by the creatures, is like the knowledge we have of a man by his workmanship, which he hath wrought. If the workmanship be rare and excellent, and such as hath required great art and strength, then we conceive the man that hath done it, hath been a wise man, a strong man, and the like, according to the nature of the workmanship. So, when we know God by the creatures, we conceive, that the God that made them, must be a great God, a wise God, a powerful God. But next, The knowledge that we have of God by the Scriptures, I mean the literal knowledge, is like that knowledge that one gets of a famous learned man, by reading what he writes: If in his writing he hath discovered much learning, vast sense, and solid judgment, accordingly we conceive him to be a sensible judicious man. So by reading the word, we may conceive of God's excellency, as we do of a man by his writing; but the knowledge of God, that we get by Christ, is like that knowledge which one gets of a king, by having seen his image, or rather his son, who is as like him as he can look. Now, Christ is so like the Father, and so truly and really his image, that tho' blind *Arians* cannot see the essential glory of the Father in him yet he says to *Philip*, Joh 14. 9. *He that hath seen me, hath the Father*. Now, in the book of the creature we may see the being of God, in the book of the Scripture the will of God. But above all these, we have another book written, as it were, with the rays of the sun, even Christ, whom we may call a book, for he is still the *Locos* --- the word of God; but he is not made with ink and paper, he is a living book, a living picture and representative of the Father, the brightness of his glory, and the express

press image of his person, *Heb.* 1. 3. The saving knowledge of God is by Christ, *John* 1. 18. and in Christ, *2 Cor.* 4. 6. And again, hence,

2. This question is put, *What think ye of Christ?* because, without right thoughts of Christ, there can be no religion, and consequently no salvation. There is no coming to God, but in Christ, *John* 14. 6. *I am the way, the truth and the life; no man cometh to the Father, but by me.* Without believing thoughts of Christ then we cannot worship God aright or acceptably, for without faith it is impossible to please God, *Heb.* 11. 6. And I have shewed you already, that right thinking is believing; and without believing in him, there is no salvation: *He that believes not shall be damned; for there is no name given under heaven, whereby we must be saved, neither is there salvation in any other, Acts* 4. 12. A man that cannot think of Christ as he ought, cannot perform a religious action as he ought: *As the evil man, out of the evil treasure of his heart, brings forth evil things; so a good man out of the good treasure of his heart, brings forth good things,* *Matth.* 12. 35. Now Christ in the heart, by his Spirit, is indeed a good treasure; and as natural tho'ts produce natural actions, carnal thoughts carnal actions; so spiritual tho'ts bring forth spiritual actions, and Christian thoughts Christian actions. True religion begins and advances with the right thoughts of God. I defy a man, that knows the Lord, to pray or worship God comfortably, without some due apprehension of Christ; for as in Christ alone God is well pleased, so it is in the view of Christ, or of God in him, that the soul is well pleased.

3. This question is put, *What think ye of Christ?* because it is the best rule of self-examination; seeing, as men's thoughts of Christ are, so is their state; as men think in their heart, so are they, *Prov.* 23. 7. If a man be risen with Christ, then his thoughts and affections are set on things above, where Christ sits on the right-hand of God, *Col.* 3. 1, 2. If you be Christians indeed, then you have Christ in you, the hope of glory, *Col.* 1. 27. and if Christ be in you, he will have a high room in your thought and esteem; and therefore it is laid down as the best rule of examination, *2 Cor.* 13. 15. *Examine yourselves, prove whether you be in the faith, prove yourselves, know ye not your own selves, how that Christ Jesus is in you, except ye be reprobates? If any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his,* *Rom.* 8. 9. Now, they that have the Spirit, do mind the things of the Spirit, the things of God, and particularly the CHRIST of God.

4. This question is put, *What think ye of Christ?* because this question

question comprehends all other questions in religion. After the *Pharisees* had done with asking their critical questions about the law, Christ proposes this question, which swallows up all their questions, and comprehends all that is necessary to be known ; and if we could answer this question to purpose, we should be in a case to answer all questions that concern both the law and the gospel ; for Christ is the end of the law, and the sum of the gospel. They that know Christ, they know where to find all the righteousness that the law requires, and all the grace that the gospel promises ; and so this question is the compend of the *Christian catechism*, and that not only with respect to knowledge, but also with respect to practice and experience. Christ is the sum of practical godliness, for without him you can do nothing, and by him strengthening you, you can do all things. And Christ is the sum of experimental religion also. That experience is not worth much, that hath not Christ for the sum-total of it, for it is out of his fulness we receive grace for grace. And when a man can say, beholding his glory, I have been changed into the same image, it is a rich experience. In a word, all questions that relate to Christian experience may be reduced to this one, *What think ye of Christ ?* If the question be, What know ye of conviction ? What know ye of conversion ? What know ye of illumination ? What know ye of regeneration ? What know ye of justification ? What know ye of sanctification ? What interest have ye in Christ ? What part and portion have ye in the son of *Jesse* ? What share have ye of his grace, and what hope of his glory ? All such questions may be answered with the answer of this, *What think ye of Christ ?*

5. This question, *What think ye of Christ ?* is put, because he would, by this, put a stop, and give a check to all unnecessary curious questions. They were but curious questions at best, that the *Sadducees* and *Pharisees* had asked of Christ ; but here Christ gives a check to them, by a question of everlasting moment. Some, that are ignorant professors, shew a deal of curiosity in some of their questions, such as, *Who was Melchizedeck's father ?* and the like ; but O here is a more necessary question, *Who was Christ's Father, what think ye of Christ, and whose Son is he ?* Here is an ocean of wisdom, that you may profitably dive into, and yet never get to the bottom of it ; for who can answer that question about Christ's Father, *Prov. 30. 4. What is his name, and what is his Son's name, if thou can tell ?*

6. This question is put, *What think ye of Christ ?* because our thoughts

tho'ts are but lost, if they be not laid out upon him. 'Till we be bro't to think of Christ, duly, all our tho'ts are but lost tho'ts, and vain tho'ts; O Jerusalem, *wash thine heart from wickedness, how long shall vain tho'ts lodge within thee?* The Lord sees the tho'ts of men to be but vanity; our tho'ts are like birds flying from mountain to mountain, and skipping from place to place; and like children running after butterflies, their pains are lost; and so are our thoughts lost, while they are not terminate upon Christ.

7. This question is put, *What think ye of Christ?* because there are so many mistaken thoughts of Christ in the world; *He is despised and rejected of men.* The world is filled with prejudice against him, saying, *Can any good thing come out of Nazareth?* Therefore we ought to come and see, and consider what he is, and whose Son he is, that we may not run into the same common mistake with the rest of the world, and that we may not take him for *a root out of a dry ground*, Isa. 53. 2. *having no form or comeliness.*

8. This question is put to us, *What think ye of Christ?* because we have mistaken thoughts of other things, while we have not right thoughts of Christ. The *Pharisees* had mistaken thoughts of God and his law, because they had not right thoughts of Christ; therefore Christ proposes this question. And indeed Sirs, we mistake God, we mistake the law, we mistake the Gospel, we mistake ourselves, we mistake our duty, we mistake every thing, as long as we are ignorant of Christ. A man may mistake so far, as to think that he is about his duty to God, and yet may be fighting against God, while Christ is not known or thought upon, *Acts 26.* 9. *I verily thought that I ought to do many things contrary to the name of Jesus of Nazareth*, says Paul; and accordingly he was persecuting Christ in his members; yet he thought he was doing God service, till once Christ discovered himself, and cried to him, saying, *Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me?* Then he began to think of Christ, saying, *Who art thou, Lord?* Why, *I am Jesus whom thou persecutest.* Whenever he began to think duly of Christ, then he saw he had been in a mistake. People may think verily they ought to do this and that against some of God's Children; but, if they had other thoughts of Christ, they would have other tho'ts of their duty, and would see that verily they ought not to do so. Again, Paul thought his own righteousness gain, before he knew Christ; but then he thought it loss: *What things were gain to me, these I counted loss for Christ.*

9. This question is put, *What think ye of Christ?* because thus you

you may come to understand what are his thoughts of you. It is true, *His thoughts are not our thoughts, nor his ways our ways; for as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are his thoughts higher than our thoughts.* And hence he may have thoughts of mercy towards a poor soul, that thinks there is nothing but wrath in his heart against it. But this I say, that as to your knowing and understanding of his thoughts towards you; as on the one hand a man in a natural state cannot have high, believing and becoming thoughts of Christ, and so cannot conclude that Christ hath any favourable thoughts of him, while he remains thus in unbelief and despising of Christ; nay, he may know and understand, if he remain in that state thoughtless of Christ, and disregarding him, that Christ will come in flaming fire and take vengeance on him, *2 Theff. 1. 7, 8.* so, on the other hand, the man that hath got such discoveries of Christ, as to create high, spiritual and elevated tho'ts of Christ, he may from thence understand, that Christ thinks well of him, and that his tho'ts towards him are tho'ts of peace & not of evil, to give him an expected end. It is true, Christ's tho'ts of the believer are not high and low, as the believer's tho'ts of him are; nay, Christ's thoughts are unchangeably the same. But, when the believer's thoughts of Christ are raised, then he is in best case to know and understand Christ's loving thoughts towards him: Why, even as a fountain may be known by the streams, so it is here; our knowledge, faith, love, and esteem of Christ, are but streams that flow from Christ's kind heart towards us: *We love him, because he first loved us;* we think of him, because he first thinks of us. And therefore, by what we think of Christ, we may know what he thinks of us: If you think honourably of him, you may thence know he thinks favourably of you; if you think much of him, you may know he thinks much of you. O, may a believer say, I have reason to think much good of him for he is *fairer than the sons of men,* the spotless Lamb of God; but he hath reason to think much ill of me, for I am all black and deformed like hell and the devil. But I'll tell you, believer, that as his thoughts of you make you to be in him, what he thinks you to be in him however deformed you are in yourselves, and see yourselves to be; yet, I say, as his tho'ts make things to be (for he but thought there should be a world, and there was a world; whenever it was his mind that it should be, then it was; and whatever he thought it to be, that it was, according to his thought) and as his thoughts of you make you to be in him, what you are in him: So, if you think him fair and altogether lovely, he is not behind with you, for he thinks you

fair too. Hence, to the spouse, that was admiring his beauty, he says, *Song 4.7. Thou art all fair, my love, there is no spot in thee.* And he does not say any thing but what he thinks, his words express his thoughts; for he cannot lie, who is the strength of *Israel*. Now, believer, if you cannot think or believe that you're altogether fair in him, because you see yourself altogether foul in yourself; know, that if you saw yourself to be all fair in yourself, there would be no need of, or room for believing that you're all fair in him: Hence he hath left deformities about you, that there may be room for faith; therefore let the feeling of your deformity make you humble, but let it not hinder your faith, which must not stand upon feeling, but must act contrary to it upon Christ's word: For, if you ground your faith upon what you feel in yourself, you'll never believe what Christ says concerning your being *all fair*, and your being *made the righteousness of God in him*, *2 Cor. 5. last*. If your faith then can act so as to raise your thoughts of Christ as altogether lovely, fair and spotless, you have ground to conclude, by that same act of faith, that he hath high thoughts of you, as being all fair and spotless in him, whatever deformity you feel in yourself. Christ is infinitely more to you, believer, than you believe him to be: But, whatever you believe him to be, you may be sure he is that to you, you have all that you see in him; for faith's seeing and having is all one, even as believing is explained by receiving, and receiving by believing, *John 1. 12*. What you believe then you receive, and what you receive you have, and what you have in him you are in him; having beauty, and riches and righteousness in him, you are beautiful, rich and righteous in him; and consequently, when you believingly think he is all fair and glorious, you may know he thinks you all fair and glorious in him, and he thinks no more of you than what you really are in him. The question then is put, because you may know, by what you think of Christ, what Christ thinks of you.

10. This question is put, *What think ye of Christ?* because we can never think too much of him, who is the God-man, *David's* Son and *David's* Lord, being God as well as man. O what a glorious object of our contemplation is here! You may think too much of yourselves and your own righteousness, but you cannot think too much of Christ and his righteousness: Yea, when you think any thing of yourself and your righteousness, you think too much of it; but when you think as much as you can of Christ and his righteousness, you think too little of him. You may think too much of creatures, but you cannot think too much of Christ.

Yea,

Yea, you may think too much of angels, as the apostle *John* did, when he fell down to worship before the feet of the angels, *Rev.* 22. 8. To think of the nature of angels, with that inward reverence and adoration which we are to have when we think of Christ, would be idolatry ; and to think of Christ, with the same frame of heart as we do of angels, would be profaneness : Thus we may think too highly and reverently of angels ; but we cannot think of Christ too highly, too reverently, nor too much of him, who is the Lord of angels, and whom we are to honour even as we honour the Father. These are the reasons of the question.

The *Fourth* general head proposed, was, To make application of the whole. And it may be applied for these following uses. 1. For *information*. 2. For *conviction*. 3. For *trial*. 4. For *exhortation* and *direction*.

1. It may be applied for *information*, in these and the like lessons following. (1.) Hence we may learn, seeing the great question in the *Christian catechism* is, *What think ye of Christ?* Then the sum of Christian knowledge lies in this one word, namely, CHRIST. It is not in God absolutely considered, by what he is in himself ; but in God relatively considered, by what he is to us, namely, in Christ : Therefore, I observe, the question is not, *What think ye of God?* but, *What think ye of Christ?* For, as God out of Christ stands in no relation to us sinners but that of an enemy, and a consuming fire ; so the nature, essence, and immensity of God, and what he is in himself, is not the great Christian question ; but rather, what he is to us, and so what he is in Christ. All the saving manifestations of God to his people in Scripture were still, not of God, absolutely and essentially, in what he was in himself, and in his nature ; but relatively, in what he was to them : and so it was always in Christ. Thus when he came to *Abraham*, he said, *I am thy shield, and thy exceeding great reward: I am thy God, and the God of thy seed, which seed was Christ,* Gal. 3. 16. in whom that covenant and promise was established to *Abraham* and his off-spring. And when God manifested himself to the patriarchs that came of *Abraham*, *Isaac* and *Jacob*, his ordinary way was to make himself known upon that ground of the new-covenant established in Christ, *Abraham's* seed. Hence when he came to them, he used to say to them *I am the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob* ; that is, he manifested himself to them, not absolutely, by what he was in his nature ; but relatively, by what he was to them in Christ the promised seed. If we begin to dive into that question,

tion, *What think ye of God?* we may soon lose ourselves, and come to the philosopher's demand of a day to answer that question, and then a week, and then a month, and then tell it is impossible to answer it: Nay, we ought not to be curious in searching into the nature of God, lest we get a dash; for human philosophy cannot reach it, yea, I doubt if angelical wisdom can. It is the only pleasant, saving, and profitable enquiry, to study this question, *What think ye of Christ?* Here we may find what God is to us. To enquire what God is in himself, absolutely and essentially, is no saving or profitable enquiry. What profit is it for a man, who lives under the north pole, and sees not the sun for one half of the year, though he should count the course of the sun all that time that he sees it not? or, what profit were it for a man to go and count what rent the king of *Morocco* or the emperor of *China* has every year, and he get none of it? As foolish is it for us to begin and study what God is absolutely in himself, and not what he is relatively to us; therefore the question is not, *What think ye of God?* but, *What think ye of Christ?* And this shews the difference that there is betwixt learned fools and wise Christians; why, the learned fool seeks to know and comprehend what God is, what this mystery of the Trinity is, and the like, and there he mires himself; he seeks to know what God is in himself, and not what he is to him: But the poor Christian is herein wiser than that learned clerk, for all his wit; for the Christian studies Christ, and so knows what God is to him, better than all the learned *Rabbies* and their curious speculations. Though yet the poor soul may otherwise be very ignorant and illiterate, yet he is wise unto salvation, because he knows Christ, and Christ is made of God to him wisdom, righteousness, sanctification and redemption. And when he knows Christ, he is upon the surest & safest way to know God; for he sees God in Christ, and God related to him in Christ, for Christ is our relation as God-man-mediator. And indeed, Sirs, to believe in Christ, is to believe God's relation to us, and God reconciled to us: For, when we look to Christ, we see God in him; and when we see God in him, we see that he is reconciled in him to us, and well-pleas'd in him with us, 2 Cor. 5. 19. *God is in Christ reconciling the world to himself.* Mat. 3. last. *This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleas'd.* I own indeed, a man may be a believer, and yet apprehend God to be his enemy; but then he is not believing, he is not thinking of Christ by faith. It is an unbelieving thought he hath then of God; for a believing thought of Christ would give him another tho't of God, even as a friend and father

father in him. This then, I hope, is an usual inference, that the sum of Christian knowledge is Christ.

2dly, Hence see what is the best matter for meditation, and the best rule for self-examination. Here is the most noble subject of meditation, namely, to think of Christ; and here is the most excellent rule for self-examination, namely, to ask our souls that question, *What think ye of Christ ?* Meditation and self-examination are duties much neglected among us; they are spiritual exercises, directly cross and opposite to our vain, wandering, idle and unfixed hearts. A man will rather go betwixt the stilts of a plough from morning to evening, than travel betwixt these two duties for one half hour, though yet they are like the stilts of that plough by which the fallow-ground of the heart must be plowed up; but when the tho'ts begin to come in betwixt these two stilts of meditation & self-examination, behold on a sudden (to speak it in broad Scots) they *quit the plough, and run away with the harrows*. No doubt you will know this from sad experience, that your thoughts are in this matter like wild, vicious horses, running mad here and there thro' the fields, without keeping any road, or observing any rule; but here is the best matter and rule, both for regulating our tho'ts in meditation and self-examination. As for meditation, the best way is to think of Christ: Why, you may think upon a promise, but out of Christ you'll find no comfort in it, for all the promises are *yea* and *amen* in him; and so you will not find it your own, but by looking to Christ. Yea, you may think upon God, but out of Christ you'll find no comfort in him, Psa. 77. 3. *I remembred God, and was troubled*: But the antidote against that trouble is believing thoughts of Christ; therefore says Christ to his disciples, Joh. 14. 1. *Let not your hearts be troubled; ye believe in God, believe also in me*. If you think upon the law, you'll find there you're drown'd in debt both to the command and curse, till once you look to Christ the end of the law for righteousness. If you look upon your duties that God calls you to, you'll find them a heavy task, till once you look to Christ, & then you'll find his yoke is easy, & his commands are not grievous. Again, as to self-examination, the best rule here is to say to your soul, *What think ye of Christ ?* They are but proud self-conceited persons that do not think highly of Christ, and God approves them not. 2 Cor. 10. last. *He that glories, says the apostle, let him glory in the Lord: For not he that commends himself is approved, but whom the Lord commends*; intimating, that they that glory only in the Lord, they discommend themselves, and are commended and approved of God; but they that do not glory in the

Lord, nor think highly of him, they commend themselves, but are discommended and disapproved of God; yea, they deceive themselves, Gal. 6. 3. *If any man think himself to be something, when he is nothing, he deceives himself.* Self-conceit is self-deceit; and as they are all self-deceivers who are self-exalters, so they are all self-exalters who are Christ-despisers; they think not much of Christ, who think much of themselves: And so, to enquire what you think of Christ, is the best way to find yourself out, what you are in state or frame. You may by this rule know how to judge of your own thoughts: You may think of a thousand good things, you may think of sermons, you may think of death, judgment and eternity; but though you may think seriously on these subjects, yet the rule whereby to judge of the rectitude of your thoughts about them is here, do they lead you to high thoughts of Christ, in whom alone we can think of death without horror, judgment without terror, and eternity without fear or dread?

3dly, Hence we may see, that Christ himself is the best judge of men's state; for he can look into the hearts and thro'ts of men, and say, *What think ye of Christ?* All judgment is committed to the Son of God, and he will cast many whom the world approves; because, whatever men think of them, yet he knows that they think little of him and his Father. Also, he will approve of some whom the world casts; because, however the world thinks little of them, yet he knows that they think much of him and his Father; for they know him, and whose Son he is. Christ's question shews that he knows our thoughts; for, to whom shall we give an account of our answer to this question? None in all the world knows what we think, but God himself, and Christ is God. Christ discovers the ignorance of the *Pharisees* here also, and shews that he knew their thoughts were amiss: *If he be David's Son,* says he, *how does David in spirit call him Lord?* Here they were confounded, and might have been convicted that their thoughts were naught. Indeed, this was one of these things that old *Simeon* declared concerning Christ, that *He should be a sign that should be spoken against, that the thoughts of many hearts might be revealed,* Luke 2. 35. Thus, when Christ met with the woman of *Samaria*, he revealed many thoughts of her heart to her, and gave her a view of all her lewd tricks; *Come, see a man,* says she, *that told me all things that ever I did; Is not this the Christ?* As Satan presented to our Lord Jesus the whole body of the world at a glance, so Christ can let us see a black sight of all our sins at once, so as to force us to acknowledge that he is the Christ, that knows our hearts and thoughts.

But,

4thly

4thly, Hence we may see, what is the great end and design of a gospel-ministry, namely, to discover Christ, and remove the prejudices of peoples minds against him, to rectify their mistakes about him, and to fill them with a high opinion of him. The sum of a gospel-minister's business, is, to commend his master, saying, *What think ye of Christ?* and that both in his preaching, and praying, and catechising, and visiting. The whole of their doctrine and practice is, as it were, a voice preaching Christ. If they preach the law and its curses and threatnings against christless and impenitent sinners, it is to lead them to Christ, and to drive them to the city of refuge. If they preach faith, they make Christ the author and finisher, as well as the Object of it. If they preach repentance, they make Christ, as exalted at the right-hand of God, *to be a prince and saviour to give repentance*, the fountain of it; and Christ crucified, viewed by faith, to be the immediate root of it. If they preach duties and new obedience, they make Christ the *alpha* and the *omega* of it. Ministers may indeed speak much of Christ in their sermons, and yet not preach Christ: As for example, if one should preach of Christ mainly as a lawgiver to be obeyed, and little or nothing of Christ as a lawfuller, to be believed in, and served from love, because of his having saved us from the yoke of the law: For a covenant of life and death, upon doing or not doing, may be preached, and called the Gospel of Christ, in a mistake, while it is only the law that is preached, and not *Christ the end of the law for Righteousness*. And you may know it by this, among other things, the tendency of such old-covenant doctrine, is to lead men to this question, not, *What think ye of Christ?* but, *What think ye of yourselves?* and, *What are you doing, that you may have eternal life?* Why, the man begins to think God is standing upon some doing-terms yet with him; and therefore, in order to life, he must do so and so: Thus he is led to himself, and not to Christ. But gospel-doctrine tends to lead a man wholly out of himself, and wholly into Christ; for, whatever be the text, the strain of gospel-doctrine is, *What think ye of Christ?* It is not the design of gospel-ministers to commend themselves, but Christ. There is a set of ministers, say some, that set up themselves above others, and study only to commend themselves, to the disparagement of all others, as if none but they were gospel-ministers; but, my friends, if any man's concern for Christ's cause and interest, or for his master's glory, shall commend him, he needs not think strange tho' the world of *Pharisees* envy him, as they did Christ himself when his doctrine and life commended

him. I'll tell you what commendation a gospel-minister hunts most after ; it is that of *Paul*, 2 *Cor.* 3. 1, 2, 3. it is to have an epistle-commendatory in the hearts of hearers, by the power of the Spirit of God savingly accompanying the word, and leaving an impression there, that it is indeed the word of God, and not of men, and that God is in it of a truth. He would desire, with the same Apostle, 2 *Cor.* 4. 2. to commend himself by the manifestation of the truth to every man's conscience in the sight of God. Let truth be nick-nam'd and reproached as it will, the evidence of truth will commend itself to the consciences of all the lovers thereof. Mean time, it is possible that a man may commend Christ in order to commend himself as an evangelical preacher ; for such a good work he is indeed commendable, but for such a bad end it is to God only that he is accountable. But it is possible also to know if a man intend not himself by preaching Christ ; for sometimes there is such a power and virtue attending the word, and such a smell and savour of heaven with the preacher, as carries a secret demonstration of his spirituality and purity of intention into the heart even of the carnal by-standers, much more those whom he hath enlightened with the spirit of discerning, to know the voice of *Christ* from a *stranger*. However, Sirs, think of ministers what ye will, the great question is, *What think ye of Christ?* Wo to us, if our only design be to bring people to say *What think ye of such a minister?* and *what think ye of such a sermon?* If we make Christ a covert for raising our own applause, he can instantly command an angel to smite us, as he did *Herod*, and order us to be eaten up of worms, for not giving God the glory. O what should ye think of us? Though we magnify our office as ambassadors of Christ, yet in ourselves some of us are frail, feeble, sinful pieces of dust as any of you ; we are among the chief of sinners as well as you ; we need the Blood and Spirit of Christ to justify and sanctify us, as well as you ; let us decrease, but let Christ increase : If any of us be made instruments of good to your souls, let it engage you to think the more of Christ, that could work such a work by such simple and unlikely instruments : He puts the treasure in earthen vessels, that the *excellency of the power may be of God*, and not of us. Whatever honour God calls you to put upon them for their work's sake, yet if your esteem centre upon the minister or his work, saying, *O I think much of the minister, and I think much of the sermon*, you need to begin to think better ; for the grand question is, *What think ye of Christ?* It is indeed the best sermon that works the highest thoughts of Christ.

The *2d use* is for conviction and reproof to all those that are filled with unworthy and unbecoming thoughts of Christ, with ignorant and erroneous thoughts of him. Some have no thoughts of Christ at all ; some think little of him ; some think hardly and harshly of him ; some think meanly and basely of him : To speak of all the base and mean thoughts of Christ that the world is filled with, would be impossible. O how basely do the *Arians* think of Christ, and his supreme Godhead ! If I had not found it necessary to confine myself to the first branch of Christ's question here, *What think ye of Christ?* the other branch, namely, *Whose Son is he?* might have led me particularly to have treated the doctrine of Christ's Sonship, and eternal Godhead, and Co-equality with the Father, in opposition to that damnable heresy, which some tell us is creeping into *Scotland*, as well as it is raging in *England* and *Ireland*. I shall only say, that the question concerns them, as well as the *Pharisees* of old, *What think ye of Christ,* and *whose Son is he?* O, can they say no more than, with the *Pharisees*, that he is the son of *David*? Then, how does *David* in spirit call him Lord? And if he be *David's* Lord and God, how can he be so, and yet not co-equal with the Father? For we have not two Lords, or two Gods; the Lord our God is one Lord, we have but one supreme God and Lord; therefore Christ, being Lord, must be one with the Father essentially: Christ is the true God, and eternal life. But I cannot now enlarge on this subject. O may *Arian* doctors begin to read over the Christian catechism again, and learn to answer this question, *What think ye of Christ?* Again, as *Arians* think nothing of his Godhead, but as if it were an inferior deity; so some that pretend a greater respect to him, yet think but basely of him. *Papists* think nothing of the imputation of his righteousness; *Socinians* think nothing of the sacrifice of his death; *Arminians* think nothing of the power of his grace; *Quakers* think nothing of his word; *Atheists* think nothing of his Spirit; *Deists* think nothing of his revelations. If we look out to the world, the *Pagans* have no thought of him at all; the *Mahometans* think him nothing but a great prophet at best, and inferior to *Mahomet*: the *Jews* think him nothing but an impostor, and that he is not the Christ, but only the carpenter's son, or, it may be, a blasphemer, that had a devil. And again, if we look into the church, even the purest churches in this world, among which I would willingly hope the poor church of *Scotland* hath not yet lost the vogue; yet, O how many dark and confused notions, yea, unwarrantable and unworthy thoughts of Christ, may be there discovered, even a-

mong these churches that are supposed to be pure, Christian, protestant and reformed churches! It were endless, to speak of doctrinal and practical errors that swarm in the churches, whereby contempt is poured upon Christ and his doctrine, his truth, his gospel, and his yoke, his loving yoke of gospel-obedience. What low tho'ts of Christ appear in that strain of doctrine that tends to confound the old and new covenant, law and gospel, faith and works, without duly keeping up the old land-marks betwixt Christ and all his rivals and competitors, that seek to share with him in the glory of salvation-work! What low tho'ts of Christ appear in that sort of practice, that consists either in a life of legal righteousness, or a life of open wickedness! What low tho'ts of Christ, as our righteousness, appear from every thing that tends to lead sinners back to the law, as a covenant of works! And what low thoughts of Christ, as our sanctification, appear from every thing that tends to lead sinners off from the law, as a rule of holiness! How is Christ, and his merit and righteousness disesteemed, to the encouragement of self and self-righteousness! And how is Christ, and his Spirit and Grace disesteemed, to the encouragement of sin & licentiousness! It is not my business, to expose the nakedness of any: They are singular persons, that are helped to guard against all right and left-hand extremes, so as to think no less of Christ as a Lord, than Christ as a Saviour; and to esteem a whole Christ, without setting up one part of Christ against another; but my work especially is, to strike at the root of all that disesteem of Christ, that takes place in the world, especially in the visible church. Whence is it, that the world thinks so little of Christ, and so naughtily of him? Why, *1st Ignorance* is a cause of it, *ignoti nulla cupido*. As it is impossible for them to undervalue Christ, who have the saving knowledge of him; so it is not possible that any can prize him, whom they do not know. Many are like *Festus*, *Acts* 25. 19. who told *Agrippa*, that *Paul's* enemies had questions against him, concerning one Jesus; Christ is to them a certain man, one *Jesus*, but for their part they know little of him, and are indifferent about him. As a blind man, what he does not see, he cares not for, though he be told of it as never so fair and beautiful; so natural men are blind, *2 Cor.* 4. 4. they can see no beauty or comeliness in Christ, for which they should desire him. Therefore, though they may hear of his glory and comeliness, and be a little moved therewith, yet they care not so much for him, as to give him the highest room in their tho'ts and esteem. *2dly, Unbelief* is another cause why people think little of Christ.

If they could believe, they would see the glory of God in him, and see him a glorious and lovely object: But through unbelief, Christ is lothsome instead of lovely; hence his doctrine is lothsome, his righteousness, his holiness, his cross. Unbelief makes people think Christ is a cheat, and God is a liar, and that he says what he hath no mind to do; it makes them think that he is not able to save, or that he is not willing to save. O how basely does unbelief think of Christ! Unbelief also will make a man think God like unto himself and an approver of his sin, Psalm 50. at the close, *Thou thoughtest that I was altogether such an one as thy self*; and so it makes them think of Christ but very basely. 3dly, *Pride and self-righteousness* is another cause why people think little of Christ, Rom. 10. 3. While people think much of themselves, and their doing, they cannot think much of Christ, and his righteousness. This is that legal principle that makes men to do with the garment of Christ's righteousness, as the *Ammonites* did with the garments of *David's* messengers, they clipt them so short, that they were not able to hide their shame. But if it was a terror and smiting to *David's* heart, to cut off but a little of the lap of *Saul's* garment, ought it not to be a terror to us, to cut off a lap of Christ's garment, or clip it so short, as to think that it cannot cover us completely, without some rags of our own rotten righteousness sewed to it? Again, it is this legal principle, that makes believers themselves think it cannot be that they are accepted as righteous, perfectly righteous in the sight of God, thro' the righteousness of Christ imputed; why, because they want a feeling of that righteousness in themselves, which the legal heart is ready to make the foundation of pardon and acceptance: But, as *Luther* said, we must not feel, but believe, that we are thus righteous; yea, it is this hidden principle of self-righteousness, that will make a minister preach Christ alone for righteousness, as if he were as much for exalting Christ, as any that ever preached; and yet, before ever you know well where you are, you'll find him bringing in some legal duty of qualification, in order to your being justified, that will spoil all your former beauty; just like an untoward milk-cow, that will let down a good deal of milk very well, but then, with an unhappy kick of her foot, she will tumble it all down to the ground, when she hath done: Even so the sincere milk of the word of life, and justification through Christ's righteousness alone, may be let down abundantly, that you would think the man as evangelical as *Paul* himself, or any body that ever preached the Gospel; but, behold of a sudden the legal foot gives it a kick,

and spills all when he hath done, or else the law sets her foot among the midst of the milk; I mean, mixes some dirty righteousness, and qualification of our own, with the fair and clean milk of Christ's righteousness, so as the poor exercised soul's heart rises to take a drink of it. Why, I thought yonder milk was for me, and yonder righteousness of Christ was for me; but there came in a qualification that before ever I could be justified, I behoved to do so and so, and to be so and so humbled, and penitent, and sure I am I want such a qualification, and therefore all is lost to me. But, poor soul, whatever comes in this way, tending to make you look into yourself, and stand off from Christ, you may know it is but a switch of the law of works; slight it, and set it off, if it hinder you from thinking of Christ as your ALL, and from buying and drinking his wine and milk without money, and without price.

4^{thly}, *Carnal Reason* is another cause why people think little of Christ; for the natural man receives not the things of the Spirit of God, they are foolishness to him, 1 Cor. 2. 14. There is natural reason, which is so much cried up at this day, when a man goes about to measure God's truth, and spiritual mysteries, with this short line of human reason; and finding that reason agrees with these mysteries, no more than the sound of rams horns, in the view of carnal sense, was like to bring down the walls of *Jericho*; behold, no fault, must be found with lady *reason*, but Christ's Gospel, and the mysteries thereof, must bear the blame, namely, that they are foolish and absurd, and therefore not to be received or esteemed by such wise heads as they are, who little remember the Apostle's admonition, 1 Cor. 3. 18. *If any man will be wise, let him become a fool, that he may be wise.* Hence *Luther* gave it as an infallible mark that the Gospel was not truly preached, and was not the Gospel, indeed namely, if it was so brewed, fitted and adapted unto reason, that all approved of it, and yielded to it peaceably; for how then should Christ be a sign that should be spoken against, *Luke 2. 34. and a stone of stumbling, and rock of offence?* This leads me to a 5th cause why people think so little of Christ, namely, the *calumny* cast upon the Gospel of Christ, and the dispensers of it. Is it possible for the wisdom of the world to hold her peace from speaking against that which she judges to be foolishness? How then shall Christ be not only for the rising, but the falling of many in *Israel*? Mark says *Luther*, where this fall is, even in *Israel*, in that people that seemed to be Christ's only people, and upon Christ's side. It is even in *Israel* that many fall, and in *Israel* that Christ is spoken against.

gainst. Thus, when he came to be a minister of the old and ancient truths of God, to confirm the promises made unto the fathers, *Rom. 15. 8.* when he began to preach the same, the greatest part of the multitude cried out, *What new doctrine is this?* *Mark 1. 27.* Whence we may see, that when a church hath gone off from any ancient truth, or old way of expressing it, no sooner are these old truths received, or set in their ancient frame, than presently it is called a new scheme of doctrine: However, by this means Satan gets much of his will; for it tends to make people think little of Christ and his Gospel. *6thly, Division* is another cause why people think so little of Christ. There is a two-fold *division* that I mean; there is not only an outward church-division, but an inward heart-division. No doubt the former hath a great hand in making many to slight Christ; for when a Church is divided, the generality of people are apt to be stumbled: Why, say they, we know not whom to believe, and what side to turn to; every party says they are for Christ, and therefore the indifferent sort of people think we will even let Christ and them both alone. But it is especially inward *heart-division* that I mean: When the heart is divided betwixt Christ and the world, betwixt Christ, and idols or lusts; the world, and lusts thereof, will be sure to carry away the heart, that it cannot think highly of Christ, while it thinks so much of other things. A man may as soon with one eye observe the stars, and with the other measure the earth at the same time, as he can think highly of Christ, and of his idols too: Therefore, when Satan, like the pretended mother, says, let it be neither thine nor mine, but divide it; God, who is the Lord of the heart, says, let the devil rather have all, for God will either have all or none. Now, when men have any approved idol in the heart, Christ is despised, his rival gets all; the divided heart then is a heart separate and joined to idols; and this division causes disesteem of Christ, so as the man cannot think of Christ, he must, of necessity, think of some other thing, *Luk. 14. 18.* See how they that were invited to the great supper, the Gospel-banquet, put it off with excuses, *I have bought a piece of ground, and I must needs go and see it,* says one: Mark the phrase, *I must needs go*; he pleads necessity, and necessity hath no law. When the heart is not wholly for Christ, of necessity it will be for the world, and the lusts thereof; and he that is not for Christ, Satan will find him always enough of business to take up his thoughts, and which the man will reckon so necessary, that he will have no leisure to think of Christ. Now, when this question is proposed,

What

What think ye of Christ? or when Christ is offered, there are two sorts of persons that shew very little esteem of him; yea, that shew they do nothing but despise him in their heart: The *Apostle* compares them to *dogs and swine*, 2 *Pet.* 2. 22. 1. There are some like swine, namely, *the prophane worldly people*: for as swine think more of the mire, than any thing else; so, if one go to drive him away from the mire, he only gives a grunt, and away he goes to the mire again, or else rooting his snout in the earth: So prophane and worldly people love to wallow in the mire of sin, and to be rooting in the earth; and if any go about to drive them from sin, and to pull their noses out of the earth, they go away grunting and grumbling in their heart, that they cannot be allowed their necessary pleasure and profit, and they return to the wallowing in the mire, and rooting in the earth, as eagerly as ever. All the answer they give to the question, *What think ye of Christ?* is a grunt: They are disturbed a little about it, and moved a little to mutter some words, according as they are affected; but away they go grunting, with their mouth towards the dust; it is not Christ they are thinking of. 2. There are others like dogs, namely, *legalists and self-justiciaries*, that are worse enemies to the Gospel of Christ, than the worldling, or openly prophane; for as a dog thinks more of a stinking carcase than any thing else, so, if you go about to drive the dog from his vomit, or stinking carrion, he will be either ready to bark or bite, or fly in your face: Even so legalists and self-justiciaries think more of the stinking carcase of their own righteousness, and legal duties, than any thing else; and when any goes about to draw them away from the high esteem of the filthy rags of their own righteousness, shewing the loathsomeness and vileness thereof, the absolute necessity of being wholly denied thereto, and adorned with nothing but Christ's perfect righteousness for justification before God; if we shew them how *God justifies the ungodly*, and how the *righteousness of God, without the works of the law*, is manifested in the Gospel; why, then they go away from the ordinances, barking, and biting, and slandering, calumniating the Gospel, which they do not understand or esteem, as if it were a doctrine of licentiousness, and an encouragement of sin; and they return to their vomit, their stinking carrion, neglecting the heavenly carcase to which the believing eagles gather together, that they may live by faith upon the Son of God. Now, both these sorts of persons, however differently affected, yet agree in their *slighting of Christ*,

upon

upon different grounds. What do they think of Christ? Nothing at all: The Lord convince and awaken such.

The *third use* may be for *examination* and *trial*. Let this great question of the Christian catechism be a touchstone to try what metal you are of, and to understand what is your state now, and what will be your lot for ever. It is according as you answer this question, *What think ye of Christ?* For helping you into this enquiry, I would direct you to try it, 1. By the qualities of your thoughts. 2. By the object thereof.

First, Try yourselves, upon this question, by the qualities of your thoughts; for it is not a simple tho't, like a flying vapour, that is here intended; but a qualified thought, that you are to try yourselves by. For example, (1.) Right and becoming tho'ts of Christ are preferring and superlative thoughts, Christ is beyond comparifon to the man: The language of such a tho't of Christ is this, O what can he be compared unto! If you compare him to a rose, he is the rose of *Sbaron*: If you compare to a lillie, he is *the lillie of the valley*: If you compare him to a sun, he is the sun of righteousness: If you compare him to a star, he is the bright and morning-star: If you compare him to a chief and honourable worthy, he is the chief among ten thousand: If you compare him to a head, he is the head of principalities and powers: If you compare him to a flower, he is the flower of the stem of *Jesse*: If you compare him to a branch, he is the branch of righteousness: If you compare him to an advocate, he is an advocate with the father: If you compare him to a counsellor, he is the wonderful counsellor: If you compare him to a king, he is the king of kings, and Lord of Lords: If you compare him to a prince, he is the prince of peace, the prince of the kings of the earth: If you compare him with men, he is fairer than the sons of men: If you compare him with angels, he is the Lord of angels; let all the angels of God worship him. The man does, in his tho't, prefer Christ to all things in heaven and earth. *Whom have I in heaven but thee? and there is none upon the earth that I desire besides thee.* In all things he gives him the pre-eminence, *Col. 1. 18.* Then again, (2.) Right and becoming thoughts of Christ are admiring and adoring thoughts, exalting and extolling thoughts; if you have due tho'ts of him in your heart, you'll find in your heart to bless him, saying, as *Pfal. 118. 26.*

Blessed is he, in God's great Name

That cometh us to save:

We from the house which to the Lord

Pertains, you blessed have.

And

And, O magnify the Lord with me; you would wish that all the world would fall a blessing, and praising, and extolling him. They are glorying and glorifying thoughts; the man's heart glories in the Lord, and glorifies the Lord, and would desire his glory may be advanced above the heaven: Why, because, (3.) Right and becoming thoughts of Christ are spiritual and sublimated thoughts. Natural thoughts can rise no higher than nature, 1 Cor. 2. 14. but spiritual thoughts being managed by the conduct and influence of the Spirit of God; *the Spirit searches all things, even the deep things of God.* Indeed the Spirit of God is the *all in all* of these tho'ts; for he comes, according to the promise, and glorifies Christ, by receiving the things of Christ, and shewing them unto the soul, Job. 16. 14. *They that are after the flesh, do mind the things of the flesh; but they that are after the Spirit, the things of the Spirit,* Rom. 8. 5. Indeed, the things of Christ and the things of the Spirit are the same, no human natural wisdom can reach to them. Wise naturalists may indeed dream of them, and speak of them, like a man speaking in his dream of the light of the sun, while yet it is dark night with him, and he was never awakened, &c. (4.) Right and becoming thoughts of Christ are applying and appropriating thoughts, in so much that the man takes Christ into his soul, as he takes meat and drink into his body, Job. 6. 54. This is that *believing thought*, without which a man receives no benefit; any more than a man that wants meat can have benefit by thinking upon meat without eating thereof. The man takes in Christ to himself for his own good. To think of Christ, without applying him, is like a man thinking of meat and drink, without taking it, which does no good. *Quest.* But can there be no right thinking of Christ, without applying? Indeed, man, the thought is but a vain thought, an unbelieving tho't, an unprofitable tho't, if it be not either an *applying thought* of Christ, or a thought of Christ *in order to application*; like a sick man receiving a cordial out of his physician's hand, he takes it from him, not to hold it in his hand, and no more, but in order to make it his own, by drinking it down for his *refreshment, healing, and strengthening.* The man's taking the cordial in his hand, is not properly the taking that the physician means, but his taking it into his stomach, is the proper taking of it; yet the former taking of it in his hand is right, in so far as it is in order to the other: So here, *a bare thinking* of Christ is of no avail, unless it be an *applying tho't*, or a tho't *in order to application.* And tho' the tho'ts of Christ, in order to ap-
plication,

plication, be not application itself properly, yet it is good, in so far as it is like a taking Christ into your hand, in order to take him into your heart, and that for your own soul's refreshment, life, health, and everlasting salvation. (5.) Right tho'ts of Christ are sinking and serious tho'ts, in opposition to the swimming, roving, and indifferent thoughts. Some have a wild thought about Christ, that if he be good for any thing, they shall have a share of him, as well as others : But *what* he is, and *how* they shall come by him, they never deeply pondered ; for they were never touched with a sense of their sin, misery and undone state without him. A swimming tho't of Christ is like that of some ignorant creatures crying out in a surprize, *Christ, have mercy on us* ; but the tho't that sinks deep, is like that of the Publican, smiting on his breast, and crying, *Lord, have mercy on me a sinner*. But there are learned fools in the world as well as ignorant ones, that have nothing but swimming tho'ts, roving speculations ; and yet it may be, they can speak of Christ to better purpose (you would think) than one that is exercised to godliness : But yet these two sorts differ as far as the pleading of an orator differs from the pleading of a malefactor ; the one vents his great wit, but the other his heart-concern. Again, (6.) Right tho'ts of Christ are trading thoughts. The man hath it for his constant trade, to think highly of Christ, and give him the chief room in his heart and esteem. In this respect, his heart is fixed, trusting in the Lord. *The desire of our soul is to thy name*, says the church, *Isa. 26. 8, 9. and to the remembrance of thee. With my soul have I desired thee in the night, and with my Spirit within me will I seek thee early*. 'There was a trading with heaven late at night, and early in the morning. Yea, *David* makes it morning, and evening, and mid-time of the day ; yea more, seven times a day ; and yet most of all, when he says, *My soul breaks for the longing that it hath to thy righteous judgments at all times*. It is a constant trading. True, indeed, there are innumerable intermissions in the believer's Christian thoughts and desires. But as we say, it is such a man's trade to buy and sell, while he follows that employment, tho' it is not every moment he is thus occupied ; but tho' there be several intermissions in the exercise of his employment, yet the bent of his mind goes that way : So here, we may call this the believer's constant trade, because, whatever intermissions there are in this his mental trading with heaven, yet the bent of his soul is towards Christ : Yea, it is not only his business, but his pleasure, and that makes him go on. If a man thrive at his trade, he takes pleasure in it ; and if not, he

is in danger of giving it over. We go sometimes upon business to those whom we never saw, nor care for seeing again, and whom we take little pleasure to converse with: They that never go to Christ but merely upon business, and never find any pleasure in conversing with him, surely they are too great strangers to him. Certainly, believer, there is too much strangeness betwixt Christ and you, if your business you have to do with Christ be seldom your pleasure, or if it be merely business that takes you to him, saying, I want a pardon, I want a promise, I want this and that. But, is there never a love-visit you make to him, saying, Lord, I have got a pardon, and I am come to bless thee for it; I have got a promise, and I am come to praise thee for it; thy company is sweet, and I am come to get thee in my arms, that I may have more of thy embraces? O sweet trading! *My meditation of him shall be sweet.* Indeed, these thoughts of Christ that are right, are glad, joyful, satisfying thoughts.

(7.) Right thoughts of Christ are humbling thoughts, and yet emboldning thoughts. O but these that think highly of Christ, cannot but think meanly of themselves, saying with *Job*, *Now mine eye seeth thee; wherefore I abhor myself, and repent in dust and ashes.* The believer, that thinks duly of Christ, hath both the highest and lowest thoughts in the world; the highest thoughts of Christ, and the lowest thoughts of himself; and yet this humility doth not hinder his boldness, for he hath *boldness to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus*, Heb. 10. 19. The more he thinks of Christ, the more humble thoughts he has of himself; and yet the more he thinks of Christ, the more bold he is towards God. It is a bold humility, and a humble boldness; hence, when he is *worshipping God in the Spirit*, two other things concur, *Phil* 3. 3. namely, a *rejoicing in Christ Jesus*, and a *having no confidence in the flesh*. O, says the soul, I have no ground of confidence in myself, but I have all ground of confidence in Christ! Unworthy wretch am I, as ever was out of hell; but behold, there is a worthy blood, a worthy righteousness of Christ, *the Lord our righteousness*; therefore, unworthy as I am, I am warranted to be bold in claiming all thro' Christ: I see the holy of holies is open to me thro' this blood of Christ.

(8.) Right thoughts of Christ are *assimulating* thoughts, sanctifying and transforming thoughts, *2 Cor.* iii. *last*. They that see Christ, cannot but love him, and desire to be like him; for there is a transforming favour in his face. They that are in heaven are like him, because they see him as he is; the beatifical vision brings

brings in full conformity to him: Now, a spiritual thought and a believing thought is a mental sight, a fiducial vision of him; and the more of this, the more conformity to him in holiness. The tho't that indears Christ, imbitters sin; a man cannot think duly of the loveliness of Christ, without thinking of the loathsomeness of sin. O, when the sun of righteousness ariseth, there is a heat that accompanies the light, and warms the heart. And indeed high tho'ts of Christ do warm the heart, and make it burn within him; and such heart-warming thoughts are these, burning thoughts, tending to burn up and destroy corruption; for, according as Christ comes into the heart, sin must go out, according to the measure and degree of his coming: As a talent of gold, or some weighty metal, falling into a vessel of water, dashes out all that is in the vessel to make room for itself; so Christ's coming into the heart, dashes out sin to make room for himself. And indeed they that have honourable tho'ts of Christ in their hearts, cannot have favourable thoughts of sin; because, whenever Christ comes into the thoughts, if he do not dash out the life, yet he dashes out the love of sin. What, man! will you say that Christ is in you, and that you have faith, and yet the love of sin as great as ever, and you can indulge yourself in whoredom, and drunkenness, and lying, and swearing, &c. You'll never make a good man believe that Christ is in you, or that you have faith, even though you should swear by your faith, as some do, who even thereby testify to the world that they have no faith at all, being so prodigal of it, as to swear away the faith which they say or think they have. So far as Christ comes in, sin goes out. It is possible, indeed, that a believer, that hath Christ in him, may think that he hath more sin than ever, and that Sin is on the growing hand, instead of decaying; but he is mistaken. It is in this case as it is with a cup of water, put silver and gold into the cup, and the water swells up; and the more you put in, the more will the water swell and run over, that you would think there is still more water than before, the more gold is put in. Christ is the tried gold; and the more the vessel of the believer's heart is filled with it, the more may sin appear to rise and swell, and run over all its banks. This frights and terrifies the poor soul, because now he sees that which, it may be, was hid in the vessel of his heart before, and out of his sight. But it is not that there is more sin, more water than before, but more gold cast in; only every dash perhaps makes the water fly about, that he thinks he was never so full of sin and corruption as now: Yet still it holds good, Christ's coming

coming in makes sin fly out ; and the more it seems to rise and swell, the more does the soul's indignation rise and swell against it. All right thoughts of Christ are sanctifying thoughts. In a word, high thoughts of Christ are new tho'ts. They that suppose they have thought well enough of Christ all their days, and continue to have no better thoughts, no higher thoughts, no weightier thoughts, no clearer tho'ts of him than ever they had, surely they are strangers to this esteem of Christ that we are enquiring into. *If any man be in Christ, he is a new creature ; old things are done away, and all things are become new, and new thoughts among the rest.* Where grace comes, there the wicked man does forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts, his carnal thoughts, his legal thoughts ; they are changed into spiritual thoughts, evangelical thoughts, such as he never had before : And new thoughts of Christ will bring in new words and new actions ; the words follow the thoughts. You may then turn the question. *What think ye of Christ ?* to another, *What speak ye of him ?* for, *out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh.* If you think it ill breeding, or ungentle manners, as many do, to speak of Christ and spiritual things, and cannot drop a word for him from sabbath to sabbath, who can believe that you think highly of Christ ? Nay, that which is most in your heart and thoughts, will be most in your lips. The actions also follow the thoughts : Can you think highly of Christ, and yet do nothing for him ? Nay, new and precious thoughts of Christ will bring in new gospel-obedience from a principle of love to him. Thus you may try yourselves now on this question, *What think ye of Christ ?* by the qualities of your tho'ts. Examination is the very design of the question, namely, to discover what our tho'ts of Christ are ; and therefore I insist mainly upon this.

But, having tried yourselves by the qualities of your thoughts. 2dly, Try yourselves by the object thereof, namely, Christ ; *What think ye of Christ ?* And here such a large field presents itself, that it is impossible I can go thro' it all. Besides what was said in the doctrinal part, I would ask some further questions concerning Christ, not only for examination, but for raising your esteem of him.

(1.) What think ye of his eminent station he is in as Mediator betwixt God and you, and his relation to God and you, his relation to God by nature as his eternal Son, and by office as his righteous servant ? God calls you to wonder at him in this station, *Isa.* 42. 1. *Behold my servant, whom I uphold, &c.* His Father called him forth to serve him and you, and to serve him for your sake ; to

serve

serve him as a Redeemer to ransom you ; to serve him as a surety to pay your debt ; to serve him as a physician to heal your souls ; to serve him in all the offices that your need requires : And what think ye of him ?

(2.) What think ye of his travels, in order to accomplish the works that belongs to that station and relation wherein he stands to God and you ? The travel of his eternal mind before time, when *his delights were with the sons of men* ; the travel of his soul, and the travel of his body in time ; his travel from heaven to earth, and from earth to heaven again ; in all his mediatory actions, his *incarnation, birth, life death, resurrection, ascension and intercession* ! O but the Lord can give a glance of his glory in the very naming of these things ! How did he travel as in birth, when he went about his Father's business ! *Luke 2. 49.*

(3.) What think ye of his treasures, his unsearchable riches that are stored up in him for the benefit of poor sinners, having received these gifts for men ? All the treasures of wisdom and knowledge are hid in him ; all, and infinitely more than we lost in the first *Adam*, is treasured up in the second *Adam*. O, what may a poor, ignorant, witless sinner think of a treasure of wisdom for his illumination ! What may a guilty sinner think of a treasure of righteousness for his justification ! What may a filthy sinner think of a treasure of grace for his sanctification ! And what may a miserable sinner think of a treasure of mercy for his complete redemption ! Yet all these treasures, and infinitely more than we can name, are in Christ, *1 Cor. 1. 30. Who of God is made unto us wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, and redemption.* O the fulness of grace that is in him, that out of his fulness we may receive and grace for grace ! He is the store-house of all God's treasures ; for all is treasured up in him that we may be complete in him, who will by faith make use of him : And what think ye of him !

(4.) What think ye of his thoughts ? *Psal. 139. 17. How precious are thy thoughts unto me, O God ! how great is the sum of them ! If I count them, says he, they are more in number than the sand ; when I awake, I am still with thee.* O his thoughts ! Dwell with wonder and admiration upon God's thoughts. Is it nothing to you, that ever he had thoughts of love towards the like of you, thoughts of pardon, thoughts of peace, thoughts of good and not of evil, to give you an expected end ? O believer, his thoughts are not precious to the rest of the world ; but what are they to you ? Think you nothing that his thoughts

and care should have been about you from all eternity, and now manifested in time? Having loved you with an everlasting love, how is he drawing you with loving-kindness? besides all his providential care in bringing things about for your good, and that in a way beyond your contrivance and foresight, yea, in such a manner as never entred into your tho'ts. You little tho't what was his design in ordering your lot in such a part of the world, and such a spot of his vineyard, and bringing you to such a sermon, or under such a ministry. O how innumerable are his precious thoughts! and what think ye of him?

(5.) What think ye of his words, as well as his thoughts? Surely, if you think duly, you'll think them sweet words, *Psal. 119. 103. How sweet are thy words to my taste? Sweeter than honey to my mouth.* Does the Spirit never take some of his words, and put a spiritual majesty thereupon? Though many times, like *Samuel*, you mistake the Lord's voice, believer, and think it is *Eli* that speaks, and cannot discern the voice of Christ from the voice of *Moses*, the voice of grace from the voice of the law; yet when the Spirit comes, and rounds-in a word from Christ sometimes, what think ye of it? *It is the voice of my beloved, behold he cometh skipping upon the mountains, and leaping upon the hills!* What think ye of his inviting words, saying, *Come to me, all ye that are weary and heavy laden?* What think ye of his expostulating words, saying, *Why will ye die, O house of Israel?* What think ye of his intreating words, and his promising words, his *I wills*, and *ye shalls*, *I will be your God, and ye shall be my people?* Do ye think so much of them, that your hearts say *amen* to them? What think ye of his *may-be's*? Believers will think much of a *may-be* from him sometimes. It may be he will be gracious; it may be ye shall be hid in the day of the Lord's anger. What think ye of his *shall-be's*? There are *shall-be's* for the church in general; *upon all the glory he shall be a defence; in the mount of the Lord it shall be seen:* What think ye of these? There are *shall-be's* for yourself in particular. There is a *shall-be* for your protection, *a man shall be a hiding-place from the storm. This man shall be the peace, when the Assyrian shall come into our land.* There is a *shall-be* for your provision, *bread shall be given thee, and thy water shall be sure.* There is a *shall-be* for your instruction, *they shall be all taught of God.* There is a *shall-be* for your justification; *his name shall be called, the Lord our righteousness.* There is a *shall-be* for your salvation from sin and wrath, *his name shall be called Jesus, because he saves his people from their sins, even Jesus, which delivers from the wrath to come.* There is a
shall-be

shall-be for your happy death, *death shall be swallowed up in victory.* There is a *shall-be* for a happy welcome at the day of judgment, *they shall be mine, in the day that I make up my jewels.* There is a *shall-be* for a happy eternity, and *so we shall be ever with the Lord.* What think ye of all these words and *shall-be's*? Is there any faith here, saying, *amen*, so let it be, so shall it be? What think ye of his *verily's*? We cannot go through these, to tell you how oft he hath confirmed his words with a *verily, verily, I say unto you*: Many a wrathful *verily* against his enemies, that think nothing of him; many a loving *verily* towards his people, that think much of him. O, do you esteem them all to be the truth, and that *verily* it is and shall be as he hath said? What think ye of his dying words, and when he said upon the cross, *It is finished*? What think ye of his living words, *I am he that was dead, and am alive, and behold I live for evermore*? O what think ye of his words? Cannot your heart say, *Lord, to whom shall I go? thou hast the words of eternal life*: O what think ye of him?

(6.) What think ye of his *works*? even his works of creation, what think ye of these? *For by him all things were made that were made, and without him was nothing made, Job. 1. 3.* O when you behold *the heavens, the work of his hands, the moon and the stars, which he hath ordained*, may you not say, *what is man, that thou art mindful of him, &c*? What think ye of his works of Providence? *For he upholds all things by the word of his power! Heb. 1. 3.* If you wonder how he can raise your dead bodies at the great day, and sever your dust from other dust; may you not as well wonder, how he every day raises up in your view innumerable stalks of corn out of the dust, and gives *to every grain of seed his own body*? as the Apostle argues, *1 Cor. 15. 35. &c.* How will he raise the believer's vile body out of the filthy dust, where it rots, and make *it like his own glorious body*? O fools that we are, and slow of heart to believe, how does he raise the beautiful lilies out of the dung? *Solomon, in all his glory, is not comparable to one of these*; and all the world cannot make one of them to rise, without his powerful providence. These miracles of providence are common every day in our view, and so we think nothing of them; but we might see the power of Christ in them. If you wonder how it was possible for Christ to turn the water into wine, or multiply a few loaves, and a few fishes, as to feed so many thousands; we needed not wonder so much, if we but tho't how his providence is doing that every year: The water falls from the clouds, and the vine, by his order, turns it into wine; and by the spawn of such fishes,

and the grain of such loaves, he is feeding millions every day. Wo's us, that we cannot think of him, and his works, as we ought! Above all, what think ye of his works of grace, and redeeming love? All his other works are as a drop of the bucket, in comparison of this ocean; for herein we may see him appear, in his own, and his Father's pomp and splendor, manifesting all the glorious perfections of God, even his infinite power, and wisdom, holiness, justice, mercy, truth, faithfulness, and all God's attributes. I might here mention his works of grace for us, and his works of grace in us; but it were endless to speak of the thousandth part. His work of grace for us lies in his bringing in everlasting righteousness, especially if we speak of his good works; surely it is a good work, that can fulfil the holy precepts of that good law which we have broken, and can answer the righteous threatening of the just law which we have incurred. Well, here is the doing and dying of the Son of God, for both these ends, that divine holiness may be vindicated, and Justice satisfied, in the way and manner of our salvation through him. The law of God is a perfect law, and exceeding broad; but here is a righteousness as broad as it can be, so as to magnify the law, and make it honourable: O what think ye of that good work? His work of grace in us is also much to be thought of; and that lies mainly, I think, in his imputing that perfect righteousness to us for our justification, and implanting another righteousness beside it for our sanctification, which he carries on to perfection. This internal work of grace may be begun with sighs and groans, advanced in battles and conflicts; but it will be completed in victory and glory. But in this short glance of his works, what think ye of them? May ye not say, as *Psal. III. 3. His work is honourable and glorious, and his righteousness endures for ever*: And when you notice his works, what think you of himself?

(7.) What think ye of his Gospel, and the terms of it? That Gospel, which we preach in his name, wherein his righteousness is revealed from faith to faith: If you think highly of him, you'll think highly of it, as the best news, and gladdest tidings that ever you heard; *How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of them, &c?* Some are ready to think the Gospel of grace, and salvation thro' Christ, is too good news to be true with respect to them, as if it were not to be supposed that God will bestow so great salvation so freely upon so great sinners; not considering, that God in the Gospel aims not at our glory chiefly, but at the declaration of his own glory, and the magnifying of his own free grace;

and

and that therefore we ought to take freely what he gives freely. It is a manifestation of free grace, sovereign grace, which is neither hindered by our evil, nor furthered by our good, *Rom.* 3. 24. and regards neither our worthiness to deserve it, nor our unworthiness to impede it, *Rom.* 9. 15. Hence *Luther* alledged, that mens minds were so occupied with fantastical imaginations of their own works, that the glad-tidings of the gospel will seem strange matters to them: Men will be astonish'd at the greatness of his grace, as it is, *Jer.* 33. 8, 9. Many think of the Gospel, as if it were a *new law*, wherein God stands upon some easier terms with us than in the covenant of works; thus confounding Law and Gospel, and making a hotch-potch of both. Indeed if we speak of law-terms, upon which our salvation stands, they are no easier than ever they were: A perfect righteousness is the only condition of salvation; and we not having that in ourselves, the Gospel offers it in Christ, and there is the ground of our eternal salvation: But if we speak of Gospel-terms, we need not say, you must come up to them; but rather, come down *Zaccheus*, for this day is salvation come to thy house: Salvation is come to you, and offered freely to you, *without money, and without price*; come down and take it. And indeed faith, which belongs to the order and method of God's applying the Gospel, is a coming down from all our legal hopes of salvation for something to be done by us, in order to our being obliged to another, even to Christ for all, *Isa.* 55. 1, 2. *Rev.* 22. 17. Come down from the sycamore-tree of your vain hopes, and get all freely; that is the Gospel: What think ye of it? This is indeed a hard saying to proud flesh and blood, which thinks rather they should go up, and do more for their justification and salvation, than come down, and be obliged to another to pay all their law-debt completely. He will do all for you, or nothing: And, O man, what think ye of him and his Gospel? But then,

(8.) What think ye of his service, and his wages? When a man is once bro't into the Gospel-terms, and understands them, then, and not till then, does he come up to the Gospel-rule; for faith works by love, and love is the fulfilling of the law as a rule, from thankfulness to him that hath delivered from the law as a covenant. If you think his service hard and uneasy, it seems you are not thinking much of Christ, but rather of the law which is a heavy yoke, that neither we nor our fathers were able to bear: But Christ's yoke is easy, and his burden light, *Mat.* 11. 29, 30. because in this service the man hath no law-debt to pay, for Christ

hath done that to his hand, but only a love-debt. *If you love me, keep my commandments*; and thus, *His commandments are not grievous*. Here grace is all and all, both of the service and wages. Grace says, *Up and be doing, man, in my strength; for the greatest work is done to your hand, and now my grace shall be sufficient for thee*. Grace says also, *Behold a crown of glory, a reward of grace awaiting you, after you have fought the good fight of faith; therefore have an eye to this recompence of reward*. Death is the proper wages of sin, and it is a just debt; but grace's wages is free: *The gift of God is eternal life, through Jesus Christ our Lord*; that is, there is here no promise of life upon our doing, but a promise of grace to do, and of glory to crown our doing, and of both grace and glory as the reward of Christ's doing all; and therefore, What think ye of him and his service?

(9.) What think ye of his livery? If you would answer this question, *What think ye of Christ*? I would ask, What wear ye of Christ? The raiment of his righteousness and the garment of his grace, so as to be *all glorious within* and without, like *the king's daughter*, will be precious to you. If you be clothed with the scarlet robe of his blood and righteousness, by which you are perfectly righteous before God, then to be sure you'll think it very indecent for you to be clothed with nasty apparel before men. If a poor maid be married to a rich king, and yet go abroad like a beggar in filthy rags, would not every body cry, shame on her, that having such a husband, should discredit him and herself? If you be married to Christ, and think much of your husband and his righteousness, surely you'll think it becoming to wear his livery, and not go abroad with foul mouths and filthy hands, like the rest of the world, to the dishonour of your Lord.

(10.) What think ye of his love, and the reason of it? Who can understand the height, and depth, and length of his love? It is without all dimension. And why does he love any of the lost posterity of *Adam*? He tells us the reason, *Deut. 7. 7, 8. He loved you, because he loved you*. Do you think he loves you for your beauty, O black and ugly sinner? Nay, he urges his love and kindness upon you in the Gospel freely, not for your own beauty's sake, but for his own name's sake: And his grace, love and good-will, as revealed in the Gospel, is to be believed with Application to yourself, for no other reason but because it is his will and pleasure. His love must make you beautiful, but cannot find you so. And if you cannot believe his grace and good-will to you, because you have ~~no~~ beauty, you're but rejecting the reason

of his love, despising the freedom of his grace, and standing upon the terms of the Old Covenant of works, slighting the grace of the New Covenant: This is such a natural disease to mankind, that even believers in Christ, when they are helped to perform duty with any lively frame, are ready to say with *Leah*, *Jacob's* wife, when she bro't forth several children to him, *Now my husband will love me, because of my fruitfulness*; so says the believer, when he is helped to bring forth fruit unto God, and finds his spirit revived in duty, his soul strengthened, his heart enlarged, and a great deal of comfort there, *O now, says he, my husband will love me, because of my fruitfulness*: But what comes of it? The person having such a legal set, the Lord, to correct it, takes away all his fruitfulness out of his view, in a manner, and leaves him barren: *O, says the believer then, where is my former sweet hearing, and sweet praying and praising, and sweet meditation?* Why, the Lord hath cut off these, that he may cut off your legal pride of being loved for your beauty and fruitfulness, and that you may return to your first husband, for then was it better with you than now. You must begin, believer, where you began at first, and think of his loving you merely because he loves you. They that build their conjugal comfort only, or mainly, upon their righteousness of sanctification, and so secretly hanker after the law, will find their souls very unsettled, even up and down with their changeable frame. But again, I might ask, What think ye of his loveliness? *O, is he white and ruddy in your view?* *O see how the spouse describes him, Song 5. 10. &c. in the beauty of his head, his locks, his eyes, and all and every part of him; his belly or bowels of mercy: His mouth is most sweet, says she. O the words, the smiles, the kisses of his mouth, his kind embraces!* I have read of one *Agatho*, that was a man so holy, that with a kiss he cured one of the leprosy; whether that be true or false, yet what I intend by telling it, is true, That such is the vertue of Christ, that a kiss of his mouth, a smile of his countenance, will cure the soul of spiritual leprosy; yea, a word of his mouth will do it. *Now are you clean thro' the word that I have spoken, John 15. 3.* Again, What think you of his favour and his blessing? Surely if you esteem him duly, you will think *his favour is life, and his loving-kindness better than life, and that it is his blessing only that makes rich.* Especially, what think ye of these blessings and benefits that cannot be enjoyed by feeling, but by faith, nor by sight of sense, but by the sight of faith, *We walk by faith, and not by sight, says the Apostle.* But it is the fault even of believers, that they can hard-

ly believe they have any more than they feel; and hence, when they are in the darkness of desertion, they think they have nothing, they have lost his favour, because they do not feel it; they have lost his righteousness, because they do not feel it: But remember, that when *Asaph* said, *Hath the Lord forgotten to be gracious? Hath he in anger shut up his tender mercy?* He added, *This was my infirmity.* You know, in a house where it is dark, all things are there that were before, though you see them not; so it is with you, believer, though you be in darkness, yet all abides: Do you think all is gone, because you cannot see it? Well, you never walk by faith, but by feeling; nay, *He that walks in darkness and hath no light, let him trust in the name of the Lord, and stay himself upon his God.* The name of the Lord still abides, his God remains, the object of faith continues as much as ever, and *the just shall live by faith.* Will you not believe the sun is in the firmament where it was, because a cloud hath come and intercepted the light of its beams? *Why,* says one, *but my misery is, when I'm in the dark night, I fear it was all but delusion that ever I met with, and that there was nothing real or saving in it.* This I find is a common thought among serious souls; but all that I shall say to it, is by enlarging the former similitude: Ask a man when it is dark night, How do you know that ever you saw the natural sun? It may be you was but dreaming, and deluding yourself; it was nothing but a strong Imagination. *Why,* says the man, I am sure I saw it, because my eyes were dazzled with the light of it, and I was warmed with the heat of it, and I saw to work by it, and by the light of it I saw every thing about me. So may you say, believer; when a dark night of desertion or temptation comes on, the tempter suggests, *It may be all was but a delusion.* *Why,* man, were not your eyes enlightened, was not your heart warmed, did you not see to work, and went on in your work joyfully, *the joy of the Lord being your strength;* and did you not see every thing about you? You saw God in his glory, you saw sin in its vileness, you saw holiness in its beauty, you saw the world in its vanity, you saw the creature in its emptiness, Christ in his fullness, you saw your self in your loathsomeness; but now, when the light is withdrawn, *What think ye of Christ?* Is there no sun, because it is set to your view? Do you think it never shone upon you, because it is not now shining? What think ye of an absent Christ? Do you think nothing of him, because he is absent? Surely, believer, that is not thought like a believer. Sense is many times denied you, that you may learn to believe more than

than you do. But, say you, when he is not present with me I cannot believe : I shall tell you my mind here, there is a powerful presence necessary to believing ; but there is a sensible presence, that is not necessary to it, but rather usually comes in immediately after faith. Now that powerful presence of God that is necessary to believing, does open up the object of faith, and draw out the soul to the embraces thereof. Hence, when a man begins to think upon the proper object of faith, namely, Christ's righteousness, God's promise, the truth of God, the blood of Christ ; power is sometimes insensibly exerted, not by any outward open violence upon the man, but by an inward, secret, and sweet enchantment, as it were : Ere ever he is aware, and before ever he knows that it is divine power that is doing the work, he finds the object of faith, that he is thinking upon, making room for itself in his heart, and drawing out his soul as it were insensibly to it ; and thereupon comes in sensible presence after that, *Eph. 1. 13. After ye believe, ye were sealed.*

Now, if you say you cannot believe without this powerful presence, that is true ; divine power must be exerted to every act of faith : but then this power does ordinarily put forth itself insensibly and unawares, while we are thinking on or viewing the object of faith, *Pf. 39. 3. While I was musing, the fire burned.* The Spirit of God clears the object of faith, that being viewed and applied, the heart is set on fire with it ; there is his powerful presence ushering in the sensible presence. But if you say, you cannot believe till you have his sensible presence ; that is to make sense the foundation of your faith, and not the Word of God, or the Christ of God : Therefore, in order to believe, let not your question be first, What find you in your self ? but rather, *What think ye of Christ ?* You will find none of the sweet effects of faith, till you think on Christ the object of it. Again, What think ye of his invisible glories ? *Faith is the evidence of Things not seen.* Faith sees not the things that are seen and felt ; sensible enjoyments, for example, are not the object of faith, but sense : But faith sees the things that can neither be seen nor felt ; it believes contrary to sense, yea, things incredible to human reason, considering only the power of God that speaks in the Word, as you see in the faith of *Abraham.* The greatest glory of Christ is invisible and incredible to nature ; therefore we do not think much of him, if our faith does not terminate on things not seen. Again, What think ye of his tabernacles and ordinances ? Surely, if you think much of Christ, his tabernacles will be amiable to you. The sli^{ghter}

of his ordinances is a slighter of Christ, a slighter of prayer is a slighter of Christ, a slighter of the word is a slighter of Christ : *He that despiseth you, despises me, &c.* What think ye of his cause and interest, such as the much-forgotten reformation-work in *Scotland*, which our fore-fathers established by solemn national covenants ? If, the more it is forgotten among ministers and people, the more nearly it lies to your heart, and the more you long for its reviving, it were an evidence that you think something of Christ, when others think little of him. But, O, if the generation tho't more of Christ, there would be more zeal for his interest, honour, and public reformation-work ! And perhaps the confusions of our day, the heavy bondage we are complaining of thro' the land, will never cease to grow to a height of terrible wrath, till we be bro't to a sense of our defection, & a humble confession & reformation. Further, What think you of his cross, and of his crown ? Is his cross your crown ? Surely they think much of Christ, that can say with *Paul*, *God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of the Lord Jesus Christ.* *Moses* tho't his cross better than a crown, esteeming the reproach of Christ greater riches than all the treasures of *Egypt*. They that think much of Christ, must resolve upon it, that the world will not think much of them, but that they will be crossed, reproached, and nicknamed ; but, if Christ was nicknamed, for us, and endured the contradiction of sinners against himself, we may well bear a reproach for him, especially when he hath said, *If ye be reproached for the name of Christ, happy are ye ; for the spirit of glory and of God resteth on you : On their part he is evil spoken of, but on your part he is glorified ;* and considering that his cross makes way for his crown, and in the mean time his sweetness swallows up all the bitterness thereof. What think ye of his friends and his foes ? If you think highly of him, surely his friends and followers will be esteemed as *the excellent ones of the earth*, and his foes will be disesteemed by you. What think ye of his enemies ? Tho' they were appearing in never so much worldly pomp, you'll think very little of them, if ye know them to be his enemies. *O my soul, come not thou into their secret ; to their assembly, mine honour, be thou not united.* What think ye of his enemies within you ? When you find these like thorns in the flesh, like splinters run into the flesh, does it not make you, with *Paul*, to beseech the Lord thrice, yea, to pray thrice and thrice, and a hundred times thrice, with sighs and groans, to be freed from them ? What think ye of his enemies about you ? I mean, the world and the lusts thereof, *the lusts of the flesh, the lusts*

lusts of the eye, and the pride of life. I have read a pretty story, which I reckon useful no other way than for the moral of it, how an angel and an hermit should have been travelling together: *When first they went by a dead carcase the hermit stopt his nose, and the angel smiled; and, after that, they went by a wanton strumpet proudly dressed, at which the hermit smiled, and the angel stopt his nose.* The moral shews us, that, *in the sight of God and angels, no carrion is so noisome as pride is.* But the more highly that any think of Christ, surely the more humble they are, and pride will accordingly be hid from their eyes. Again, What think ye of the world's thoughts of Christ? If you think highly of him, you'll wonder why the world think so little of him. O strange, that all the world are not taken up with him! What think ye of your own tho'ts of him? Surely, if you think duly of him, you'll think you have but very poor thoughts of him, you'll think that you cannot think enough of him. These are some probatory questions, by which you may take your own heart to task before the Lord.

But I cannot stand to enlarge on these things; and I must own the thousandth part is not said that might be spoken from this text: for as the whole Scripture does testify of Christ, either directly or indirectly, so I might go thro' all the Scripture, and ask, *what ye think of Christ*, in a suitableness to what is said of him, in this or that place of Scripture?

This doctrine might again be applied by way of lamentation over all *Christ-despisers*, who either stand upon a *legal bottom*, trusting in themselves, and their own righteousness; or who slight Christ and his ordinances, not loving *the place where his honour dwells*; who delay and postpone their *closing with him*, giving away the prime and virginity of their affections to the world, prostituting their precious souls to their lusts, and the ignoble things of time; who sit down satisfied and content without Christ, never miss him, nor *feel a want of him, nor seek after union and communion with him.* O whence is it, that you despise Christ at this rate! Alas, it is thro' ignorance and unbelief, that you *see no form or comeliness in Christ, wherefore he should be desired*; and the *God of this world hath blinded your minds who believe not, lest the light of the glorious Gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them.* Do you consider what a miserable case you are in, while you despise and think so little of Christ? You are in imminent danger of temporal judgments; for God, in his holy providence, may resent the injuries done to his Son, he may leave

leave your house desolate. You are exposed to spiritual judgments, such as that, *Iſai.* 6. 10. and to eternal wrath, even everlasting destruction from his presence; *He that believes not, shall be damned.*

Now let me offer a *word of exhortation.* O seek the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of Christ may be sent, that beholding his glory, your tho'ts concerning Christ, may be changed; and you may be bro't to esteem him, and to go home with the rose of *Sharon* in your bosom, Christ in your heart. O will you tell me, do you think it worth your while to take Christ, and embrace him before you go? If you say you cannot believe, you cannot repent, you cannot mourn for sin, you cannot pray, you cannot obey; and so, because you have no grace, no strength to do any thing, you are discouraged: I must tell you, sinner, when you conceive religion to be some great difficulty above your power, and thereupon are discouraged and damped, you do not think of Christ as you ought, but of your self forsooth, as if you were the fountain from whence these good things should flow. The law may and does discourage sinners, yea, curses every Christless sinner unto hell; but the Gospel offers no discouragement to sinners, but all encouragement. Perhaps you'll find us that are ministers sometimes going off from our most Gospel-texts that we can chuse; and when we explain faith, we will tell you how many things it includes, such as the forsaking of all sin, and the performing of all duty, and studying universal holiness: But whatever be the fruits of faith, which the Lord makes to grow out of his grace, yet faith itself is a great mystery; and whatever you hear us say, that leads you off from this question, *What think ye of Christ?* suspect it. I'll tell you in the Lord's name, That to believe, imports no more than to take Christ for all; it is to think you have nothing, and can do nothing, but that he hath all, and can do all, and therefore you'll take him for all. You think you cannot believe: Well said, but *what think ye of Christ?* If you think to bring faith out of your own bowels, you think unworthily of Christ, who is the author of faith, and of his Father, who is the giver of it. You think you cannot repent: True, but *what think ye of Christ?* If you think to bring repentance out of yourselves, you think unworthily of him who is exalted, by the right hand of God, to give repentance. You think you cannot do this, or that duty you are called to; but *what think ye of Christ?* if you sit poring on your self, and your own abilities, never a good turn will you do: Nay, you think unworthily of Christ, who hath said,

Without

Without me ye can do nothing, but by me strengthening you, ye can do all things. You are discouraged, because you think you have not this thing in yourself, or that thing in yourself: But that is unbelief, man; for faith lies in thinking, what am I in Christ, *Isai. 45. 24. Surely shall one say* (and they shall not only say it with their mouth verbally, but think it in their heart believingly) *in the Lord have I righteousness and strength*: And because, by the mouth of two or three witnesses every word is confirmed, there are three *In the Lords*, in that one chapter, *ver. 17. Israel shall be saved in the Lord, with an everlasting salvation; ver. last. In the Lord shall all the seed of Israel be justified, and shall glory*; and in this 24th *ver. In the Lord have I righteousness and strength*. And if you be once brought to this believing thought; in the Lord have I righteousness, in the Lord I have strength, in the Lord I have Salvation, in the Lord I have all, then you'll find your work easy, and all going right. Now, you that cannot be brought to think much of Christ, O pray God, if perhaps the thoughts of your heart may be forgiven you; and whereas you think nothing of him now, O consider what you will think of him in a day of challenges, when conscience awakens; in a day of desolation, *Isai. 10. in the day of death, in the day of judgment*. What will you think of him, when you see him mounting the tribunal, and when pronouncing the fearful sentence, *Depart from me, ye cursed*? Surely you must have dreadful thoughts of him then, if you cannot be brought to think highly of him now; now, when he is not come to destroy mens lives, but to save. But you, believer, that now think highly of him, whatever great thoughts you have of Christ now, yet what will you think of him in that day, when he who is your life shall appear, and ye shall appear with him in glory? O, what will ye think of him, when he pronounces the sentence of absolution, *Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you*? O, what will ye think of his palace, his attendants, his throne, crown and glory?

I would offer an advice to you that think much of Christ, and have a high esteem of him. *First*, That you would evidence your esteem of him; and that, *First*, By the degrees of it, so as to esteem him above all things else, above all your relations, *Mat. 10. 37. He that loveth father or mother more than me is not worthy of me*. Our love to them must be hatred, when it comes to compete with Christ. *If any man come after me, and hate not father and mother, he is not worthy of me*. Above all worldly advantages, yea, above life, *Rev. 21. 11. They loved not their lives to the death; their*

their pangs of love were stronger than the pangs of death. *Secondly*, By the *effects* of it, such as, (1.) Desire of converse: If you think much of Christ, you'll desire his company in all ordinances; you'll seek him in the temple, &c. (2.) Entertaining no rival, but saying, *What have I to do any more with idols?* Giving up all other lovers. (3.) Sympathy, grieving at those things that are grievous to him. (4.) Preserving his memory, living upon him: Like the woman that drank the powder of her dead husband's body, mingled with her daily drink: so should ye, by faith, daily eat the flesh, and drink the blood of the Son of God. A *Second* advice is, That you would do all that you can, to make others think as much of him as you do; and that, (1.) By commending him, and telling others of his beauty, that they may admire him. See the practice of the spouse for this, *Song 5.* and what influence it had upon the daughters of *Jerusalem*, their beginning to think much of him, and seek after him also, *Song 6. 1.* O then commend him to your families, your children, and your neighbours. (2.) By adorning his Gospel, and walking worthy of him, and wearing his livery. It is a master's honour and credit to have a good servant, and well arrayed; they think much of the master that hath such a servant: And how does it proclaim the praises of Christ, when they that profess him are eminent for piety? *1 Pet. 2. 9.* In a Word, *Let your light so shine before men, that others seeing your good works, may glorify God,* and think much of Christ. O let your hearts be still thinking of him, your life praising, and your tongue speaking of him. Here is a fountain for spiritual discourse: If you have opportunity of conversing with any concerning the great solemnity you have been witnesses to here; or if any ask you, Where was such or such a minister's text? here is a fair Occasion for spiritual converse; for you cannot in a manner tell them this text, without asking them a question, *What think ye of Christ?*

CHRIST

CHRIST in the Believer's Arms :

In a SERMON preached at Strathmiglo, May 10. 1724.

By the Reverend Mr. EBENEZER ERSKINE.

To the R E A D E R.

CANDID READER,

THE following discourse is one of those sermons which were charged with heterodoxy by Mr. A.A. before the last session of the General Assembly, May 1725. Whether the charge was just or injurious, I submit to the judgment of every impartial reader, who resolves, like the noble Bereans, not to swallow down doctrines he reads or hears, by a Popish implicit faith, but to search the scriptures, that he may know whether they will abide the trial of that bar. If the doctrines here advanced will not stand before the law and the testimony, let them perish, as having no truth in them; but if they be agreeable to, and founded upon, the oracles of the great God, he who makes no difficulty to baptize them the doctrine of devils, would do well to consider, whether he falls under that heavy charge of changing the truth of God into a lie, Rom. i. or of putting light for darkness, and darkness for light, Isaiah v.

I have observed it to be the practice of some, to raise a mighty hue and cry against certain men, as erroneous new schemers, maintaining principles inconsistent with the Scriptures, and our approved standards of doctrine, without ever condescending upon one unsound position which they hold. I have observed others frame principles or errors out of their own disturbed fancy, and then fall to the confutation of them, as if these were the principles of the men they level against, while they only palm their own fictions upon them, and thus beat a man of straw, the creatures of their own imagination. I humbly think, that when errors are broached in a church, he that would act a fair and faithful part in the defence of truth, ought first to make it evident, beyond contradiction, that such errors are vented, and by whom, or in what books, and then to refute them solidly from Scripture and reason. This, I apprehend, is the most habile way, both of gaining them that have gone aside from the truth, and of guarding others against the infection of their principles; but to make a pother and noise of error, without such a particular condescension and confutation, is but like the trumpeter giving an uncertain sound; in which case, who shall prepare himself to battle?

I bless the Lord, I found his countenance in delivering the following discourse. I know he sealed it upon the hearts of some, who, I am persuaded in charity, know the voice of the great Shepherd. If he shall also accompany it with the light and power of his Spirit in the reading, it will more than compensate all my pains and labour.

I am,

thy soul's friend and well wisher,

Dec. 13. 1725.

E. E.

LUKE ii. 28.

Then took he him up in his Arms, and blessed God.

IN the preceding context, from verse 25. and downward, we have the following particulars recorded concerning Simeon, of whom my text speaks. First, We have an account of his character, ver.

ver. 25. *He was a just and devout man*, that is, one that made conscience of the duties of the *first* and *second* table of the law, just towards man, and devout towards God. *Note*, That there are no barren branches in Christ the true vine : *They that have believed in him, will be careful to maintain good works, and will have a respect to all his commandments.* Another part of Simeon's character is, That he *waited for the consolation of Israel* ; that is, for *Christ the promised Messiah*, who is, has been, and will be the matter and ground of consolation to all believers, in all ages and periods of time ; *And blessed are all they that wait for him, for they shall not be confounded.* Another part of his character is, *That the Holy Ghost was upon him* ; and that *both as a Spirit of prophecy, and a Spirit of holiness.* It is the privilege of all true believers, *That they have the spirit of glory & of God resting upon them*, 1 Pet. 4. 14. *Secondly*, We have here a promise made to Simeon, ver. 26 *And it was revealed to him by the Holy Ghost, that he should not see death before he had seen the Lord's Christ.* In this promise, Simeon saw him by the eye of faith, before he saw him by the eye of his body. *Note*, That faith's views of Christ in the promise, makes way for the sensible manifestations of him here, and the immediate enjoyment of him hereafter, Eph. 1. 13. *After that ye believed, ye were sealed.* *Thirdly*, We have the time *when*, and the place where Simeon had this promise actually accomplished unto him, ver. 27. it was in the *temple*, when the parents bro't *the child Jesus, to do unto him after the custom of the law.* *Note*, *They who would have a meeting with Christ, must wait upon him in his temple, and ordinances of his appointment* ; for it is there that *every one doth speak of his glory.* *Fourthly*, In the words of my Text, we have Simeon's welcome and kindly reception he gave to the *Messiah*, when he met him in the temple, *Then he took him up in his arms, and blessed God.*

Where notice, *First*, Simeon's privilege, *He took him up in his arms*, viz. in the arms of his body ; but at the same time, he embraced him also in the arms of faith, and took him up as the salvation of God ; otherwise he could never have blessed God for him, as the promised *Messiah, a light to enlighten the Gentiles, and the glory of his people Israel.* I am ready to believe, that there were many who got Christ in their arms, when he was an infant, who never had been formed in their hearts ; but Simeon got him, both in the arms of his *body* and *soul* at once. Some may be ready to think, O what a happy man was Simeon, and what a sweet *arms-full* had he, when he had the *Great Messiah, Immanuel, God-Man*, in his bodily arms ! 'Tis true indeed, this was a privilege ; but yet his

greatest

greatest privilege was, That he had him clasped in his arms of faith ; and though now his body be out of our reach, yet still there is access to embrace him in a way of believing : And this is what every true believer hath the experience of, either in less or more. *Secondly*, In the words we have *Simeon's* gratitude for this privilege : *He blessed God*. He is in a praising frame, being *filled with joy and peace in believing* ; and his heart is so big with praise, that he wishes immediately to be gone to the land of praise, where he might get a well-tuned harp put into his hand, and join with the *hallelujahs* of the redeemed above ; *Now*, says he, *lettest thou thy servant depart in peace*. So much for explication of the words.

Before I proceed to the doctrine I intend to insist upon, we may observe, from the *text* and *context*, *First*, That God's word of promise to his people is *sure*, and never fails of accomplishment. *Simeon* here had got a promise from the Lord, *That he should not die, until he had seen the Lord's Christ* ; and accordingly my text gives an account of its accomplishment. O Sirs, venture on God's word of promise, and look on it as the best security, for *faithful is he that has promised* ; his naked word is as good as payment ; he never brake his word to man ; yea, it is impossible for him to lie. *Secondly*, That believers, will find God not only as good, but better than his word, when he comes, in his own time, to make out his promise to them. *Simeon* had a promise, That he should only see the *Messiah* before he died ; but we find that he gets more than a bare sight of him, for he gets him in his arms and heart at once. *Thirdly*, That a true believer loves Christ so well, that he would put him in his very heart. *Simeon* here takes Christ in his arms, and lays him in his bosom, as near his heart as he could bring him : So the spouse, *Song* 1. 13. *My beloved is to me as a bundle of myrrh, he shall lie all night between my breasts*. O ! the mutual endearments betwixt Christ and believers ; he carries them as lambs in his bosom, and they carry the Lamb of God in their bosom, *Isa.* 40. 11. *Fourthly*, That faith's embraces of Christ are so sweet, that they render the prospect of death not only easy, but desirable to the believer. *Simeon* here, when he gets Christ in his arms, is content that the union betwixt the soul and body should be dissolved. But passing all these, the Doctrine I design to speak to at this time, is this :

DOCTRINE. That *faith's embraces of Christ fills the mouth with praise*. *Simeon* took him in his arms, and blessed God, whereas I told you, it was the arm of faith clasped about Christ, that did fill him with praise and gratitude, taking him up as the Lord's *Messiah*.

IN prosecuting this doctrine, I shall, thro' divine assistance,
 I. Speak a little concerning that arm of faith which embraces
 Christ. II. Notice some of these songs of praise, which readily
 fills the believer's heart and mouth, when he gets Christ in his
 arms. III. Whence is it, that faith's embraces of Christ do thus
 fill the heart and mouth with praise. IV. Apply the whole.

As to the *First*, viz. Concerning that arm of faith which
 embraces Christ, I would shew, (1.) What it is. (2.) What
 sort of an arm it is. (3.) How it embraces Christ.

For the *first*, I have not time, at present, to open up the nature
 of faith at any length; all I shall do, is only in a few particulars to
 shew what it supposes and implies. *1st*, Then it plainly supposes,
 That there is a *gift or grant of Christ made to sinners, in the free offer
 and call of the Gospel*. Receiving necessarily supposes a giving; and
 to take what is not given, is but theft, robbery, or vicious intro-
 mission, *Joh. 6. 32*. Saith Christ there to a promiscuous multitude,
 the greatest part of whom were unbelievers, as is evident from
 the sequel of the chapter, *My Father giveth you the true bread which
 is from heaven*; where 'tis plain, That giving & offering are much
 the same thing, with this difference only, That the gift or grant
 of Christ in the word to sinners, is the ground upon which the of-
 fer is made. We read, *That God hath given the earth to the sons of
 men*; that is, he made a grant of it unto them, to be used and pos-
 sessed by them; and, by virtue of this grant, before the earth
 came to be fully peopled, when a man came to a piece of land,
 and set his foot upon it, he might warrantably use it as his own
 property and possession; and the foundation of this was, that
 God had given or granted the earth to the sons of men. In like
 manner, God had gifted or granted his only-begotten Son, *Joh. 3.
 16*. For what end? *That whosoever believeth in him, or takes
 possession of him by faith, may not perish, but have everlasting life*.
 'Tis true indeed, the eternal destination, the purchase and appli-
 cation of redemption, is *peculiar* only to the *elect*; but the *reve-
 lation, gift and offer* is common to all the hearers of the Gospel,
 insomuch, as the great Mr. *Rutherford* expresses it, the *reprobate*
 have as fair a *revealed warrant* to believe, as the *elect* have. Every
 man has an offer of Christ bro't to his door who lives within
 the compass of the joyful sound; and this offer comes as close
 home to him, as if he were pointed out by name: So that none
 have reason to say, The call and offer is not to me, I am not war-
 ranted to embrace Christ; *for it is to you, O men, that we call,
 and our voice is to the sons of men*, *Prov. 8. 4*. We have God's
 commission to preach this Gospel, and to make offer of this Christ

to every creature sprung of Adam, Mark 16. 15. and the event of the publication of *this Gospel* among sinners follows in the next words, *He that believeth this Gospel, shall be saved; he that believeth not, shall be damned.* No man ever died, or shall die under the drop of the Gospel, for want of a full warrant to embrace a Saviour. No, no, Sirs, your death and blood will be upon your own heads; your unbelief will be the great Ground of your condemnation: God will upbraid you at the great day with this, That you had Christ in your offer, and would not embrace him: *I called, but ye refused; I stretched out my hand, but no man regarded; therefore will I laugh at your calamity, and mock when your fear cometh,* Prov. 1. 24, 26. 2dly, This embracing of Christ supposes the knowledge of Christ; for a man, when he believes, doth not embrace a blind bargain. Now, there is a *twofold knowledge* that faith necessarily supposes, viz. a knowledge of ourselves, and a knowledge of Christ. (1.) I say, it supposes the knowledge of ourselves, or a conviction and discovery of that sin and misery, thralldom and bondage, we are reduced unto, by the breach of the first covenant. *The law must be our school-master, to bring us to Christ;* without a discovery of sin and misery by the law, in less or more, the sinner will never flee to him, *who is the end of the law for righteousness.* The man, in this case, is just like a mariner at sea, sailing upon a broken and shattered bottom, not far from a great rock; so long as he apprehends his vessel to be good enough, or sufficient to carry him to land, he will still cleave to it, refusing to throw himself upon the rock for safety; but when the wind and waves beat upon the ship, and break her in pieces, then, and never till then, will he cast himself upon the rock: So is it here, while the sinner apprehends he can do well enough upon the broken bottom of a covenant of works, his own doings and good meanings, he will never betake himself to Christ the rock of ages; but when a *hail-storm sweeps down the refuge of lies*, and lets him see, that if he stay on this bottom of the law, he must inevitably sink into the bottom of hell; then, and never till then, doth the man cry with the Goaler, *Men and brethren, what shall I do to be saved?* The same we see in Paul, Rom. 7. 9. *I was alive without the law once, but when the commandment came, sin revived, and I died.* And Gal. 2. 19. *I through the law am dead to the law, that I might live unto God.* Thus, I say, embracing of Christ necessarily supposeth the knowledge and conviction of our lost condition by the law or covenant of works. (2.) It supposeth or implieth a *knowledge of Christ, as the blessed remedy of God's providing*; and there is so much of this goes into the very nature of faith, that we find it frequent-

ly called by the name of *knowledge*, *Iſa.* 53. 10. *John* 17. 3. and this knowledge of Christ is not a bare *ſpeculative knowledge* of him, attained by external revelation, or common illumination, for there are many learned unbelievers; but it is an internal ſaving knowledge of him, which comes by the Spirit of wiſdom and revelation, accompanying the external discoveries of him in the Gospel, which goes into the nature of true faith; God, who commanded light to ſhine out of darkneſs, muſt ſhine into the heart, giving the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jeſus Chriſt, 2 Cor. 4. 6. He, as it were, ſtrikes out a window in the man's breaſt, which before was like a dungeon of helliſh darkneſs, and makes a beam of ſaving, humbling, and captivating light to ſhine into it; and thus the man is *changed from darkneſs into a marvellous light*: And this light is called, *The light of life*, becauſe with it, and by it, a new principle of life is implanted in the ſoul, Eph. 2. 1. *You hath he quickened, who were dead in treſpaſſes and ſins.* (3.) This embracing of Chriſt bears in it the ſoul's firm and ſteady aſſent unto the revelation of the Gospel concerning Chriſt; ſo that the man cannot but join iſſue with *Paul*, 1 Tim. 1. 15. *It is a faithful ſaying, That Chriſt came to ſave ſinners.* Now, this aſſent of the ſoul to the Gospel-revelation, is not a bare hiſtorical aſſent, which leans only to the teſtimony of man, for thus reprobates may and do believe; but it is ſuch an aſſent, as is bottomed upon the teſtimony of God, or his record concerning Chriſt, in the Gospel; hence it is called, *A believing the record of God, a ſetting to the ſeal that God is true.* Faith that is of a ſaving nature, will not venture upon any thing leſs than the credit & authority of God himſelf; THUS SAITH THE LORD; is the ground and reaſon of the ſoul's aſſent: And this is a firmer bottom than heaven and earth, *For the faſhion of this world paſſeth away, but the word of the Lord endureth for ever; faithfulness being the girdle of his loins, and truth the girdle of his reins*; ſo that he will aſſoon ceaſe to be God, as ceaſe to make good his word, which is ratified by his oath; *theſe being the two immutable things, wherein it is impoſſible for God to lie.* (4.) Hereupon follows the *receiving, embracing, or applying* act of faith. Chriſt being known in the light of the word and ſpirit, and the truth of the revelation concerning him aſſented to; the ſoul goes a degree further, and, as it were, takes him home into its arms and boſom, as a remedy every way ſuited unto the ſoul's maſady and miſery. This embracing and appropriating act of faith is juſt as it were the ſoul's eccho unto the call and offer of the Gospel. I offer him for thy *ſaviour*, faith God; and I embrace him as *my ſaviour*, faith faith: I offer him for *wiſdom*, to thee who art a fool, ſays God; and

I embrace him for my wisdom, says *faith*: I offer him for thy righteousness and justification, who art a condemned sinner, says *God*; and I embrace him as the *Lord my righteousness*, says *faith*: I offer him for thy sanctification, who art a polluted filthy sinner, says *God*; and I embrace him for my sanctification says *faith*: I offer him for thy redemption, who art a lawful captive, says *God*; and I embrace him for my redemption, and my all, says *faith*. Thus, I say, the soul echoes to the voice of *God* in the Gospel, when it believes, much like that, *Zech. 13.* and last, *I will say, it is my people*; and they shall say, *the Lord he is our God*: And this is what we call the assurance of faith, or an appropriating persuasion, whereby the soul, as it were, takes seizin and infeoffment upon *Christ*, and all the blessings of his purchase, as its own, upon the ground of the Gospel-offer and Promise. What lay before in common, to all in the offer, the soul brings home to itself in particular; and, just like *Simeon*, takes *Christ* in its arms and bosom, saying with *Thomas*, *My Lord, and my God*. I do not say, that the first language of faith is, *That Christ died for me, or I was elected from eternity*; no, but the language of faith is, *God offers a slain and crucified saviour to me, and I take the slain Christ for my saviour*; and in my taking or embracing of him, as offered, I have ground to conclude, that I was elected, and that he died for me in particular, and not before. I shall only add, that this appropriating act doth inseparably attend the knowledge and assent beforementioned; and that they are all jointly comprized in the general nature of saving faith; which I take up as an act of the whole soul, without restricting it to any one faculty, or distinction as to priority or posterity of time.

Now this saving faith, which I have been describing in its essential acts, is variously expressed in the sacred oracles of the Scripture of truth; from which fountain alone, our notions of it are to be drawn: *To the law and testimony, if they speak not according to this word, it is because there is no truth in them*, *Isa. 8. 20.* 1st, Then it is called a receiving of *Christ*, *John 1. 12.* *To as many as received him, &c. Col. 2. 6.* *As ye have received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk ye in him*. This expression of faith leads us to conceive of *Christ*, under the notion of a gift freely offered and presented to us in the Gospel, and bears an appropriation in the very nature of it; for, where a man receives a gift, he takes it as his own, and it becomes his in possession. 2^{dly}, It is sometimes expressed by a resting or rolling ourselves on the Lord, *Psal. 37. 5.* *Commit thy way*, or as it reads in the margin, *Roll thy way on the Lord*; and *ver. 7.* *Rest in the Lord, and wait patiently for him*. Which expression may either allude unto a poor weary man, who is like to

sink under a load, his legs not able to bear him; he leans or rests himself upon a strong rock, which he is confident will not sink underneath. Faith, in its justifying act, it is *not a working*, but a *resting grace*; O! says the poor soul, I am like to sink into the depths of hell, under the weight of *mine iniquities, which have gone over my head, as a burden too heavy for me to bear*: But I lay my help where God has laid it; O! this is my rest. Hence he that believes is said to enter into his rest. Or this resting of the soul on Christ, may allude to one's resting upon a bond, or good security granted to him by a sponable person: He takes it as security to himself, and rests on the fidelity of him that grants it: So, in believing, we rest upon the veracity of a promising God in Christ, as a sufficient security for the blessing promised. 3dly, 'Tis called a *flying for refuge to the hope set before us*, Heb. 6. 18. In which, there is an allusion to the man-slayer under the law, who fled from the avenger of blood: The poor pursued man, he was not to turn aside to any of the cities of *Israel*; he was not to fly to the temple, and to offer sacrifice; but he was to fly streight to the city of refuge. So in believing, the soul is never to rest in any thing on this side of Christ, *who is a hiding-place from the wind, and a covert from the tempest*; the hail shall sweep away every other refuge: But as the man-slayer, when once within the gates of the city of refuge, was in such safety, that he could freely speak with the avenger of blood, without any manner of danger; so the soul that is by faith got under the covert of the blood and righteousness of Christ, is in such absolute safety, that it dare speak to the law, and all its pursuers, saying with the Apostle, *Rom. 8. 33. Who shall lay any thing to the charge of God's elect? it is God that justifieth; who is he that condemneth? it is Christ that died, &c.* 4thly, It is call'd, *A submitting to the righteousness of God*, *Rom. 10. 3.* A very strange expression! Shall it be tho't submission for a condemned criminal to accept of pardon from his prince? or for a person that is stark-naked, to accept of a garment? The expression plainly points out the arrogant pride of the heart of man; we are, as it were, mounted upon an imaginary throne of our own righteousness by the law, thinking, with *Laodicea*, that we are rich, and stand in need of nothing, disdainng to be obliged to another for righteousness: But now, when a man believes, all these towering imaginations are levelled, he is emptied of himself, and made to *count all things but loss and dung, that he may be found in Christ, not having his own righteousness, but the righteousness that is of God by faith*, Phil. 3. 8, 9. The language of the soul submitting to the righteousness of God, is that of the church, *Isai.*

45. 2, 4. Surely shall one say, in the Lord have I righteousness and strength. 5thly, 'Tis called, *a taking hold of God's covenant*, *Isai. 56. 4.* The covenant of grace, as it lies in the external dispensation of the Gospel, is like a rope cast into a company of drowning men; God comes by his ministers, crying to sinking sinners, who are going down to the bottomless gulf of his wrath, *Take hold of my covenant*, and of him whom I have given for a covenant to the people, and I will deliver you from going down to the pit. Now, when a man believes, he, as it were, takes hold of this rope of salvation, this covenant of grace and promise; and like *Jeremiah*, when the cords were let down to the pit by *Ebedmelech*, puts them under his arm-holes, and lays his weight upon them. The poor soul, in this case, says with *David*, speaking of the covenant of grace, *This is all my salvation*; here will I lay the weight of my sinking and perishing soul. 6thly, 'Tis called, *A yielding ourselves to the Lord*, *2 Chron. 30. 8.* *Hezekiah*, writing to the degenerate tribes, exhorts them, to *yield themselves to the Lord*; or, as it is in the *Hebrew*, *give the hand to the Lord*; alluding to men who have been at a variance, when they come to an agreement, they strike hands one with another, in token of *friendship*. The great God, the offended Majesty of heaven, comes, in a Gospel-dispensation, stretching out his hand all the day long to rebellious sinners, crying, *Behold me, behold me*; cast away your rebellious arms, and be at peace with me. Now, when a sinner believes, he, as it were, strikes hands with the Lord, according to that, *Isa. 27. 5.* *Let him take hold of my strength, that he may make peace with me, and he shall make peace with me.* 7thly, 'Tis called, *An opening of the heart to Christ*, *Cant. 5. 2.* *Rev. 3. 20.* *Acts 16. 14.* This expression imports, that as the sinner's heart is by nature shut and bolted against the Lord; so when he believes, *the everlasting doors of the understanding, will, and affections, are lifted up to the Lord of hosts, the Lord mighty in battle*, *Psal. 24.* 8thly, 'Tis sometimes called, *A buying*, *Isa. 55. 1.* *Buy wine and milk without money, and without price.* *Rev. 3. 18.* *I counsel thee to buy of me gold tried in the fire, &c.* This buying does not import such a commutation, as if we were to give to God an equivalent for his grace; for 'tis a buying without money, and without price; 'tis a giving of poverty for riches, emptiness for fulness, deformity for beauty, guilt for righteousness, pollution for holiness, bondage for liberty; in a word, buying in Christ's market is nothing else but taking, *Rev. 22. 17.* *Whosoever will, let him come, and take of the waters of life freely.*

Many other expressions the Spirit of God makes use of in the

word, to hold out the nature of faith; sometimes 'tis called, *The substance of things hoped for*, Heb. 11. 1. because faith, as it were, doth realize and substantiate the promise: Just like a man looking to bonds, charters, or any other securities; he will say, There is my substance, and all my stock, tho' they be but bits of paper: So the believer, when looking on Christ's righteousness and fulness, as held forth in the free promise of the Gospel, will be ready to say, There is my substance, and everlasting all; with *David*, he rejoiceth in God's word of promise, *as one that findeth great spoil*; yea, *it is better to him than gold, yea, than much fine gold*. Again, 'tis called, in the same verse, *The evidence of things not seen*: The word in the original rendered *evidence*, signifies to convince to a demonstration. Faith, acting upon the promise, convinceth the soul of the reality of things invisible, as if they were before him, and he saw them with his bodily eyes: And this sight of faith is not such a sight as *Balaam* got of Christ when he said, *I shall see him, but not now*; *I shall behold him, but not nigh*; he saw him by the spirit of prophecy, as the redeemer of *Israel*, but not by the spirit of faith, as *his redeemer*, as *Job* 19. 20. *Balaam* saw him, without any personal interest; but *Job* saw him as his own redeemer, with appropriation; *I know*, faith, he, *that MY REDEEMER liveth*. Again, in the 13th verse of the same chapter, faith is called, *An embracing of the promises*, Heb. 11. 13. The word in the original signifies a kindly salutation or kissing; being an allusion to two dear friends, who, when they meet, clasp one another in their arms, in a most loving and affectionate manner. The grace of the promise embraces the soul, and then the soul embraces the promise, and hugs it, and Christ in it, in his arms. The reverse of this is the case of the presumptuous hypocrite, who, in some sort, embraces the promise indeed; but the special grace of the promise not having embraced him, he is like a man taking a tree in his arms, he embraces the tree, but not the tree him.

Again, faith is sometimes called, *An eating the flesh, and drinking the blood of the son of man*, John 6. 53. because faith makes use of, and applies Christ for the life, nourishment, and sustentation of the soul; just as a man makes use of the meat and drink that is set before him for bodily nourishment. Let a man have never such a rich feast before him, yet he will inevitably starve, unless, he apply it, and make use of it: So without faith's application of Christ, and his fulness, we inevitably die, and perish; and, O! how sad to perish in the midst of plenty? *Lastly*, Faith is called, *A trusting in the name of the Lord*, *Isai.* 50. 10. *Isai.* 26. 3. We all know what it is to trust in a man of honesty and integrity; when
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he passes his word, we make no doubt, and have no hesitation concerning his performing what he had promised : So, faith takes the promise, and trusts the veracity of the promiser ; as 'tis said of *Abraham*, Rom. 4. 20. " He staggered not at the promise of God, thro' unbelief, but was strong in the faith, giving glory to God." The perfections of God, such as his *power*, *holiness*, *goodness*, but especially *his veracity*, are pawned in the promise, as *grounds of trust*. Hence we are to trust in his NAME, and when we trust in him, and stay ourselves upon him, we are still to take him up as *our God in Christ*, for we can never trust him, while we take him as *an enemy*.

The *second* thing proposed for opening up the first general head in the method, was to give you some of the qualities of this arm of faith. *First*, 'Tis *leaning, and a staying arm*, Cant. 8. 5. *Who is this that cometh up from the wilderness, leaning upon her beloved ?* Isai. 26. 3. *Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace, whose mind is stayed upon thee.* It is the office of faith to underprop the soul, when 'tis ready to be overwhelmed with the burden of sin and sorrow, darkness and desertion, Psal. 27. 13. *I had fainted, unless I had believed to see the goodness of the Lord in the land of the living.* It leans and stays itself on him who is *the strength of Israel*, even the *man of God's right-hand, whom he hath made strong for himself* ; and thus it bears up the soul under the heaviest pressures. *Secondly*, 'Tis a *winning and a gaining arm*. The Apostle, Phil. 3. 8. speaks of *winning Christ, and being found in him* ; and 'tis said of the wise merchant, *That he went and sold all, that he might buy or win the pearl of great price* ; and this pearl can be won no otherwise, but by receiving it, Job. 1. 12. Yea, faith is such a *winning grace*, that it is ever taking, ever receiving out of Christ's fulness, *grace for grace* ; it digs into the rock of ages, and makes up the poor soul with unsearchable riches ; it maintains a traffick with heaven, travels to *the land afar off*, and returns richly freighted, and loaded with the commodities of that *better country*. *Thirdly*, It is a *very wide and capacious arm*. It is not little that will fill the arm of faith ; the whole world, and all the fulness thereof, cannot fill the arm of faith : No, no, it flings them away like dung, that it may get its arm filled with a God in Christ ; *I count all things but loss and dung, for excellency of the knowledge of Jesus Christ my Lord*, Phil. 3. 8. Yea, I may add, that heaven, and all the glories of *Immanuel's land*, bear no bulk in the arm of faith, without Christ, in whom *the fulness of the Godhead dwells*, Psal. 73. 25. *Whom have I in heaven but thee ? and there is none in all the earth that I desire besides thee.* *Fourthly*, 'Tis a *most tenacious arm* ; its motto may be,

GRIPES FAST: As the arm of faith is wide, and *takes in much*, so it keeps, and *gripes fast* what it gets, *Cant.* 3. 4. *I held him*, says the spouse, *and would not let him go.* Faith is such a tenacious grace, that it will wrestle with an omnipotent God, and refuse to yield to him, when he seems to shake himself loose of its gripes, as we see in the case of *Jacob*, *Gen.* 32. 24. and downward; there *Jacob* gets a gripe by faith of the *angel of the covenant*: The *angel* says unto him, *Let me go*, *Jacob*; a very strange word for the *Creator* to become a supplicant to *his own creature*: Well, what says *Jacob's* faith to this proposal? *I will not let thee go, except thou bless me*: As if he had said, Let the day break, and let it pass on; let the night come, and let the day break again; 'tis all one: Lean *Jacob* and the living God shall not part without the blessing. To this purpose is that of the *Prophet*, *Hos.* 22. 3, 4. *By his strength*, viz. by the strength of faith in prayer, *he had power with God*; yea, *he had power over the angel, and prevailed*; *he wept and made supplication unto him.* O, Sirs, try to follow the example of *Jacob*, and you shall be fed with the heritage of *Jacob your father*, *Hai.* 58. 14. Thus, I say, faith is a most gripeing and tenacious arm; the first gripe that faith takes of Christ is so fast, that it never quits gripe of him again thro' eternity; it unites the soul to Christ, and the union is so close and intimate thro' faith, that the man becomes *one body and one spirit with him*, and so indissoluble, as that *neither death nor life, nor things present, nor things to come, shall ever be able to make a separation.* Fifthly, Hence it follows, that faith is a very bold and confident arm, it hath a great deal of ASSURANCE in it, for it will maintain its claim to Christ upon the ground of *the new covenant*, even when hell and earth, sense and reason, and all seem to be against it; it will *trust in the name of the Lord, and stay itself upon its God and covenant*, even when the poor soul *walks in the darknes* of desertion, in the darknes of temptation, in the darknes of affliction, yea, in the dark valley of the shadow of death. *Abraham's* faith had much opposition to grapple with, when he got the promise of *Isaac*, and in him of the promised seed, in whom all the nations of the earth were to be blessed; yet, such was the *confidence and assurance* of his faith, that *he staggered not at the promise.* The language of faith is, *When I fall, I shall arise*; *when I sit in darknes, the Lord shall be a light unto me*; *he will bring me forth to the light, and I shall behold his righteousness*, *Mic.* 7. 8, 9. Yet I would not be here mistaken, as if the poor believer did not apprehend Christ and the promise, with a tottering and trembling hand; nay, the believer, through the prevalency of unbelief, is many times brought so low, as to cry
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with the Psalmist, *Is his mercy clean gone? Hath he forgotten to be gracious? Fails his promise for ever more?* Psal. 77. 7, 8, 9. But let it be remembered, that this was not his faith, but his infirmity, through prevailing unbelief, which made him thus to stagger; for, let faith but get rid of unbelief, let it get up its head, and allow it to speak its proper language, its dialect will be, *ABBA FATHER*, Rom. 8. 15. and, *doubtless thou art our father, tho' Abraham be ignorant of us, and Israel acknowledge us not; Thou, O Lord, art our father, our redeemer, thy name is from everlasting.* Sixthly, 'Tis a very patient and waiting arm; for *he that believeth, doth not make haste*, Isa. 28. 16. Faith, although it firmly believes the accomplishment of the promise, yet it will not *limit the holy one of Israel*, as to the time of its accomplishment; *I will wait for the Lord, that hideth his face from the house of Jacob, I will look for him*, Isa. 8. 17. *The vision is for an appointed time*; and therefore, says faith, tho' it tarry, *wait for it, because it will surely come, it will not tarry*, Hab. 2. 3. Faith will not draw rash or desperate conclusions, because the Lord hides or defers his visits; no, but it looks to God's word of promise, and grounds its confidence there, saying with the church, *I will look unto the Lord, I will wait for the God of my salvation, my God will hear me*, Hos. 7. 7. Seventhly, Faith is a feeding arm, it feeds upon the carcase of the lion of the tribe of Judah; and thus, like Sampson, gets its meat out of the eater, and sweet out of the strong. Hence, as you heard, 'tis called *An eating of the flesh, and drinking of the blood of Christ*; and, in this view, Christ is presented to us in the sacrament of the supper, *Take, eat, this is my body*. There was a part of the sacrifices under the law reserved for food to the priests, when the rest was burnt upon the altar; believers are spiritual priests unto God, and they live upon the altar, and that blessed passover that was sacrificed for us. Eighthly, It is not an idle, but a working arm. Indeed, in its justifying act, it is not a working, but only a taking, or a resting arm; 'tis like the beggar's hand, that takes the alms. without working a stroke for it. In justification, faith is a passive, or a recipient kind of an instrument; but in sanctification it is an active or efficient kind of an instrument; 'tis such an active arm in sanctification, that it purifies the heart, and actuates and animates all the other graces of the spirit; it works by love, it works by repentance, it works by hope, it works by patience, it works by obedience; and *faith without works is dead, as the body is dead without the spirit*: In a word, the whole of Gospel-obedience is the obedience of faith; and the obedience that flows not from faith, is but dead works, which cannot be acceptable to a living God.

Ninthly,

Ninthly, Faith is a fighting and warlike arm, Heb. 11. 35. 'Tis said of the worthies there, That they, by faith, waxed valiant in fight: Yea, 'tis not only a fighting, but a victorious arm; for it puts to flight the armies of the aliens. 'Tis by faith leaning on the arm of omnipotency, that the believer's bow abides in its strength, and the arms of his hands become strong, to break bows of steel in pieces, By faith we quench the fiery darts of hell, and trample upon the powers of darknes; by faith we overcome the world, and set the moon under our feet: Yea, this gallant grace of faith, it will take up the spoils of Christ's victory over sin and satan, hell and death, and triumph in his triumphs, even while it is in the field of battle, and seemingly overcome by the enemy. *Thanks be to God, that causeth us always to triumph in Christ.* My head and general, faith faith, has overcome, and I have already overcome in him; for we are more than conquerors through him that loved us, Rom. 8. 37. *Lastly*, Faith is a saving arm, He that believeth shall be saved; there is an inseparable connexion established, by the ordination of heaven, between faith and salvation, John 3. 16. *Whosoever believeth, shall not perish, but have everlasting life.* Although indeed there is no connexion of causality, yet there is an undoubted connexion of order. Faith cannot but carry salvation along with it, seeing it takes up Christ the salvation of God in its arms, as you see Simeon did.

The *third* thing proposed here, was, To enquire how this arm of faith doth embrace Christ. In general, I answer, it embraces him just as God offers him in the Gospel. There is a manifest proportion betwixt God's offer, and faith's reception of Christ; which I shall illustrate in the *four* particulars following, *1st*, Christ is freely offered in the Gospel, Isa. 55. 1. Rev. 22. 17. So faith embraces him as the *free gift* of God. There is a natural propensity in the heart of man, to give something or other of our own, by way of exchange or equivalent for Christ, and the blessings of his purchase. Proud nature cannot think of being so much beholden to God, as to take Christ and salvation from him for nothing at all; and therefore it would always be bringing in this or the other qualification, as a price in its hand to fit it for Christ: I must be so penitent, so humble, so clean and holy, before I come to Christ; and then I will be welcome, he will pardon and save me. But, Sirs, whatever you may think of it, this is but a tang of the Old Covenant of works, and all one as if a man should say, I must first heal myself before I go to the physician; I will first wash myself clean before I go to the fountain opened up for sin, and for uncleanness. Beware of this, for 'tis a secret subverting of the order and method

thod God hath established in the covenant of grace, this being the very money and price, which he forbids us to bring to the market of free-grace. Faith argues at another rate, in its embracing of Christ; O! says the poor soul, I am a diseased sinner, from the sole of the foot to the crown of the head; and this qualifies me for the Physician of souls: I am a polluted sinner, black like the *Ethiopian*, spotted like the leopard; and therefore I will go to the fountain: I am naked, and therefore I will take the white-vestment offered me, to cover the shame of my nakedness: I am blind, and therefore I will take the eye-salve, which recovers sight to the blind. Thus, I say, faith embraces Christ, as he is freely offered. 2dly, Christ is *fully and wholly* offered in the Gospel; and accordingly faith embraces him *wholly*, without dividing him. I own indeed, that the first sight of faith is to Christ as a *Saviour*, Christ as a *Priest*, fulfilling the law, satisfying justice, and thereby bringing in everlasting righteousness; this being the only thing that can answer the present strait and necessity of the soul, under the awful apprehensions of vindictive justice and wrath; and therefore, thither it flees for refuge, in the first act of believing. But now, although faith, *at first*, fixes upon Christ as a *Priest*, yet, at the same time, it embraces him as a *Prophet*, submitting unto his instruction, and subjects itself unto him as a *King*, receiving the law from his mouth: O! says the soul, *I am more brutish than any man, I have not the understanding of a man*; but this Saviour *has pity on the ignorant, and them that are out of the way*: He opens the book and looses the seven seals thereof, and therefore I will sit down at his feet, and receive the whole revelation of the mind and will of God from him: I am a poor captive and vassal of hell; *Other Lords have had dominion over me, but now I will make mention of his name*: He is *my judge, my king, and my law giver, even he that saves me*. Thus, I say, the arm of faith embraces a whole Christ. There is nothing of Christ, says the soul, that I can want; I must have him all, and have him all as mine own, as my prophet, my priest, and my king. And herein the faith of the hypocrite or temporary believer comes short of the faith of God's elect: The hypocrite, he halves Christ, or else inverts the order of his office, in his way of receiving him; either he receives him as a Saviour, only to keep him out of hell, but waves the acceptance of him as a king to rule him; or else he professedly subjects himself unto Christ's authority as a king and a law-giver, hoping upon that score, that Christ will save him by his blood and righteousness, as a priest; and so thereby makes up the defects of his lame obedience: Which is, upon the matter, to put a piece of *new cloth into*

an old garment, whereby the rent is made worse. 3dly, God gives Christ cordially and affectionately in the Gospel: His very heart, as it were, goes out after sinners, in the call and offer thereof. It is not possible to conceive any thing more affectionate, than the word in which he bespeaks sinners, *Ezek. 33. 11. Hos. 10. 8. Isa. 55. 1, 2, 3.* Now, I say, as God offers Christ most affectionately and cordially, in like manner does faith embrace him; he embraces a whole Christ, with the whole heart and soul; the love, joy, delight and complacency of the soul, runs out upon him, as their very centre of rest: And these affections, like so many springs of Gospel-obedience, set all the members of the body a work in his service; so that the head will study for him, the hand work for him, the feet run on his errands, and the tongue ready to plead his cause. 4thly, Christ is offered particularly to every man; there is not a soul hearing me, but, in God's name, I offer Christ unto him, as if called by name and surname. Now, as the offer is particular to every individual person, so faith embraces Christ, with particular application to the soul itself. When I embrace a Saviour, I do not embrace him for salvation to another man; no, but I embrace him as my saviour, for salvation to my own soul in particular. Beware, my friends, of a general faith, abjured in OUR NATIONAL-COVENANT, AS A BRANCH OF POPERY. A general persuasion of the mercy of God in Christ, and of Christ's ability and willingness to save all that come to him, will not do the business; no, devils and reprobates may and do actually believe it: There must therefore, of necessity, be a persuasion and belief of this, with particular application thereof unto a man's own soul; for, if the *mercy of God in Christ be offered to every man in particular*, then surely faith, which, as I was saying, is but the eccho of the soul to the Gospel-call, must embrace Christ, and the mercy of God in him, with particular application to itself, otherwise it doth not answer God's offer, consequently cannot be of a saving nature. So much for the *first* general head proposed in the prosecution of the doctrine.

The *second* thing proposed was, to take notice of some of these songs, which readily the soul has in its mouth, when, like *Simeon*, it gets Christ embraced in the arms of faith. We are said to be filled with joy and peace in believing; yea, by faith in an unseen Christ, the soul is replenished with joy unspeakable, and full of glory; and when this is the soul's case, it cannot but bless God, as *Simeon* did, and vent its heart in these or the like songs of praise. (I.) It cannot but bless him for electing and everlasting love. Faith's embraces of Christ helps the soul to trace the streams of divine love

love to their fountain-head, and to read its own name in the book of life, among the living in *Jerusalem*. O, blessed be God, will the soul say, that ever I, wretched I, miserable I, should have been upon God's heart, before the foundations of the world were laid: Glory to God in the highest, who hath drawn me with loving-kindness; whereby I know, that he hath loved me with an everlasting love. (2.) The soul, in such a case, cannot but bless God for Christ, and redeeming love through him, saying with the Apostle, *Thanks be unto him, for his unspeakable gift; glory to him in the highest, that to us a son is given, to us a child is born, whose name is the wonderful counsellor, the everlasting father, the mighty God, and prince of peace*. And then, when the soul views the glorious retinue of blessings that come along with Christ, it cannot thun to join issue with the Apostle in his triumphant doxology, *Eph. 1. 2.* saying, *Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places, in Christ*. And there are these few, among innumerable blessings, that come along with Christ, which the soul will readily bless God for, in the case mentioned. *First*, O blessed be God, will the soul say, that in Christ he is become my God, even my own God. I was once without God in the world; but O! what a happy turn is this? Now I can view him in Christ, and say, *He is my God, my father, and the rock of my salvation, the portion of my cup*; and therefore, *the lines are fallen to me in pleasant places, and I have a goodly heritage*. *Secondly*, O! blessed be God, will the soul say, that in Christ the fiery tribunal is turned into a mercy-seat, by his obedience and death; the law & justice having got a complete satisfaction, a way is made for the empire of sovereign grace: So that now *grace reigns through righteousness to eternal life, by Jesus Christ our Lord, Rom. 5. last*. And as it is the will of God, that grace should reign, so 'tis the desire of my soul, to make this name of his to be remembered to all generations: O! let grace wear the crown, and sway the scepter for ever; and let all the *Hallelujahs* of the higher house be to the *praise of the glory of his grace*. *Thirdly*, O! blessed be God, will the soul say, that in Christ he has blotted out all mine iniquities, *as a cloud, and as a thick cloud*. There was a cloud of sin pregnant with wrath hovering above my head, but in Christ I see it scattered; *We have redemption in his blood, even the forgiveness of sins*; and therefore, *Bless the Lord, O my soul, and all that is within me, bless his holy name, who pardoneth all thine iniquities*. *Fourthly*, O! blessed be God, will the soul say, that in Christ I am blessed with an everlasting and law-binding righteousness; Christ, my ever-blessed surety, he was made under the law, and has magnified it,

and made it honourable; and the Lord is well pleased for his righteousness sake; and in him, and through him, the righteousness of the law is fulfilled in me; and therefore, I will greatly rejoice in the Lord, my soul shall be joyful in my God, who hath clothed me with the garments of salvation, and covered me with the robes of righteousness, as a bridegroom decketh himself with ornaments, and as a bride adorneth herself with jewels, Isa. 61. 10. Fifthly, O! blessed be God, will the soul say, that in Christ he is become a father to the fatherless, and blessed me with the blessing of adoption and sonship. I may seal it from my experience, that in him the fatherless find mercy. I was like an outcast infant, and helpless orphan, but the everlasting father took me up, and gave me a name and a place in his house, and within his walls, even an everlasting name, that shall not be cut off. Behold, what manner of love is this, that the father hath bestowed upon me, that I should be called a son of God; 1 John 3. 1. Sixthly, O! glory to God, will the soul say, for the open door of access into the holiest, by the blood of Jesus. The door was once barred against me, and all Adam's posterity, by the breach of the first covenant; but in Christ it is again opened, so that we may come with boldness to a throne of grace, for grace and mercy to help in time of need: An incarnate Deity is now become the way to God and glory. I might tell you of many other blessings that the soul is ready to bless God for, when it gets Christ in the arms of faith; but I do not insist. I conclude this head, by referring you to two or three scriptural songs, which will readily occur in such a case, 1 Pet. 1. 3. *Blessed be the God and father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who, according to his abundant mercy, hath begotten us again to a lively hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, to an inheritance incorruptible and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, &c.* Another you have, Rom. 8: 33. to the end of the chapter, *who can lay any thing to the charge of God's elect, &c.* A third you have, 1 Cor. 15. 55, 56. *O death! where is thy sting? O grave! where is thy victory? &c.* Another, with which I conclude this head, is that which concludes the Bible, Rev. 22. 20. *Even so come Lord Jesus.*

The third thing proposed was, to enquire whence it is, that faith's embraces of Christ doth thus fill the mouth with praise? Answer (1.) This flows from the certainty that is in faith. Faith is not a doubting grace; no, doubts and jealousies vanish before it, as the clouds and darkness of the night do vanish at the appearance of the sun; and the certainty of faith flows from the stability of these foundations upon which it builds, which are more firm than the pillars of heaven, and foundations of the earth; It builds upon the word of God, the oath of God, the blood of God, the

the righteousness of God, the power of God, the veracity of God; and seeing it builds upon such immovable foundations, how can it miss, to have a certainty in it proportioned, in some measure, unto the grounds upon which it stands? And hence it comes, that it fills the mouth with praise. Let news be never so good, yet, if we have no certainty in our belief of them, it exceedingly mars our joy and comfort: But now the glad tidings of the Gospel, they are no flying uncertain reports; no, 'tis God, that cannot lie, who speaks, and thence comes the certainty of faith. (2.) This flows from the applying and appropriating nature of faith, which I hinted at already. Let news be never so true, though never so great and good, yet if we have no interest or concern in them, it mars the sweetness and comfort of them. Tell a poor man of mountains of gold and silver, what relief will that afford him, if he hath no access thereto, or interest therein? But tell him that all these treasures are his, and that he has the owner's warrant and command to take and use them as his own, this will make him rejoice indeed. Tell a hungry and starving man of a rich feast or banquet, what is that to him, if he be not allowed to taste it? Tell a naked man, exposed to the injuries of the wind and weather, of fine robes, and excellent garments, what will it avail him, if they be not for him, or for his use? But tell the hungry man, that the feast is for him, and naked man, that the clothing is for him, this will create joy and triumph. So here the Gospel-report doth not tell us of a Saviour and Salvation that we have no interest in, no, but it tells us, that *to us is the word of this Salvation sent*; that *to us is this Child born, and this Son given*; that *he is made of God unto us wisdom, righteousness, sanctification and redemption*; and that as the great trustee of heaven, *he received gifts for men, yea, for the rebellious also*. Now, faith accordingly, applies all these good news, this Saviour, and his whole salvation, to itself in particular; and hence it comes, that it fills the heart with joy, and the tongue with praise.

(3.) This flows from that sensible assurance of God's love, and of grace and salvation, which commonly follows upon believing; according to what you have, Eph. 1. 13. *After that ye believed, ye were sealed with the holy Spirit of promise*. There is a certainty of sense, which very frequently accompanies or follows upon the certainty of faith, as a natural fruit of it, and yet is not of the nature and essence of it, because there may be true faith where there is not this sensible or reflex assurance of grace and salvation. The certainty of faith is built upon the word of God, the record of God, and promise of God, which is a believing, because God hath spoken, *Psal. 60. 6, 7. compared*; God had made a promise of

the kingdom to *David*; *God hath spoken in his holiness*, saith he, *I will rejoice*; and in the faith of this word of promise, he speaks with such certainty, as if he were already in possession; *Gilead is mine, Manasseh is mine, &c.* But now the certainty of sense is a knowing that we have believed, or the soul's reflecting upon its own act of believing. The certainty of faith is like the certainty that a man hath of his money in a good and sufficient bond, or the certainty that a man hath of his estate, by a good and sufficient charter. He rests upon his bonds and charters as good securities to him. But the certainty of sense is like the certainty that a man hath of his money, when he is handling it with his fingers, or taking in his rents. By the certainty of faith, *Abraham* believed, without staggering, because he had God's word of promise for it; but, by the certainty of sense he knew it, when he saw *Sarah* delivered of his son *Isaac*, and got him in his arms. Now, I say, faith commonly produces this sensible assurance, sweet and reviving experiences of the Lord's love to our souls; and hence it comes, that it fills the mouth with praise.

The *fourth* thing was, The application of the doctrine. And the first use shall be of information. This doctrine informs us, (1.) Of the excellency of the grace of faith; it cannot but be an excellent grace, because it embraces precious Christ. Hence it is, that God puts such an estimate upon it, that he cares for nothing we do, if that be wanting; *Without faith it is impossible to please God; whatever is not of faith, is sin.* Suppose it were possible for a man to attain such a pitch of morality, as to be *touching the law blameless*; yet all his obedience, moral and religious, stands for a cypher in God's reckoning; yea, is *like the cutting off a dog's neck, and the offering of swines blood upon God's altar*, if faith be wanting. Thus then, I say, faith is an excellent grace of absolute necessity, in order to our acceptance before God; only let it be here carefully remembered, that 'tis not the act of faith, but its glorious and ever-blessed object, Jesus Christ, whom it embraces, that renders us acceptable unto God. In point of acceptance, faith renounces its own actings, and looks for acceptance only in the beloved; it rejoiceth in Christ Jesus only, and hath no confidence in the flesh. 2. See, from this doctrine, what a happy and privileged person the believer is; he gets Christ the lamb of God in the embraces of his soul: And, O! what can the most enlarged heart or soul of man wish for more? This was the one Thing that *David* desired, *Psal. 27. 4.* We read of one, in the Gospel, that said to Christ, *Blessed is the womb that bare thee, and the paps that gave thee suck*; to which Christ answered, *Yea, rather, blessed are they*

they that hear the word of God, & keep it, Luk. 11. 27, 28. And, who are they that hear the word of God, and keep it, but believers, who have him formed in their hearts, and clasped in the arms of faith? for he that thus *bath the Son, bath life*. And concerning such, I may say, as *Moses* said concerning *Israel*, Deut. 33. 24. *Happy art thou, O Israel! who is like unto thee, O people saved by the Lord?* Notice the expression, they are a people already saved, *they have everlasting life*; that day that Christ comes into the heart, the salvation of God comes, as 'tis said to *Zacchæus*, *This day is salvation come to thy house*. (3.) See, from this doctrine, the true way of joy and comfort; perhaps there may be some poor soul *going mourning without the sun*, saying, *O that it were with me as in months past*; once in a day, I thought I could say, *The candle of the Lord shined upon my head*; but, alas! now the scene is altered, the Comforter that should relieve my soul is far from me, how shall I recover my wotted joy in the Lord? Well, here is the way to it, go forth out of yourselves, by a direct act of faith; take Christ a-new, in the embraces of your souls, upon the free call and offer of the Gospel, and with *Simeon* ye shall be made to *blefs God*. It is the wreck of the comfort of the generality of God's people, in our day, that they continue poring within themselves, upon their graces, their frames, their experiences, their attainments, without going forth, by faith, unto the fulness of a Redeemer for relief: And while we do so, we are just like mariners at sea, while they sail among shallow waters, near the shore, they are always afraid of striking upon the rocks, or running upon sands, because they want depth of water; but when they launch forth into the main ocean, they are delivered of their fears, being carried far above rocks and sands: So, while the believer continues among the shallow water of his graces, duties, experiences and attainments, he cannot miss to be harassed with continual fears, because the waters of divine grace are but at ebb, while we stay there; but when by faith we launch out into that full ocean of grace that is in Christ, then fears, doubts and perplexities vanish: The soul is carried up above all these, being strong, not in the created grace that is in itself, but in the grace that is in Jesus Christ, in whom dwells all the fulness of the God-head. So then, I say, if ye would surmount your fears, and recover your joy and comfort in the Lord, study to live by faith upon the Son of God; for we *are filled with joy and peace in believing*. (4.) From this doctrine we may gather, what a delightful place heaven will be, where the soul shall live in Christ's embraces forever. If the believer's heart be so refreshed when he gets Christ embra-

ced by faith, what over-powering floods of joy must flow upon his soul, when he comes to immediate fruition, where no clouds shall ever intercept the rays of the Sun of righteousness from him, thro' an endless eternity, No wonder, tho' sometimes the believer break forth into such longing expressions, when he thinks of immediate enjoyment, as that of *Paul, I desire to be dissolved, and to be with Christ, which is best of all.*

Use II. may be of trial. Sirs, you have been in the temple this day; I would ask, have you seen the Lord's *Messiah* there? Have you got him, like *Simeon*, in the arms and embraces of faith? O! say you, how shall I know if I ever had him in my arms? For answer, take these following things as marks. 1st, If ever ye have embraced Christ, Christ has embraced you first; for there is a mutual embracing betwixt Christ & the believer, and it begins on Christ's side; he first takes hold of the soul by his Spirit, before the soul takes hold of him by faith, *Phil. 3. 12. I follow after, if that I may apprehend that for which also I am apprehended of Christ Jesus.* O! will the soul say, I was wandering, like a lost sheep, among the mountains of vanity, I had gone into a far country with the prodigal, and never had a thought of Christ, till he by his sovereign grace held and drew me, with the cords of victorious love and grace, and then my heart laid hold and apprehended him: Never a soul yet came really to believe in Christ, but will be ready to own that it was not free-will, but free-grace that began the work: *No man can come to me, except the Father which hath sent me draw him.* 2^{dly}, If ever ye had Christ really in the embraces of faith, you have been made to quit the embraces of other lovers; *Ephraim shall say, What have I any more to do with idols?* Particularly, ye have been made to part with the law, as a husband, *Rom. 7. 4. Ye are dead to the law, by the body of Christ, that ye may be married to a better husband, even to him that is raised from the dead.* O, Sirs! 'tis a harder business than many are aware of, to make a divorce between a sinner and the law, so as to make him renounce all hopes of salvation and righteousness from that corner. It is much easier, to pull his lusts out of his arms, than to pull the law, as a husband, out of his embraces; and the reason of this is plain, because the law gives a promise of life to them that obey it; *He that doth these things, shall live in them;* which sin and lust cannot do, in regard they carry the stamp of hell and wrath visibly upon them, to the eye of a natural conscience: So that 'tis much easier to convince a man that his sin is an evil thing, than to convince him that his righteousness is so: hence Christ tells the *Pharisees*, these self-righteous wretches, that Publicans and Harlots should enter into
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the kingdom of God before them: Publicans and Harlots and such sort of persons, lie more open unto the sharp arrows of conviction, than self-righteous persons, who make, as it were, a barricado of the law itself, and their obedience to it, behind which they lie intrenched, and fortified against all the curses and threatenings of the law, that are denounced against them: They still take the law, for a friend, while they obey it as well as they can; never dreaming that nothing will satisfy the law, but an obedience that is every way complete. But, now I say, if ever ye have embraced Christ, ye have been made to part with the law as a covenant, and with your own righteousness by the law, as filthy rags, saying with *Paul, I, through the law, am dead to the law.* At the same time that the soul quits the embraces of the law, as a husband, it parts with other lovers also. The first view of Christ by faith, makes all the twinkling stars of created enjoyments to vanish and disappear; so that the soul joins issue with *David, Psal. 73. 25. Whom have I in heaven but thee, &c.* 3dly, If ever Christ was in the embraces of thy soul, thou mayest know it, by the desirable concomitants and effects thereof; I shall not stand upon them, only, in so many words, your estimate of Christ will be raised, *For to you that believe, he is precious*: Your love to him will be inflamed, *for faith worketh by love*; Your joy and peace will be increased, *for, believing, we rejoice with joy unspeakable, and full of glory*: Heart-holiness will be promoted, *for faith purifieth the heart*: And, in a word, your souls will make their boast in him, *for in him shall all the seed of Israel be justified, and shall glory.*

Use III. shall be of exhortation to all in general. Sirs, before we part this evening, I would fain have every soul hearing me, going home with the great *Messiah*, the Son of God, in the arms and embraces of their souls; and then I am sure ye should go away, blessing God that ye ever came here. We must deal with you as reasonable creatures, and persuade you in a moral way; and, when we are so doing, look up to God for the concurring efficacy of his Holy Spirit, whose prerogative it is to persuade and enable you to embrace Jesus Christ, as he is offered to you in the Gospel; and therefore, by way of motive, consider, (1.) The absolute need ye have of this Christ, whom we offer unto you. Without him, *ye are condemned already*; without him, ye are without God in the world, *God is angry with you every day*; the law and justice of God, like the avenger of blood, is pursuing you; and therefore, O sinners, flee to a Saviour: *Turn to your strong-hold, ye prisoners of hope.* (2.) Consider the matchless excellency of that Saviour whom we call you to embrace. Angels and men are at

an everlasting stand, to speak of his worth and glory; he is best known by his own and his father's testimony concerning him; and if ye would know the record of God concerning him, search the Scriptures, for these are they that testify of him; 'tis in this glass that we behold *his glory, as of the only begotten of the father, full of grace and truth.* I despair that ever a sinner will embrace Christ, 'till there be a true knowledge of his personal excellency as *Immanuel, God-man.* There is a seeing of the Son, which, in order of nature, although not in order of time, goes before the soul's believing in him, *John 6. 40.* (3.) Consider the ability and sufficiency of this Saviour whom we call you to embrace; take the Father's testimony of his ability, *Psal. 89. 20. I have laid help upon one that is mighty:* Take his own testimony, *Isa. 63. 1.* take the Spirit's testimony, in the mouth of the Apostle Paul, *Heb. 7. 25.* declaring him *able to save to the uttermost, all that come to God by him.* Thus ye have the three that bear record in heaven attesting the sufficiency of this Saviour. O then set to your seal, that God is true, by believing the record that God gives of his Son; for if ye do not, your unbelief gives the lie unto a whole Trinity, *1 Joh. 5. 10, 11.* (4.) Consider that this sufficient Saviour is the SENT of God. This is a designation given to Christ thirty or forty times in the Gospel, according to *John*, and the ordinary argument with which Christ persuades sinners to embrace and receive him; and nothing could have greater influence than this designation, if the weight of it were but duly weighed. O! consider in what quality and capacity his Father has sent him. Shall not God's AMBASSADOR-EXTRAORDINARY get a hearing, among a company of condemned rebels? He is sent as a redeemer, to set at liberty the captives; and shall not captives embrace him? He is sent as a surety, and will not insolvents and bankrupts embrace a surety? He is sent as a physician, and will not the wounded and diseased sinner embrace him, and his healing-balm? &c. (5.) Consider that his heart and his arms are open, and ready to embrace all that are willing to be embraced by him. O! may the soul say, fain would I embrace him, but I doubt of his willingness to embrace me. I tell you good news, he is more willing to embrace you, by far, than you are to be embraced by him. He says he is willing, and you may believe his word, for he is the AMEN, FAITHFUL and TRUE WITNESS; and he says, that he will cast out none that come unto him. He swears he is willing, and will ye not believe his oath? *Ezek. 33. 11. As I live, I have no pleasure in the death of sinners, saith the Lord.* Pray tell me, why did he, engage from eternity, and voluntarily give his hand to the Father,

in the counfel of peace, faying, *Lo! I come, I delight to do thy will, O my God?* Why did he affume the nature of man, and the finlefs infirmities thereof? Why did he, that is the great Law-giver, fubject himfelf unto his own law? Why did he, that is the Lord of life and glory, fubmit to the ftroke of death ignominioufly upon a crofs; why doth he fend out his minifters to you, with call upon call? Why doth he wait all the day long, faying, behold me, behold me? Why doth he expoftulate the matter with you? Why is he grieved at the obftinacy of your hearts, if he be not willing that ye fhould embrace him? For the Lord's fake therefore, confider thefe things, and do not reject the counfel of God againft yourfelves. (6.) Confider what a glorious train and retinue of bleffings come along with him, when he is embraced in the arms of faith; fuch as pardon of fin, *Heb. 8.* and *laft*; Peace with God, *Rom. 5. 1.* A complete juftifying righteoufnefs, *Rom. 8. 3, 4.* Adoption and Sonfhip, *John 1. 12.* Sanctification, both in the root and fruit of it, *1 Cor. 1. 30.* Saving-knowledge of God, and the myfteries of his covenant, *2 Cor. 4. 6.* The crown of eternal glory at laft, *John 3. 16.* All thefe might be particularly enlarged on; but I don't infift, but proceed to obviate fome objections that fome may make againft complying with this exhortation.

Object. 1. Some poor foul may be ready to fay, Gladly would I embrace Chrift, with my very foul; but ftill I entertain a jealoufy of my right and warrant to meddle with the unfpeakable gift of God; he is fuch a great good, that I am afraid it be but prefumption in me to attempt the embracing of him. Now, for removing any jealoufies of this nature, I fhall lay before you a few of thefe warrants, upon which a loft finner may receive and embrace this Saviour. *1ft,* Let desperate and abfolute neceffity be your warrant: Ye muft either do or die; there is no mids: *He that believeth, fhall be faved; he that believeth not, fhall be damned.* Do not ftand to difpute the matter; there is no time, no not one moment of time, wherein a man is allowed to tofs this queftion in his breaft, after the revelation of Chrift to him in the Gofpel; fhall I believe, or fhall I not? Or if ye will difpute the matter, will ye argue, as the Samaritan lepers did; *If we fit ftill here we perifh; but if we go into the camp of the Affyrians, peradventure we fhall live:* So ye, if ye fit ftill in this finful and miserable condition, without God, and without Chrift in the world, we unavoidably perifh; but if we throw ourfelves into the arms of a redeemer, and upon the mercy of God in him, beyond peradventure we fhall be faved: And therefore, I fay, let abfolute neceffity be your warrant.

2dly, Venture to embrace this Saviour in the arms of faith upon the warrant of the very design of his Incarnation ; Why is there a Saviour provided ? Why was he manifested in the flesh ? Upon what errand was he sent *into* the world, but *to seek and save that which was lost*. Well, since this is the very design of God in giving a Saviour, that sinners might be saved by him ; what can be more agreeable unto him, or his Father that sent him, than that a lost sinner should embrace and receive him ? 3dly, Let the revelation of this incarnate Deity, in the glorious Gospel, be your warrant to embrace and receive him ; a bare revelation of a Saviour, without any more, is enough to induce a sinner to believe in him. Why was the brazen serpent in the wilderness lifted up on the pole, but that every one in the camp of *Israel*, who were stung with the fiery serpents, might look unto it, and be healed ? The very lifting up of the brazen serpent, was a sufficient warrant to any man to look to it : So the son of man his being lifted up on the pole of the everlasting Gospel, warrants every man to believe in him, *John* 3. 14, 15. 4thly, Besides the revelation of Christ, ye have a full, free, and unhampered offer of him, in the external call of the Gospel ; and this directed to every one, without exception, *Isa.* 55. 1, 2, 3. *Rev.* 22. 17. *Mark* 16. 15. *Prov.* 8. 4. Sirs, we offer a Christ to you, and the whole fulness of grace and glory, merit and spirit that is in him, as the free gift of God, without the money and price of your own works and qualifications ; if ye bring any such price, to make a purchase of the pearl of price, ye shall lose him for ever : God loves to give his Christ freely, but he scorns to receive any thing for him. Let this then be your warrant, that Christ is gifted and offered of God in this Gospel ; and let it be remembered, that in the matter of a gift, there is no difference between man and man : The poorest, as well as the richest, may receive a gift presented unto him ; a condemned malefactor has as good a right to receive a gift presented unto him by the king, as the greatest favourite in the court : his being a guilty criminal is no prejudice at all to his receiving a gift ; yea, his being so, qualifies him for receiving the pardon. So here, Christ's being the gift of God, freely offered & presented, warrants the sinner to receive him without respect to any qualifications but that of his being a sinner : Hunger is the best disposing qualification for meat, nakedness fits a man for clothing, &c. And that Christ seeks no other qualifications, is evident from his counsel to *Lazicca*, *Rev.* 3. 17, 18. *Thou art wretched, and miserable, and naked, and poor, and blind ; I counsel thee to buy of me gold, white raiment, and eye salve.* 5thly, Ye have not only an offer of Christ, but an express

express command, requiring you to embrace him, for your warrant, 1 *John* 3. 23. *This is his commandment, That ye believe in the name of his Son Jesus Christ.* Sirs, 'tis not a thing left optional to you, to embrace Christ or not, as ye please; no, ye are concluded under a law, fenced with the severest penalty, *He that believeth not is condemned already, and the wrath of God abideth on him.* The unbelieving sinner counter-acts the authority of heaven; and thus rushes upon *God's neck, and the thick bosses of his buckler.* Ye have no reason to doubt, but that the command of believing is to you: for if ye were not commanded to believe, your unbelief could not be your sin: *Where there is no law, there is no transgression.* Ye do not doubt but ye are commanded, by the word of God, to read, hear, pray, sanctify the sabbath, and to perform the other duties of the moral law; and because they are commanded, ye mint at obedience: Now, believing is as peremptorily enjoined, yea, rather more than any other duty, inasmuch as the successful and acceptable performance of all other duties depends upon it: and therefore do not stand disputing your warrant, against the express authority of heaven. *6thly,* Besides the command of God, ye have a promise of welcome, to encourage you in believing, *Joh. 6. 37. Him that cometh to me, I will in no wise cast out,* *John 3. 16. Whosoever believeth in him, shall not perish, but have everlasting life:* But, say ye, These promises may be to others, and not to me: I answer, the promise is indorsed to you, directed to you in the external call and dispensation of the Gospel, *Acts 2. 39.* There the Apostle is preaching to a company of men, whose hands hath lately been dipt in the blood of the Son of God; he calls them to faith and repentance: By what argument does he enforce the exhortation? Why, he tells them, *The promise is to you, and your children, and to all that are afar off, and to as many as the Lord our God shall call;* where 'tis plain, the promise is extended, first to the *Jews,* & then to the *Gentiles,* who, at that time, were afar off; and then, indefinitely both to *Jew* and *Gentile,* to whom the call of the Gospel should reach: the external call, which is only here intended, howsoever the Spirit of the Lord did internally *concur,* being the *alone* foundation upon which the promise is to be received, and not the internal call of one person, which can never be a warrant of believing to another; and therefore, as the Apostle said to them, so say I to you, in the name of God, the promise is to you, I mean, the promise of welcome; *Whosoever of you believeth, shall not perish.* This promise is not made to believers exclusively of others, but to every one that hears the Gospel; for if so, we could call none to believe, but such as have believed, which is most

most absurd. Well then, let God's promise warrant you to believe in Christ; and if ye do not think this sufficient, take his promise of welcome, ratified with his oath, *Ezek. 33. 11. These being the two immutable things, wherein it is impossible for God to lie. 7thly.* Let the indefinite and absolute nature of the covenant of grace, be your warrant for embracing the Lord Jesus. The covenant of grace, as it lies in the external dispensation of the Gospel, is conceived in the form of a blank bond, or testamentary deed, where there is room left to every man to fill up his name by the hand of faith; the strain and tenor of it is, *I will be their God, and they shall be my people; I will take away the stony heart, and I will give them a heart of flesh; I will sprinkle them with clean water; I will put my Spirit within them; I will be merciful to their unrighteousness; I will subdue their iniquities:* Where you see the grant runs in an indefinite way; no man's name mentioned, neither any by name excluded: Why, what is the design of this, but that every man may be encouraged to subscribe his name, or to make application thereof to his own soul, in a way of believing, by which we are said to take hold of God's covenant? O, Sirs! the covenant of grace, as it lies in the external dispensation of the Gospel (for now I abstract from his secret purposes, which are not all the measure or rule of faith) is just like a rope cast in among a company of drowning men; he that throws it in, cries to every one of them to take hold of the rope, promising to draw them safe on shore: So God, in the Gospel-dispensation, proposes his covenant to every one as a ground of faith; assuring them, that whosoever takes hold of his covenant, and receives his Christ, whom he hath given for a covenant to the people, shall not perish, but have everlasting life. For the Lord's sake, do not put this rope of salvation away from you, under a pretence that ye know not if it be designed for you. Would ye not reckon it ridiculous madness, in any of these drowning men now mentioned, to fall a disputing whether the rope were cast in to them, when they are at the very point of sinking to the bottom? Would not every one of them gripe at it, with the utmost strength and vigour, without putting any question? Now this is the very case, O sinner, thou art going down to the pit of eternal misery; God, by his ministers, cries to you to take hold of his rope of salvation: O then see that ye refuse not him that speaketh from heaven; do not dispute yourselves away from your own mercy. 8thly, Let the welcome that others hath met with, in coming to Christ, be your encouragement to venture also; never any that really came to him, but they met with a kindly reception. Ask the prodigal son; ask *Mary Magdalene, Paul,*
and

and others, what entertainment they met with from this Saviour ; they will be ready to tell you, that they obtained mercy. Now the same mercy that saved them, is as ready to save you. You don't doubt but *Moses, David, Peter, Paul*, and other saints that are now in glory, had sufficient warrant to believe. Sirs, you have the same grounds of faith as ever they had, the same God, the same Saviour, the same Bible, the same covenant, the same promises, the same faithfulness of God to lean to, as ever they had ; and these Grounds of faith are so firm, that they never disappointed any that leaned to them ; and therefore be encouraged to believe as they did. O ! how will it gall and torment unbelieving sinners in hell for ever, when they see others who believed upon the same grounds, that were common to them also, sitting down in the kingdom of heaven, and themselves shut up in utter darkness, with devils and damned spirits, because of their unbelief ? And, how will the devil himself upbraid unbelievers in hell, when fallen under the same condemnation with himself, that they had such fair warrants to believe in Christ, which he never had ?

Object. 2. You bid me embrace Christ, but, alas ! he is far away out of my reach ; Christ is in heaven, how shall I win at him ?

Answer, Seeing ye cannot come up to Christ, Christ is come down to you ; and we bring him near to you, in this word of salvation which we preach, *Isa.* 46. 12, 13. *Hearken to me, ye stout-hearted, that are far from righteousness ; I bring near my righteousness, it shall not be far off, and my salvation shall not tarry : And therefore, say not in thine heart, Who shall ascend into heaven, to bring Christ down from above ? or who shall descend into the deep, to bring him up again from the dead ? for the word is nigh thee, even in thy mouth, and in thy heart ; that is, the word of faith which we preach,* *Rom.* 10. 6, 7, 8. Sirs, Christ is in this Gospel, this word of faith, and grace, which we, in the name of God, deliver unto you ; and your faith must terminate immediately upon this word, otherwise ye can never embrace him. As I believe or trust a man, by his verbal or written promise ; so I embrace Christ, by the word of faith, or promises in the Gospel. Suppose a sponfable man, residing in *America*, should send me his bill for any sum of money, that man and his money are bro't near to me by his bill and security which he sends me : So here, tho' Christ be in heaven, and we upon earth, yet the word of faith, which we preach, brings him, his kingdom, righteousness, salvation, and wholefulness nigh unto every one of us, so that we need not ascend into heaven, or descend into hell, in quest of him.

Object. 3. My Arms have been so defiled with the embraces
of

of other lovers, that I am afraid Christ will never allow me to embrace him. For *answer*, I only refer you to *Jeremiah 3. 1. Thou hast played the harlot with many lovers, yet return unto me, saith the Lord.* But say ye, My sins are highly aggravated. *Answer*, *Isa. 1. 18. Come 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 as crimson, they shall be as wool.*

Object. 4. You bid me embrace him; but, alas! I want an arm; I have no power to embrace him. *Answer*, If thou hast a will to embrace him, the great difficulty is over, for there lies the principal stop; *Ye will not come to me, that ye might have life:* Where God gives the will, he gives also to do of his own good pleasure. You say, you want the arm to embrace him; then do as the man with the withered hand did, *mint to stretch it forth* in obedience to the command of Christ. Believing is a thing we must be essaying, even before we can find the Spirit of God working it in us effectually. We cannot pray, we cannot sanctify the sabbath, we cannot think a good thought, 'till the Spirit of God works it in us; and yet we do not forbear these duties, because we have no power to do them: So, although we have no power to believe, yet we should be trying to believe. The way that the Spirit of God works faith in the souls of the Elect, is, by making them sensible of their own inability, that they may turn the work over upon his own hand, who *worketh all our works in us, and for us.*

Object. last. Let me mint at believing, as much as I will, I shall never be able to effect it, if I be not among God's elect; *for it is only they that are ordained to eternal life that do believe.* *Answer*, This is an extraordinary sophism of the grand enemy of salvation, whereby he discourages sinners from believing in the Lord Jesus; and the fallacy, or weakness of it, will easily appear, by applying the objection to the ordinary business of human life. When meat is set before you, do you decline to take or use it, for this reason, that you do not know whether God has ordained it for you? Don't ye say, meat is for the use of man, and this meat is set before me, and therefore I will take it. Ye don't say, I will not plow or sow my ground, because I know not if ever God has decreed, that it shall bring forth; or I will not go home to my house, because I don't know if ever God has decreed I should come the length. Ye would reckon a man mad, or beside himself, who would argue at this rate in affairs of this nature. Why, the case is the very same; as the secret decrees of heaven lie quite out of the road in the management of the
affairs

affairs of this life, so neither are they at all to be the measure or rule of our actions in the great concerns of eternity: *Secret things belong to the Lord, but things that are revealed, to us and our Children*: And the ground of your condemnation at the great day, will not be, because ye were not elected, but, because ye would not believe. The reprobate *Jews* were cut off because of their unbelief, *Rom. 11. 7, & 20.* I shall only add, That as ye cannot know that the meat set before you, is yours in possession, till ye take it; so neither can ye ever know that Christ was ordained for you, till ye take him into your possession by faith: And therefore ye must believe in Christ, before ye know your election; otherwise ye shall never know it, and shall never believe either. So much by way of exhortation.

I shall conclude this discourse with a short word to two sorts of persons. *First*, To you who, like *Simeon*, have got him in the embraces of your souls, and who perhaps can say, to your sweet experience, with the spouse, *I have found him whom my soul loveth.* All I say to you shall be comprized in these two or three words, (1.) O blest God, as *Simeon* did, for such a privilege; let the high praises of God be in your mouths. I told you already of several songs, ye have ground and reason to sing, which I shall not stand to resume; Only, to engage you to bless him, consider, that this is all the tribute he expects from you. Who will ever bless him, if not the people that he has formed for himself? Consider again, that this is the way to have blessings multiplied upon you: The thankful beggar is best served at the door both of God and man. The trumpeter loves to sound where there is an echo, which brings back the sound to his ears; so God loves to bestow his blessings, where he hears of them again in songs of praise and gratitude. Praise is the work of heaven, through a long eternity: Now, they who are bound to that land afar off, should be lisping out the language of the land, before they come there. (2.) Have ye got Christ in the arms of your souls? O then improve your golden season; and while ye are allowed to ride with the king in the chariot of the wood of *Lebanon*, improve your interest with him, both for yourselves and others: Particularly intreat him, That he would revive his own work, which is under such a sad decay in our land, at this day; study to *bring him into your mother's house, and to the chambers of her that conceived you.* (3.) Have ye got him in your arms, then follow the spouse's practice, *Cant. 3. 4. I held him, and would not let him go:* O! keep him in the embraces of your souls; his presence dispels clouds, and turns the shadows of death into the morning;

it is like oil to the chariot-wheels of the soul: Light, life, liberty, peace, pardon, and plenty are his continual attendants; and remember that his departure is of a very dangerous consequence. 'Tis true, his real presence shall never depart; but yet his quickning, strengthening, and upholding presence may be withdrawn to such a degree, that ye may go mourning without the sun; and if through untenderness ye provoke him to withdraw, the quarrel may be pursued even to the gates of hell, so that ye may be made to cry out, *The arrows of the Almighty are within me, the poison thereof drinketh up my spirits; and the terrors of God set themselves in array against me,* Job 6. 4.

And in order to your keeping him in the embraces of your souls, (1.) Beware of every thing that may provoke him to withdraw; particularly beware of security, which made him to withdraw from the spouse, *Cant. 5. 3, 6.* verses compared. Beware of pride, for *God resisteth the proud, and beholds them afar off.* Beware of worldly-mindedness, *for the iniquity of his covetousness, I was wroth, and smote him,* *Isai. 57. 17.* Beware of unbelief, that root of bitterness, which causes to *depart from the living God*: Distrust and *jealousy is the rage of a man*, much more is it provoking unto God. Under the law, God appointed porters to keep watch at the door of the temple, that nothing might be suffered to enter which might defile the dwelling-place of his name: Thy soul and body, believer, is the temple of God; therefore guard against every thing that may defile the same. (2.) If ye would hold Christ in the embraces of your souls, keep grace in a lively exercise; for these are the *spikenard and spices, that send out a fragrant smell* for his entertainment. Keep the arm of faith continually about him; let the fire of divine love burn continually upon the altar of thy heart; let the anchor of hope be fixed within the vail; let the fountain of evangelical repentance be still running; and under your greatest attainments, be humbled, and take care to set the crown upon Christ's head, saying, *Not unto us, not unto us, but to thy name be the glory.*

The second sort of persons I would speak a little to, are these, who perhaps are complaining of hidings and with-drawings, and are perhaps saying, I came to the temple, to see if I could get Christ in my arms, but I am disappointed; yea, matters are come that length with me, that I am ready to raze foundations, and to conclude that I am an utter stranger to him. All I have to offer to you, shall be comprised in these two or three things, with which I conclude. (1.) Allow me to ask, if there be not a void and emptiness in thy heart, which the whole creation cannot fill,

'till Christ himself comes and fills it? Are not ordinances, ministers, word and sacrament, empty without him, like dry breasts? That says, Thou art not altogether a stranger to him; and therefore do not entertain harsh thoughts of thy self, thy case is not at all unprecedented. What think ye of *David*, Psal. 13. *Azaph*, Psal. 77. *Heman*, Psal. 88. yea, of Christ himself, who, through the withdrawing of his father's love, was made to utter that heart-rending cry, *My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?*

(2.) Know, for thy comfort, that thy hiding Lord will return again; weeping may endure for a night, but joy cometh in the morning, *Psal.* 30. 4, 5. *Isa.* 54. 7, 8. The very breathings and longings of thy soul after him, are a pledge of his return; for *he satisfieth the longing soul, and filleth the hungry soul with goodness.*

(3.) When ye cannot get Christ himself embraced, study to embrace his word of promise, as the Old-Testament Saints did, *Heb.* 11. 13. As a loving wife will lay the letters of her absent husband in her breast, and perhaps kiss his hand-writ; so lay the sweet promises of thy best husband in thy bosom, and between thy breast, until he himself return. (4.) Maintain your claim unto him on the ground of the covenant when you cannot maintain it upon a ground of sense; as a wife will maintain her relation to her husband, though he be both angry and absent. The Lord loves to have his people threaping kindness, and maintaining their claim upon the marriage-contract of the new covenant, *when they walk in darkness, and see no light,* *Isa.* 50. 10. and such a carriage as this, commonly lands in a happy meeting betwixt Christ and the souls of his people; for, after believing, comes feeling.

*The rent Vail of the Temple : or, Access to the
HOLY of HOLIES by the Death of CHRIST;*

In a SERMON preached immediately after the Administration of the Sacrament of the LORD'S-SUPPER, at *Carnock*, the 12th Day of *July*, 1719.

By the Reverend Mr. RALPH ERSKINE.

MATTH. xxvii. 51.

And behold the vail of the temple was rent in twain from the top to the bottom.

SOME here may think, what will the minister make of that text, and what relation hath it to the work of this day? Indeed, I cannot promise to make any thing of it, unless the Lord

Lord himself make something of it to you. But, with his help, we may find a feast in it to our souls, and a suitable feast to follow immediately after the celebration of the Lord's Supper. Christ hath been evidently set forth crucified among you this day, and as you have been called to feast upon his passion, so now you are called to feast upon the fruits and effects of it. Have you seen him dying on a cross for you? O come and see what immediately followed upon his death, *Behold the vail of the temple was rent from the top to the bottom.* That I may divide the words, and then explain them, you may notice here, 1. The connexion of this verse with what went before, in the particle *and*; intimating the time of this miracle, that it attended the death of Christ, *verse 50. When he had cried with a loud voice, he gave up the ghost.* This loud cry signified that his death should be publick, and proclaimed to all the world, as it hath been to you this day; and his yielding up the ghost, shewed that he voluntarily resigned his soul to be an offering for sin, according to his undertaking as our surety, *Isa. 53. 10.* Death being the penalty for the breach of the first covenant, *Thou shalt surely die*; the Mediator of the new covenant must make atonement by means of death, otherwise no remission. Now he gave up the ghost, and immediately the vail of the temple was rent. 2. You have a note of admiration, *Behold!* intimating what a wonderful thing did immediately ensue. Several miracles, besides the rending of the vail, are here mentioned, but this seems to be the most remarkable. We are told, *that the earth did quake, the rocks rent, the graves were opened, and many dead bodies of the saints arose*; but that which is put in the first rank of these miracles, is, *that the vail of the temple was rent in twain*; and we find the Evangelist *Mark* mentions this in particular, and none of the rest of the miracles here named, as if this rending of the vail was the miracle most to be noticed, as containing somewhat most mysterious and significant therein, *Mark 15. 37, 38.* Where we have the very same words, *Jesus cried with a loud voice, and gave up the ghost, and the vail of the temple was rent in twain, from the top to the bottom.* And here it is ushered in with a *behold*, turn aside and see this great sight, be astonished at it. But what are we to wonder at? Then, 3. See this object of admiration, the vail of the temple was rent in twain, just as our Lord Jesus expired; that vail of the temple which parted betwixt the *holy place* and the *most holy*, was rent by an invisible power. In this and the rest of the miracles Christ gave testimony to his Godhead, putting forth the power of his divine nature at the same time wherein his human nature, his soul and body, was rent in twain, like the vail of the temple.

ple. It is remarkable, how the Evangelist describes the manner in which the veil of the temple was rent, shewing, what a full and intire rent it was. *Luke* says, *it was rent in the midst*, and here *Matthew* and *Mark* say, *it was rent in twain*; rent from the top, rent to the bottom, and rent in twain from the top to the bottom, an intire rent. But what was the meaning of all this? What did the rending of the veil signify? (1.) It was in conformity to the temple of Christ's body, which was now dissolved. Christ was the true temple, *in whom dwells all the fulness of the Godhead bodily*. When he cried and gave up the ghost, and so dissolved and rent the veil of his flesh; the literal temple did as it were, eccho to the cry, and answer the strokes, by rending its veil. (2.) The rending of the veil of the temple signified the revealing of the mysteries of the *Old Testament*. The veil of the temple was for concealment. It was extremely dangerous for any to see the furniture of the most holy place within the veil, except the high priest, and he but once a year with great ceremony, and through a cloud of smoke: All which pointed out the darkness of that dispensation, *2 Cor.* 3. 13. But now, at the death of Christ, all was laid open, the mysteries are unveiled, so that he that runs may read the meaning of them. (3.) The rending of the veil of the temple signified the uniting of *Jews* and *Gentiles*, by removing the partition-wall betwixt them, which was the *ceremonial law*. Christ by his death repealed it, and *cancelled that hand-writing of ordinances*, nailed it on the cross, and so *broke down the middle-wall of partition*; and by abolishing these institutions and ceremonies, by which the *Jews* were distinguished from all other people, *he abolished in his flesh the enmity, even the law of commandments contained in ordinances; for to make in himself of twain one new man*, *Eph.* 2. 14, 15. Just as two rooms are made one, by taking down the partition-wall. (4.) The rending of the veil did especially signify the consecrating and opening of a new and living way to God. The veil kept off people from drawing near to the most holy place; but their rending of it signified that Christ, by his death, opened a way to God for himself, as our blessed High Priest, and for us in him. 1. For himself. This was the great day of atonement, wherein the great High Priest, not by the blood of goats and calves, but by his own blood, entred once for all into the holy place, in token of which, the veil was rent; *Heb.* 9. 7, to 13. Tho' Christ did not personally ascend to heaven, *the holy place not made with hands*, that is, to heaven, till above forty days after; yet he immediately acquired a right to enter, and had a virtual admission. His entrance into the heavenly temple, *into the*

holy of holies, began in his death; having offered his sacrifice in the outer-court, the blood of it was to be sprinkled on the mercy-seat within the veil, according to the manner of the priests under the law. But now the legal shadows were all to vanish; the great, the true High Priest having by his own blood entered, and so procured, 2. For us an open entrance into the true holy of holies, as the Apostle applies it, *Heb. 10. 20, 19. We have boldness to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus, by a new and living way, which he hath consecrated for us thro' the veil.* We have now free access to come with boldness to a throne of grace, to a God in Christ, *Heb. 4.* at the close. The veil of the temple did so interpose betwixt the people and the most holy place, that they could neither go in nor look into it, but only the priest in the manner that I said before; but the rending of the veil signifies, that the true holy of holies, heaven itself, is now open to us by the entrance of our great High Priest, that we also may enter in by faith as a royal priesthood, following our forerunner, who for us hath entred within the veil, *Heb. 6. 19.* Nothing can obstruct or discourage our access to God in his grace and glory, for the veil is rent. Now I am to touch a little at the special mystery here represented, *Behold, the veil of the temple was rent in twain from the top to the bottom.*

Observ. *That Christ by his death both rent the veil that interposed betwixt God and us, and obstructed our access to him.* He gave up the ghost, and behold the veil was rent; *1 Pet. 3. 18. Christ hath once suffered for sins, the just for the unjust.* Why? *that he might bring us to God;* and in order thereunto, that he might rend the veil of guilt and wrath that interposed betwixt us and him, that he might take away the cherubims and flaming sword, and open a way to the tree of life.

The method wherein I shall speak to this subject, shall be to shew, I. What is the veil that interposed betwixt God and us. II. How the death of Christ hath rent that veil. III. In what manner is the veil rent. IV. For what end is the veil rent. V. Draw some inferences from the whole for application.

There may be some here that came to this occasion, to enquire into God's temple, to see his beauty and glory there, and to get near to God; but, ah! they are complaining, they have mis'd their mark: Why? they apprehended a veil betwixt them and the glory of God and tho't it impossible to get thro' the veil; but (may be) you wist not that the veil of the temple was rent, and therefore you have not seen the beauty of the Lord in his temple. If you had known that the veil was rent from the top to the bot-

tom, you would have gone in more boldly to the most holy place ; and if yet you will believe that the veil is rent, I can promise that you shall not miss a sight of his glory thro' the rent veil ; did I not say to thee, *If thou wouldst believe, thou shalt see the glory of God.* But I proceed in the method proposed.

First then, What is that veil that interposed betwixt God and us ? Not to speak of the veil of Old-Testament shadows and ceremonies, now rent and removed by the death of Christ, there are some veils that in a special manner obstructed our access to God, and they may be reduced to these three. The veil of a broken covenant, the veil of God's injured attributes, and the veil of man's sin. 1. The veil of a broken covenant, or law of works. The covenant of works, you know, was *do and live*, otherwise you shall die ; *In the day thou eatest, thou shalt surely die.* In which covenant you see there was a precept, a promise, and a penalty. The precept was *do*, or perfect obedience ; the promise was *life*, or eternal happiness upon his obedience ; and the penalty was *death* and eternal damnation, in case of disobedience. Now man by his sin hath broken the precept of that covenant, & so forfeited the promise of life, and incurred the penalty of death. If ever we have access to God, this broken precept must be repaired, this forfeited life must be redeemed, this penalty must be executed. Here is a veil that separates betwixt God and us, a veil that neither men or angels can rend, and yet a veil that must be rent, otherwise we die and perish for ever, and this veil is the harder to be rent, because of the following, namely, 2. The veil of God's injured perfections, particularly, his incensed justice, and injured holiness. Justice, infinite justice, was a black veil that obstructed our access to heaven ; for God became an angry God, a God filled with fierce wrath against the sinner. God hath set his penalty upon the law, commanding perfect obedience upon pain of death, God's justice was engaged to make this penalty effectual upon man's falling into sin. Nothing can satisfy justice but infinite punishment ; *the wages of sin is death*, and *God will by no means clear the guilty* : And so if this veil be not rent by a complete satisfaction, the guilty sinner must go down to the pit. The holiness of God also was injured by the breach of the law ; sin is a transgression of the law, a transgression of the precept. Now, as God's justice stands up in defence of the threatening and penalty, so his holiness stands up for the defence of the precept and command of the holy law. God cannot justify the sinner, nor accept of him as righteous, unless he hath a complete righteousness ; not a lame, partial and imperfect righteousness, but a righ-

teousness every way commensurate to the extensive precept of the law, will satisfy an infinitely holy God. As infinite justice cannot be satisfied without a complete satisfaction, answering to the threatening and penalty of the law, so the infinite holiness of God cannot be satisfied without a perfect obedience answerable to the precept and command of the law. Now our natural want of ability to yield satisfaction, and our natural want of perfect conformity to the law, make justice, and holiness, and other perfections of God stand in the way of our salvation, and of our access to heaven, like a veil that can never be rent by us; especially considering, that there is a third veil, and that is the veil of sin, on our part. This is a separating veil betwixt God and us, *Isa.* 59. 2. *Your iniquities have separated betwixt you and your God.* Now before we can get near unto God, this veil must be rent, the guilt of sin must be expiated; for without shedding of blood there is no remission. The filth of sin must be purged; for who shall ascend to the hill of the Lord, and stand in his holy place, but he that hath clean hands and a pure heart? The power of sin must be broken. There is by nature in us all a power of ignorance, our minds are become a dungeon of darkness, and this is such a veil betwixt God and us, that unless it be removed, there is no hope of mercy. Therefore, says the prophet, *It is a people of no understanding, therefore he that made them will not have mercy on them, &c.* There is in us a power of enmity: *The carnal mind is enmity against God, &c.* We are enemies to God by wicked works: This is another veil that must be rent by an arm of almighty power; for it is a veil and curtain that the devil hath strongly wrought like a web with the warp and waft of pride, carnality, security, worldliness, and all other wickedness whatsoever, which are but so many threads and pieces of the web, this veil of enmity. There is a power of unbelief, that is another veil that on our part stands betwixt us and the holy place, and separates us from divine favour: *He that believeth not, is condemned already.*

The *second thing*, How the death of Christ hath rent the veil; when he gave up the ghost, behold the veil was rent. 1. By the death of Christ, the veil of a broken covenant was rent in twain, so as we might get near to God thro' that veil of the law; for the law was fulfilled in every part of it, by his obedience to the death. Was the precept of the law a perfect obedience? Well, Christ by his obedience to the death did magnify the law, and make it honourable, brought in everlasting righteousness; his death was the finishing stroke, the highest act of that obedience whereby the law was fulfilled. Was the promise of life in the law or first cove-

nant forfeited by us? Well, Christ rent this veil, by redeeming the forfeiture with the price of his blood; he bought back the inheritance for us that we had lost, making a purchase of us and of eternal salvation for us. Was the penalty of death in the law standing also in the way? Well, Christ comes in the sinner's room, endures this penalty, by coming under the curse of the law, becoming obedient to the death, enduring the wrath of God, and delivering us from the wrath to come: And so behold the veil of a broken covenant was rent. 2. By the death of Christ, the veil of God's injured attributes, that stood betwixt God and us, was rent and removed. Christ hath satisfied the justice of God, by offering himself a sacrifice, *Eph. 5. 2.* This offering being thro' the eternal Spirit, it was of infinite worth and value; here the altar sanctifieth the gift; the altar was the Godhead of Christ, the offering was made upon the altar of the divine nature, and therefore this blood of Christ is called the blood of God. This sacrifice was of infinite worth and value, for doing the business of poor man in atoning justice, and so rending this veil. But now, as Christ hath satisfied the justice of God, by enduring the penalty and threatning of the law, so he hath vindicated the holiness of God by fulfilling the precept and command of the law; which he not only did thro' the whole course of his life, but perfectly finished in his death. Now if Christ hath fulfilled the law, satisfied the justice, and vindicated the holiness of God, by his obedience to the death, then we may see and say, *Behold the veil was rent.* But, 3. There is the veil of sin on our part; how is this rent by the death of Christ? Why, the lamb was sacrificed to rend and remove this veil; *Behold the lamb of God, that takes away the sin of the world.* By his death the guilt of sin is expiated, *for God set him forth to be a propitiation through faith in his blood, to declare his righteousness for the remission of sins, &c.* By his death the filth of sin is purged, *for the blood of Christ cleanseth from all sins,* and that both meritoriously, and efficaciously; for by his death the power of sin is also broken fundamentally, seeing by his death he purchased the Spirit, which in due time he pours out, and thereby actually removes the veil on our part, which he hath done fundamentally and virtually on the cross. By this purchased Spirit he rends the veil of darkness and ignorance: *The God who commanded light to shine out of darkness, shines into the heart, &c.* All the light of nature, reason, education, and human literature, cannot rend this veil, till the man receive the Spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of Christ. By this purchased Spirit he rends the veil of enmity, shedding abroad his love upon the heart; and indeed the view

and apprehension of God's mighty love in Christ, can rend that mighty vail of enmity, for we love him whenever we see that he first loved us, 1 *John* 4. 19. When the soul sees the God, whose majesty he dreaded, is now a God in Christ, reconciled to the soul through the sacrifice that Christ offered up, then the soul is reconciled to God, and so the vail of enmity is rent in twain. By this purchas'd Spirit he rends also the vail of unbelief; for as he is a Spirit of light to remove the vail of darkness, and a Spirit of love to remove the vail of enmity, so he comes into the heart as a Spirit of faith, and removes the vail of unbelief. He begins this rent in a work of humiliation, when he rends the heart in twain with a sense of sin, and a sight of its undone state; when he makes the soul confess its sin, and justify the Lord though he should damn him for his sin, he makes the rent of the vail wider by a gracious manifestation, like that, *John* 2. 11. *He manifested forth his glory, and his disciples believed on him.* Thus he rends the vail of unbelief, and completes the rent of this vail, when faith is turned into vision. Thus you see how by his death the vail was rent.

The *third thing*, *In what manner was the vail rent?* All I shall say on this head, shall be in allusion shortly to the rending of the vail of the temple here, which we see, was in a wonderful manner ushered in with a *Behold*, 1. *Behold it was rent*, not only drawn aside, but rent. The curtain was not only drawn aside, but torn to pieces, as if God had been angry at the vail of partition betwixt him and us; angry at the vail of separation, and enraged that there should have been any vail to intercept betwixt him and us. God's heart was set upon a reconciliation betwixt him and us, and therefore his hand takes the curtain that was hanging up betwixt him and us; gave it such a rent, as it might never be whole again: All the devils in hell cannot sew up the rent, so as to disappoint God's design of bringing his people into union & communion with him. 2. *Behold the vail of the temple was not only rent, but rent in twain*; the vail that was one, was made two, that God and man, who were two, might be made one. It was not half rent, but wholly rent, rent in twain, a full and complete rent; shewing, that Christ, by his death, would not be a half Saviour, but a complete Saviour, and the author of a full and complete salvation, taking intirely out of the way whatever separated betwixt God and us, not leaving so much as a stitch of the curtain to hold the two sides of the vail together; no, the vail was rent in twain. And not only so, but, 3. *Behold, the vail was rent from the top to the bottom.* *The vail was rent from the top*; the highest thing that separated betwixt God and us, was rent in twain! we could never have

have reached up to the top of the veil, yea, the hands and arms of all the men on earth, and angels in heaven, were too short to reach to the top of the infinite justice and holiness of God, that interposed betwixt him and us. The top of this veil, this wall of partition, *was higher than heaven*, what could we or any other creature do for rending it from the top? But Christ put up his hand, as it were, to the top of the veil, and rent it from the top. The rent begins at the top, but it does not stop here: For, 4. The veil is also *rent to the bottom*. The bottom of this veil, that did separate betwixt God and us, did reach as deep as the bottom of hell; who could descend to hell for us, to rend the veil from the bottom? According to the lamentation of one *Joannes Seneca* upon his death-bed, *We have here*, says he, *some that will go to the quire for us, some that will play for us, some that will say mass for us, and some that will pray for us; but where is there one that will go to hell for us?* But, O happy believer, Christ is one that hath gone to hell for you, that he might quench all the flames of hell with his blood, and conquer all the powers of hell that were in the way betwixt you and heaven. He descended to hell, in a manner that he might rend the bottom of the veil. But there is yet more here, he not only rends the veil at the top, and at the bottom; but, 5. *From the top to the bottom* all is rent, both the top & the bottom, and all that is betwixt the top and the bottom, and all the impediments betwixt heaven and hell are removed. Tho' heaven be purchased, and hell vanquished, yet there might be something in the earth, something in the world, betwixt heaven & hell, that might obstruct the passage to the holiest; ay, but the rent is from the top to the bottom, all that comes betwixt the top and the bottom, is rent as well as both ends; so that there is access from the lowest part of misery, to the highest happiness; a long rent, in a manner, from the top of heaven to the bottom of hell. We fell as low as hell by sin, but Christ by his death hath made an open way from hell to heaven; for, *behold, the veil was rent in twain from the top to the bottom.*

The fourth thing, *For what end was the veil rent?* I shall tell you only these two ends of it. 1. That Christ might enter into the holiest as our high-priest for us. 2. That we might enter in also after him, and through him. 1. I say the veil of the temple was rent, that Christ, our glorious high-priest, might enter into the *holy of holies* in our name. I told you, that the veil of the temple was that which parted betwixt the *holy place* and the *most holy*, and which kept off people from drawing near to the *most holy place*. The veil was for concealment, & none might enter within the veil

but the high-priest, and he was not to enter in without blood, the blood of the sacrifice along with him, as you see *Heb. 9. 3, 7.* Now, the most holy place was a type of heaven. So our Lord Jesus Christ having shed his own blood, entered within the veil into heaven, the true *holy of holies*, carrying in with him the blood of his own sacrifice, *Heb. 9. 12. Not by the blood of goats and calves, but his own blood, he entered in once into the holy place.* Not that Christ did carry into heaven his own substantial blood in his hand, we are not to understand it so carnally, but that in a spiritual sense, and virtually he did so. Under the law, the day of atonement was upon that day when the high-priest went into the *holy of holies*, *Lev. 16. 30.* on that day the people were pardoned all their sins, and cleansed from all their transgressions; when the high-priest had been *within the veil, in the holy of holies*, then was the atonement actually made. Tho' the blood was shed without the camp, yet the atonement was not made till it was bro't into the holy place, *Lev. 16. 14, 15.* What did this typify, but that our atonement was perfectly made upon Christ's going into the *holy of holies*, namely, heaven? See *Heb. 9. 24. For Christ is not entered into the holy places made with hands, which are the figures of the true; but into heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of God for us.* Perhaps you have thought hitherto that the work of our redemption was perfectly completed on the cross, so as there was no more to be done: But know, it was not enough for the sacrifice to be killed without the camp, but the blood must be carried into the *holy of holies*, all was not done till that was done. Indeed when Christ died, the sacrifice was slain, the blood was shed, there was not more sacrifice to succeed, all was finished in that respect; but yet all was not done until the true veil being rent as well as the typical, the blood of Christ was carried into the holy place within the veil, that is, into heaven. Though Christ did not personally ascend, as I said in the explication, to heaven till above forty days after, yet he immediately acquired a right to enter, and had a virtual admission; so that his entrance began in his death, and when he ascended into heaven, he completed and perfected that in his own person, in the true *holy of holies*, heaven itself, which the high-priest did typically, in the figurative *holy of holies*, which was of old under the law in the earth, and there hath Christ, in the power and virtue of his blood, made atonement; and, as the high-priest did under the law, he carried in with him all the names of all the tribes of *Israel* on his breast, and by the power of this blood of the sacrifice, made a full atonement. But then, 2. Another end of rending of the veil was, not only that he might make a way

for himself, as our priest unto the most holy place, but that he might make a way for us in him, that we might enter in also, and have access to God through him, access to heaven through him. See therefore how the believer is said to follow in after Christ into the holiest within the veil, *Heb. 6. 19, 20.* They are said to flee for refuge to the hope set before them, *which hope we have as an anchor of the soul, both sure and stedfast, entering into that within the veil, whether the forerunner is for us entered, even Jesus, made an high-priest for ever after the order of Melchisedeck. Heb. 10. 19, 20.* We have boldness to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus, by a new and living way, which he hath consecrated for us through the veil, that is to say, his flesh. Where our way to heaven, or to the holiest, is said to be thro' the blood of Christ, or, which is all one, thro' his flesh offered as a propitiatory sacrifice, by which, as by the rent veil, we have boldness to enter. Now this entrance into the holiest, or access to God that we have in Christ, is twofold, either inchoative here, or consummative hereafter. 1. There is an initial, inchoative, or begun entrance that we have into the holiest in time. In the most holy place was the golden altar, and symbols of God's presence and glorious Majesty, and access thereto was typical of our access to God and heaven; which access we have now with boldness even in time, through the rent veil by which our high-priest hath entered into the holy place, *Heb. 4. last verse, Seeing then that we have a great high-priest, that is past into the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us therefore come boldly to the throne of grace.* And so it is inferred from this same doctrine, *Heb. 10. 22. Let us draw near with a true heart, in full assurance of faith.*

Quest. What is that nearness to God, and access to him, that a man hath in time when he is bro't within the veil? *Answer,* In a word, it lies not only in the first application of grace, and change of the man's state, when in Christ Jesus he that was afar off is made nigh by the blood of Christ; for, whenever the virtue of that blood comes upon us by the Spirit of Christ, God comes near to us, and we are brought near to God; but there is still more and more nearness enjoyed by his people. Exercised Christians are able to give a distinct account of their having this nearness at some times, and of their want of it at other times. He may be suspected indeed for an hypocrite, that hath no changes, *Psal. 55. 19.* for the true Christian's sky is never long clear and without clouds; change of weather, and change of way, is usually found by travellers to heaven. Every believer indeed hath still the Spirit of Christ dwelling in him; *for if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his;* but there are some singular, outpourings

ings of the Spirit promised and bestowed, and well known by all believers, and they are precious enjoyments. *This Spirit the World cannot receive, because it sees him not, neither knows him, says Christ; but you know him, for he dwells with you, and shall be in you, John 14. 17.* This access to God within the veil, is sometimes experienced in prayer, yea, most frequently in that exercise is the light of God's countenance lifted up, and the soul made to say, *I love the Lord, because he hath heard the voice of my supplication.* Do not ye believers, know this, that sometimes you have been so troubled that you could not speak? *Psal. 77. 4.* that your hearts have been so bound and straitned, that you could do nothing, and say nothing before the Lord, but sit as dumb and oppressed, all dark above, all dead within, and all doors shut upon you? You durst not neglect prayer, and yet you could not perform it; but behold, you have quickly found the two leaved gates cast open to you, your hearts enlarged and mouths wide open'd in asking, the windows of heaven open, and the banks of the river of life broken down, and the streams gushing in upon you, like that in *Isai. 44. 3.* *I'll pour water upon him that is thirsty, and floods upon the dry ground.* Also this access to God within the veil, is sometimes experienced in sweet communion and fellowship with God; *Truly our fellowship is with the Father, and with his Son Jesus Christ.* This communion with God is a mystery, sweet indeed to them that have it, and surpassing all the delights of sense and reason; but to them that have it not, it is incredible and unintelligible, a stranger intermeddles not with this joy. Ye that know not what it is, altho' the word be full of suitable and favourable expressions of it, yet it is a riddle and dark parable to you, it is only tasting of it that can declare its transcendent sweetness. *O taste and see that God is good!* You that know what it is, tho' you cannot express it, yet you can relish and understand some sound words about it. It may be, you feel it sometimes at a communion-table, sometimes in a barn or cow-house, sometimes in the fields, or under a bush, as *Nathanael* under the fig-tree: But what you felt, you cannot make the world understand; only when the Lord directs the minister to speak somewhat suitable to it, then you're ready to think, O it is just like the thing I felt at such a time and such a place; that which the minister is saying from God's word, hath a sweet sound of that which I got yonder, when none in all the world heard me or saw me: *But (Nathanael) when thou wast under the fig-tree, I saw thee,* says Christ. I heard you groaning to me, I saw you wrestling with me, I put your tears in my bottle, and poured in my comforts into your soul. O, know you what it

is to be brought near to him, and to have the clouds and veils that are on your hearts, or on your faces, scattered, and the light of his countenance lifted up upon you? Have you not been sometimes on the mount, so as to think, *O how good is it to be here?* Have you not known what the warm and healing beams of the sun of righteousness upon you are? Have you not tasted that in his company, that hath made all *the wells of worldly comforts like puddle water*, lothsome and unfavoury to you, yea, that hath made you groan in this tabernacle, and long to be at that complete and uninterrupted communion above, whereof all you tasted on earth is but a small earnest? However, the vail was rent, that you might enter within the holiest, to a begun heaven even in time. Grace being the same specifically with glory, there is but a gradual difference; and therefore the believer, even on earth, is said to be *come to Mount Zion, the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, to the innumerable company of angels, to the general assembly and church of the first-born that are written in heaven, to God the judge of all, and to the spirits of just men made perfect*, Heb. 12. 22, 23. Why, when does the believer come to all this? Even when he comes by faith to *Jesus the Mediator of the new covenant, and to the blood of sprinkling*, then he is come to heaven itself, the true holy of holies inchoatively, or by a begun entrance. But, 2. There is a consummative entrance into the *holiest*, that the believer shall have, as a fruit of the rending of the vail, and that is when he comes to the heaven above, to the higher house, *whither the forerunner is for us entered*, having rent the vail; which was rent, that we might have access to God in glory, as well as in grace, and then the believer will not be half in, as it were, but completely within the vail: for then will his communion with God be completed; then his knowledge of God, his love to God, his delight in God, his vision of God's glory, his conformity to God's image, will all be complete, *for that which is in part shall be done away, and that which is perfect shall come*, 1 Cor. 13. 10. O what a sweet exchange will that be, when faith will say to vision, I give place to you; when hope will say to fruition, I give place to you; when grace will say to glory, I give place to you; when partial communication will say to perfection, I give place to you; when short transient views will say to uninterrupted everlasting joys, I give place to you? Little wonder then, if believers long to be wholly within the vail (but I insist not on it) for then indeed he fully enters into the holiest by the blood of Jesus. Thus you see the two great ends for which the vail was rent; *namely*, that way might be made for Christ's entering into the holy of holies, and so for our entering

in through him, and after him. But I come now to the *Fifth thing, viz.* the application. Is it so, that Christ hath by his death rent the veil that interposed betwixt God and us, and obstructed our access to him? Then, 1. For information, hence we may see, (1.) What a full feast of love we have to feed upon on a communion day, *namely*, the love of Christ, not only in dying, but in rending the veil, that he might enter into the holiest for us. The apostle says, that Christ loved us, and how does he prove it? Eph. 5. 2. *He gave himself an offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweet-smelling savour*; this savoury and sweet smelling sacrifice, was the *offering of incense*, and where was the incense offered under the law? Why, it was offered within the veil. God tells *Moses*, that *Aaron* should take his handful of sweet incense beaten small, and bring it within the veil, *Lev. 16. 12*. Now Christ having given himself an offering and sacrifice to God, without the camp in this world, he rends the veil, and goes to heaven, and offers himself as incense within the veil. Perhaps you have seen and thought upon the love of Christ, in his dying upon the cross, in his making himself a sacrifice; but, O see his love also in his incense within the veil. We ordinarily feed too sparingly upon Christ, and therefore our faith is weak; we eat for the most part but of one dish, Christ as the Paschal Lamb slain on the cross; but we should learn to feed upon Christ as a priest gone in within the veil; our faith should not tarry on the cross, but we should carry it further, even after Christ within the veil, into heaven itself. Our faith should flee for refuge to lay hold upon all the hope that is set before us; the anchor of our soul will not be so sure and steadfast, as it might be, except it enter within the veil, *Heb. 6. 19*. As the Apostle says of patience, *Let it have its perfect work*, so we say of faith, let it have its perfect work; let us follow Christ within the veil, and view him, not only shedding his blood, but entering into the holy of holies within the veil, and sprinkling his blood upon the mercy-seat and before it, *Lev. 16. 15*. The priests under the law sprinkled the mercy-seat, which was within the veil, all over; and when Christ went to heaven within the veil, he did that in substance which the priest did in ceremony, in order to make a full atonement: And when faith is acted upon all this, then the believer is said to be come to the blood of sprinkling. And we act not our faith far enough, when we act it not farther than the death of Christ; for the atonement was not actually perfected, though it was made fundamentally on the cross, yet not formally, 'till upon the rending of the veil, our High-priest entered into the holy place, and sprinkled the mercy-seat

seat with his blood, by which act mercy and justice are actually met, and kiss each other. (2.) If the veil of the temple be rent, hence we may see the glory of the New Testament dispensation, beyond that of the Old; the veil of the covering is rent, the darkness of that dispensation removed by the death of Christ, and Old Testament mysteries unveiled, so that now, he that runs may read the meaning of them. Now we see clearly, that the mercy-seat signified Christ the great propitiation, the pot of manna signified Christ the bread of life. *Now we all with open face beholding the glory of the Lord, as in a glass,* which helps the sight as the veil hindered it, and that the veil of the temple was rent, it may give us ground further to expect, that the veil shall be taken away from the hearts of the Jews, for *even to this day, when Moses is read, the veil is upon their hearts; nevertheless, when it shall turn to the Lord, the veil shall be taken away,* 2 Cor. 3. 15. (3.) If by the death of Christ the veil be rent, that is interposed betwixt God and us, hence we may see what is the way to heaven, and what access we have this way. *Why, we have boldness to come to the holiest by the blood of Jesus, by that new and living way that he hath consecrated through the veil.* We may come boldly to the throne of grace, for the veil is rent, by the blood of Jesus the way is open. How shall the unholiest of sinners venture to come into the holiest of all, or to God's presence? yea, says the Holy Ghost, *by the blood of Jesus,* by the rent veil. There are many mistakes about the way to the holy place: it is a dreadful thing to think, that many who have heard the Gospel (it may be) ten, twenty, thirty years, if they be ask'd of the way to heaven, they will say, why, if we do justly, live honestly and civilly, and do as we would be done to, we shall surely be saved. But I tell you, you shall surely be damned if no more be done. O sad, that after all the light that hath shined about the way of salvation by the slain Son of God, that civility, that is to be found among the heathens, is all the title a great many can give to eternal life. Others, they hope to go to heaven by a better righteousness, but it is a righteousness of their own; they say they will do as well as they can, they must read, & pray, & hear, & the like, & so they find out a way to heaven for themselves. Some cannot endure to hear any thing spoken against self-righteousness, as if no-body were in danger to be ruined by it; whereas this is a great part of the strong man's armour, whereby he keeps possession of souls. I tell you, Sirs, your self-righteousness is so far from being the way to heaven, that true holiness itself, is but the business that people

have

have to do who are in the way, there will never be another way to heaven but Christ; holiness is the walk, Christ is the way in which we walk, Col. 2. 6. *As ye have received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk ye in him. I am the way, no man comes to the Father, but by me.* This is the new and living way, consecrated through the vail. The vail of the temple is rent, and the way to the holiest lies thro' the rent vail. Every body thinks, that it is very hard to get to heaven, and that it will cost a great deal of time, and pains, and strugling; but, says one, here is the mischief of it, people do not know, that it is hard to know the way to heaven, and that flesh and blood cannot reveal it, 'till God himself send in a beam of light upon the heart, and give the Spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of Christ, who is the way, having by his death, rent the vail. O this way is little known, and yet we let you to know, that there is free access for you all this way, and nothing to hinder your access to God and heaven this way, if it be not your own ignorant unbelieving heart; nothing to hinder your entering into the holiest, for the vail is rent, the law is fulfilled, justice is satisfied, holiness vindicated, sin is expiated. Will you go to heaven this way, man and woman? for the door is open for you, the vail is rent for you, *to you is the word of this salvation sent*, to you old men and women, and to you young men and women, whosoever hears me, to you is the way to the holiest made passable, and *whosoever will, let him come and enter in*, and *him that cometh, he will in no wise cast out*. What in all the world is to hinder you from coming in? The law, however holy, needs not hinder you, here is a righteousness; justice, however awful, needs not hinder you, here is a satisfaction; your sins, however great, need not hinder you, here is a sacrifice; all these vails are rent, what should hinder? Are there are any other vails to be rent? O, say you, the vail of darkness, ignorance, enmity and unbelief that is upon my heart. Well, let me tell you, that needs not hinder you neither to come to Christ, and employ him to rend these vails on your part, that's but little for him to do, who could rend such great vails as were on God's part; O he is good at rending vails, give him work, and the work is done. Did he not rend a greater vail, when he satisfied infinite justice, and stopt up the flood-gates of divine wrath? And if he hath done the greater, O will you not employ him to do the less? Why, say you, if I knew that he rent that great vail for me, I would not fear but he would rend the lesser; why, man, the vail was rent for sinners, and why not for you? *Christ came to save sinners*. But, say you, all shall not be saved and brought within the vail,

vail, and perhaps not I. I answer, some shall be saved, and why not you? Wherefore are not all that hear his Gospel saved, but because they will not give employment to Christ to save them? Through unbelief they think he meant no favour towards them, when he rent the veil, and so stand from him, saying, it was not for me; but I declare in his name it was for you, man, for you, woman, whoever will have the benefit of it. The Gospel notifies in general, that the veil is rent for you all, so far as that God calls & commands you all to come into the holiest by this way, this new and living way, consecrated through the veil, and if you do not, you shall be damned for your neglect of it. But as for your particular personal knowledge of your actual interest in the benefit of this rent veil, it is impossible for you to have it, 'till you come to Christ and sue for it, therefore let nothing hinder you to enter, since the veil is rent, and the way made plain; you have nothing to do yourself, for you cannot rend any veil, all that you have to do, is to consent that Christ should rend all veils betwixt God and you, for he will be a complete Saviour, he will not leave a rag of the veil for you to rend, but with his own hand will rend all in twain from the top to the bottom. O say *amen* to it, that he may get all the work and all the praise.

Use second for examination. Try what interest you have in this privilege, if the veil be actually rent from the top to the bottom, with respect to you; try whether or not you have gone in within the rent veil of the temple, to the holy of holies. The veil was fundamentally rent, when Christ gave up the ghost, it was rent formally, when he entered into the holiest, the veil is rent objectively, in the preaching of this Gospel, and now the question is, if the veil be rent subjectively, and so as you have the actual saving benefit of it in your own person? It is not enough that the veil is rent doctrinally for you, so as you have liberty to go into the holy place; but whether is the veil rent effectually to you, and in you, so as you have stepped into the holiest by the rent veil. And,

(1.) If you be a believer indeed, to whom the veil is savingly rent, then you have got a humbling sight and sense of the veil that interposed betwixt God and you, and have seen yourself to be without the veil. Did you ever see such a veil of wrath on God's part, and such a veil of guilt on your part? Such a veil of broken law, incensed Justice, and injured holiness on the one hand, and such a veil of sin, darkness, unbelief and enmity on the other hand, as hath made you to despair that ever the veil would be rent by you, or any creature in heaven or earth, and made you to see yourself lost and undone, crying out,

Amen

Men and brethren, what shall we do to be saved? Did you never see your sad state, as having a black veil standing up betwixt God and you? Folks soul-exercise about religion is suspicious, if they never saw the veil. Some will say, O I have seen many ills about me, and I have an ill heart, and an ill frame of heart; but I ask, man, did you never see yourself to be in an ill state, in a state of distance from God, in a state of separation from God, by reason of the veil that was betwixt him and you? The effectual rending of the veil begins here, *namely*, at a humbling sight of the separating veil, the man sees himself without the veil, and so within the floodmark of God's wrath.

(2.) If the veil be effectually rent in you, then you have seen the glory of him that rent the veil, and the glory of God through the rent veil, something of the glory of God in Christ. The Apostle tells us, *Heb. 10. 19, 20. That Christ's flesh*, that is, his human nature, is the veil for us to enter by to the holy of holies, that is heaven, or God's presence, God's face; so that in his flesh, or human nature of Christ, we may see the very face, the very brightness of the glory of God as in a mirror. Now, if the veil be rent in you, and the face of the covering removed, then you have seen the glory of God in Christ; you have seen God's law fulfilled by him, God's justice satisfied in him, God's holiness vindicated by him, and so God's righteousness declared in the way of saving sinners thro' him, as the propitiation in his blood. Have you seen his glory as the *only way* to heaven, as God's way to you, and your way to God, as the render of the veil on God's part and yours, the glory of his death in the value and virtue of it; in the value of it, for rending of the veils that hindered God's access to you; and in the virtue of it, for rending of the veil within you, that hindered your access to God? Have you felt something of this virtue, in rending the veil of darkness and ignorance that was upon your understanding, and shining in upon you with the light of life? The effectual rending of the veil, makes a man see some glory that's within the veil; have you seen God's glory then thro' the rent veil, and that God's glorious attributes are all glorified to the highest in this way?

3. If the veil be effectually rent, then you have cast *the anchor of your hope within the veil*, *Heb. 6. 18, 19.* After your soul, like a weary vessel to's'd upon the waves of convictions, fears, terrors, could find no rest, God hath brought you at last into this haven of rest, to cast anchor within the veil; *you have fled for refuge to the hope set before you, which hope you have as an anchor, sure and steadfast, entering into that within the veil, whither the fore-runner hath entered.*

Whither

Whither have you fled for refuge, when the law and justice of God was pursuing you for your debt, when they were ready to condemn you to hell prison? Was you then made to flee for refuge to the surety that God set before you, for paying of your debt, and to say, Lord, take bail of thy own Son for me, I despair of ever answering such a terrible charge as Justice and the law hath against me; but O look for a discharge in the blood and righteousness of Jesus, and let that answer the charge. When Christ enter'd into the holiest with his blood within the vail, he sprinkled the mercy-seat, and when the soul takes hold of this blood and righteousness of Christ, as the ground of his acquittance from the charge of Justice, *then he casts anchor within the vail.*

4. If the vail be effectually rent for you, then surely you cannot but have a superlative love for that glorious High-priest, who by his death rent the vail, and went into the holiest for you. O can you say with *Paul, He loved me, and gave himself for me?* Or, can you say with *Peter, Thou that knowest all things, knowest that I love thee?* Surely they that love him not, know nothing yet savingly about the rending of the vail. It may be some love him, and dare not so confidently say it as *Peter* did; but if you can say *amen* to two texts of Scripture, we may warrant you that you love him indeed. The one is a sad text, *If any man love not the Lord Jesus Christ, let him be anathema maranatha,* 1 Cor. 16. 22. The true lover of Christ can say, *amen*, let them be even accursed that do not love him, and shall not love him. They that can say *amen* to that now, they shall sit at Christ's right hand at the great day, and say *amen* to the sentence of the great Judge, *Depart from me, ye cursed.* The other is a sweet text, *Worthy is the lamb that was slain to receive power and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honour, and glory, and blessing,* Rev. 5. 12. The true lover of Christ can say *amen*, worthy, worthy, worthy is the lamb to receive all the praises of all the redeemed to all eternity. They that can set the *amen* of faith to this now, they have begun to join with the triumphant company already within the vail, and they shall join with them forever hereafter, saying, *Salvation to our God that sits upon the throne, and to the lamb forever and ever:* Indeed, if you love Christ at all, you love him with a superlative love, above husband, wife, children, lands, houses, goods, and worldly comforts. You do not love him at all, if you do not love him above all, and if you love him at all, the vail is rent, and if you have got into the holiest in part, and if you'll have patience, yet a little while and you shall get in fully. It is impossible that a man that *truly loves* Christ, should ever go to hell.

5. If the vail be effectually rent, then all the vails on your part that continue to separate betwixt God and you, are matters of sad regret to you; the vail of indwelling sin and corruption, the vail of darkness and ignorance, the vail of remaining enmity, the vail of unbelief, these vails are all whole and intire in the unregenerate; and tho' in believers these vails be rent, yet they are not removed. Regenerating grace hath given them a rent that shall never be sewed up or healed again; but yet, alas! there are remaining vails within the believer, while here; tho' they be rent, yet they hang there, and many times sadly separate betwixt God and him; and hence he cries, *O wretched man, &c!* O to be above corruption, O to be within the vail, *that I may see him as he is, and be like unto him.* O, when shall all vails be removed? When shall the day break, and the shadows flee away? O, when shall the curtain be taken down? Christ stands behind the curtain, and does not manifest himself. Hath he been a veiled Christ at this communion, then I'm sure, believer, your heart will be saying, O that the curtain were drawn! O that the vail were rent into ten thousand pieces!

6. If the vail be effectually rent, then your heart will be effectually rent also; when the vail is rent the heart is rent, and there is something it is rent for, and something it is rent from. (1.) Something it is rent for; it is rent for sin. Indeed the sight of the rent vail, or of God reconciled by the blood of Jesus, will rend the heart of sin more than all the thunders of Sinai, or flames of hell: *They shall look on him whom they pierced, and mourn.* When a man reads his sins, as they are written upon the cross of Christ with the red ink of his sin-pardoning blood, O then he reads them over with tears of joy, and his heart is kindly rent for sin, then he cries, *Behold, I am vile.* When the vail is rent, the heart is rent, not only for his own sins, but for the sins of others; *Rivers of tears run down mine eyes, because of the wicked that break thy law. I beheld transgressors, and was grieved.* They that can see God dishonoured, and hear men curse, and swear, and blaspheme the holy name of God, and yet never be troubled about it, surely the vail remains upon their hearts, otherwise their hearts would rend for the sins of others, and of the generation: *Set a mark upon the foreheads of them that sigh, &c.* Again, when the vail is rent, the heart is rent for the Lord's anger and absence; nothing fears them more than the Lord's anger. *O rebuke me not in thy wrath, neither chastize me in thy hot displeasure.* Nothing affects them more than the Lord's absence; for these things they weep, *mine eye, mine eye runs down with waters, because the comforter that should relieve*

relieve my soul is far from me. O the little lamentation after an absent God, an angry God, at this day! Again, when the *vail is rent*, the heart is rent for the calamities of the church, *Jer. 9. 1.* *O that my head were waters, and mine eyes a fountain of tears, that I might weep day and night for the slain of the daughter of my people.* The miseries of the church, and the sins that bring them on, are heart-rending things to the people of God; and particularly, their hearts are rent for the rents of the church, *For the divisions of Reuben there were great thoughts of heart.* For my own part, I am but a person of little experience in the world, and therefore I desire to be modest at this juncture, about the *present rent* among us. It is plain enough that *the anger of the Lord hath divided us*, and rent us in twain, like *the vail of the temple, from top to bottom.* God is angry because we have sinned. Surely, if we had been more valiant for the truth, and zealous for a covenanted work of reformation when we had fair opportunities for it, our rent had not come to such a height. But yet, tho' I cannot justify the ignorant zeal of many professors, whose hearts are rent from ministers, and they know not for what, they can give no reasonable account of their separating courses; yet I hope there is a serious remnant, whose hearts are daily rent for the rents of the church, and the sinful causes thereof; and I hope the Lord will help such to be regular in the way of their dissenting from whatever they reckon, upon solid grounds, to be the defection of the day they live in. But that I may not digress too far, I am telling you, that if the *vail* be effectually rent with you, then there are some things your heart is rent for, namely, for your own sins, the sins of others, the sins of the land, the sins of the church, the calamities of the church, the rents of the church. The Lord's anger with her, and absence from her, may indeed make you weep when you remember *Zion*, and hang your harps upon the willow-trees, while we are gone so far into captivity, and the glory is so far departed. In a word, *if the vail be rent with you*, your hearts will be rent habitually for all these things, as also for all your heart-plagues. Your heart will be so rent for your atheism, ignorance, enmity, carnality, hypocrisy, roving, wandrings, worldliness, and such like, that you'll be ready to say, as *Rebecca* said to *Isaac*, in another case, *I am weary of my life, because of the daughters of Heth.* (2.) *If the vail be effectually rent*, then, as there are some things your heart will be rent for, so there are some things your heart will be rent from. Why, your heart will be rent from sin, as well as rent for sin; your heart will say with *Ephraim*, *What have I to do any more with idols? What have I to do any more with lusts?* All that expect

to get into the *holy of holies* in the heavenly temple, are students of holiness and purity. He that hath this hope, purifieth himself even as he is pure. Christ having rent the veil, entred into the holiest with blood; and believers are daily sprinkling themselves with that blood that so they may enter in all sprinkled over with that blood also. Believers want not sin, and it cleaves to them here; but they are so far from cleaving to it, that it is the desire of their soul to be rent from it, and therefore their daily sins oblige them to make daily application *to the blood of sprinkling*. Again, *if the veil be effectually rent*, then your heart will be rent from the world. O but this globe of earth, and all the glory of it, looks but like a filthy mote, a piece of dung, *to the man who hath got his heart within the veil*. The glory of God in Christ darkens all created glory. What cares he for worldly pleasures, who hath Christ for his delight? What cares he for worldly profits, who hath Christ for his gain? What cares he for worldly honour, who hath Christ for his crown of glory? What cares he for the *world's all*, who hath Christ for his *all in all*? His heart is rent from the world. Again, *when the veil is rent*, the man's heart is rent from the law. *He that is married to Christ, is divorced from the law*, Rom. 7. 4. The law as a *covenant of works*, the believer hath nothing to do with it. *He does not owe it a cup of cold water*, as one says, for Christ hath perfectly fulfilled the condition of the *covenant of works*; and therefore, if the law challenges him, he sends it to Christ for a perfect obedience; if the penalty challenges him, he sends it to Christ for a complete satisfaction. He desires with *Paul, to be found in Christ*, and would not be found in his own righteousness for ten thousand worlds; he sees so much unholiness in all his own holiness, so much unrighteousness in all his own righteousness, so much carnality in all his spirituality, so much earthliness in all his heavenliness, so much sin in all his duties, that he is sure God may damn him for all his best duties as well as his worst sins; and therefore he hath no expectation from the law, but is rent from it, and joined to the Lord Jesus, saying, *In the Lord only have I righteousness and strength*. In a word, when *the veil is effectually rent*, the man is rent from self. 'Tis very hard indeed to rend a man from himself, self insinuates itself into all our praying, preaching and communicating. However, the power of self is broken in all true believers; instead of self-estimation, he is brought to that, *Behold, I am vile!* He hath never a good word to speak of himself, not a good thought to think of himself, but every time he prays, every time he communicates, he cries out, *Behold, I am vile!* Instead of self-justification he is brought to that, *I will lay my hand*

upon my mouth, I will not answer, I cannot justify myself, but must condemn myself, and justify the Lord. Instead of self-love, he is brought to that, *I abhor myself, and repent in dust and ashes*. Self-loathing and abhorrence takes place instead of self-will; he is brought to that, *Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?* Instead of self-ease and carnal security, he is brought to that, *O what shall I do to be saved?* And after the first soul-exercise about salvation hath landed in conversion, he is always exercising himself to godliness, giving employment to Christ to carry on and complete his salvation, and restless till salvation be completed. Instead of self-fulness and sufficiency, he is brought to that, *In me, that is, in my flesh, dwelleth no good thing*; he sees himself empty of all good, and filled with all evil. Instead of self-confidence and false hope, he is brought to that, *We had the sentence of death in ourselves, that we should not trust in ourselves, but in God, which raiseth the dead*. They are brought to despair in themselves, and instead of self-righteousness, of which before they are brought to that, *All our righteousnesses are as filthy rags*. Thus, in so far as they share of the saving benefit of the *rent veil*, so far are they rent from self; and thus by these things you may examine yourselves, what interest you have in this privilege of *Christ's rending of the veil betwixt God and you*.

Use third, For terror to unbelievers, who, tho' they hear the *veil is rent*, and so a free access to the *holy of holies* proclaimed, yet they are not at all concerned about entering in by this *rent veil*. The door of heaven is open to you, but you will not come in; the veil of the temple is rent, but you will not enter. O wretched creature, how can you answer that challenge, *John 5. 40. You will not come to me, that you might have life?* You have no grace, no holiness, no repentance, no good thing; but, says Christ, you will not come to me, that you might have grace; you will not come to me, that you might have holiness; you will not come to me, that you might have repentance; you will not come to me, that you might have all good things that you need. The *veil is rent*, the door is open, but you will not come in; *O what will you do in the day of visitation, &c.* What will you do when he that rent the veil shall rend your soul and body in twain, and say, *O slihter of the Son of God, come and give account of what use you have made of the sabbaths, sermons, and communion-seasons that you enjoyed?* Perhaps you're little thinking on death; but what know you but God will say to you, *Thou fool, this night thy soul shall be required of thee?* I defy all the ministers on earth to allure you that you shall live to get another offer of Christ to-morrow. Many here

will not come again to-morrow, and many here may never have another venture for heaven. O what will you do, when he *that rent the vail*, that you might have access to God, will rend these heavens, and come down to judgment? *Behold he cometh with clouds, and every eye shall see him!* With what countenance will you look him in the Face in judgment, when you did not care for a sight of his face in mercy thro' the *rent vail*? O what a dreadful voice will that be to you, when he will say, *Rise, ye dead, and come to judgment!* Rise, ye undervaluers of the Gospel, and give an account of yourselves! Do you know, that while you're neglecting the Gospel, and flighting the Son of God, you're saying with the *Jews*, *his blood be upon us and upon our children?* The guilt of the blood of Christ is upon you, and upon the generations after you, that follow your example; and O how terrible will it be, when he comes to make inquisition for blood, for the blood of God which you trampled under foot! O how will you then wish to be rent and grinded in pieces, when you shall find all the curses of the Bible lighting upon you! O what will you do, when he that rent the vail, shall openly rend you from the company of God, Saints and Angels, and set you with the goats on his left-hand? When you shall see some of your acquaintances that are here, standing on his right-hand, how will you then think with yourself, O what ailed me, that I did not consent to the Gospel as well as they? You now join with them in the same congregation, but your hearts are disjoined from them; you separate from them in your choice, your affections, your disposition and conversion; but e're long there shall be another kind of separation. You that will not come in among them through the *rent vail* now, there shall be a vail hung up betwixt you and them that shall never be rent; yea, the vail betwixt you and the glory of God: for *you shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power.* He that rent the vail to pieces, will certainly tear you to pieces, when there shall be none to deliver. Now the vail is rent betwixt God and you, so as you may come to God's presence with boldness, through the new and living way that is consecrated through the vail, and you shall have God, and Christ, and Saints, and Angels all welcoming you, *for the Spirit and the bride say, Come, and whosoever will, let him come,* for the vail is rent; but if once you go down by the sides of the bottomless *Tophet*, the vail that then shall be placed betwixt God and you, will never, never, never be rent, so long as eternity lasts. You'll never hear again such a sweet word; and O what would you then give for such a word as that, *behold the vail is rent, that*
you

you may come to God's favour and fellowship? But no such news shall be heard in hell; now, only now, *is the accepted time, now is the day of salvation: To day, if ye will hear his voice, harden not your hearts,* but think of coming into the holy of holies, when you hear that the veil is rent, and nothing to hinder you.

Use fourth, For consolation to believers, to whom the veil is so effectually rent in twain, that from the marks given, they may conclude they have made some entrance within the veil, by coming to a God in Christ, and casting their anchor within the veil. I have a word of comfort to say to you, though perhaps you are still complaining of many veils that separate betwixt God and you; yet a little while, and you shall have a triumphant entrance ministred unto you, into the holy of holies above, whether the forerunner hath for you entered: For *behold the veil of the temple was rent in twain from the top to the bottom,* therefore you shall come into Zion with songs, and everlasting joy upon your heads; you shall obtain joy and gladness, and sorrow and sighing shall fly away, and then all veils shall be rent and removed for ever. I'll tell you, for your comfort, of a few veils that then shall be rent; for the rending of the veil of the temple promises the rending of all veils in a short while. (1.) Then the veil of *sin and corruption* shall be rent in twain: All the rents, all the knocks that sin gets by the word, the rod, the Spirit, never rends a body of death from you, but still you are groaning under a sense of indwelling sin that separates betwixt God and you; but then, O then, believer, this veil shall be rent in twain from the top to the bottom, and from the bottom to the top, both root and branch shall be rent and removed; for when he shall appear, you shall be like him, your conformity to him shall be complete. You must go to heaven dragging a body of death after you; but whenever you come to the port of glory there will be a joyful parting; for you shall take an everlasting farewell of all your lusts and corruptions; then you'll say farewell with all our hearts, and glory to God that we shall never meet again. Blessed be God, we shall never see your face again. (2.) Then shall the veil of *darkness and distance* be rent in twain; for then darkness will give way to light, glorious light: all distance will give way to presence, glorious & everlasting presence. Now you say, it cannot see him, he is far away; but Christ says, *Father, I will that these whom thou hast given me, be with me where I am, that they may behold my glory.* To be with me where I am, there is distance removed; to behold my glory, there is darkness removed. Darkness and distance now create doubts and fears, but doubts and fears will then take wings & fly away, never to return again;

for the face of the covering shall be entirely removed, Isa. 25. 7, 8. (3.) Then shall the vail of ordinances be rent in twain. Now any view we have of God's glory is mediate, thro' the intervention of means and ordinances, and every glimpse we get of his beauty, is thro' the dim glass of duties and ordinances; for *now we see thro' a glass darkly*, says the Apostle, but the time comes, when the glass shall be broken, and *we shall see him as he is*, in an immediate manner, Rev. 21. 22. *I saw no temple there, for the Lord God Almighty, and the lamb, are the temple of it.* And then shall the Saints be able to say, the half of his glory hath not been told, when they shall see him face to face, & not his back parts, or the skirts of his garments only. (4.) The vail of scanty enjoyments and interrupted views will be rent in twain. The life of the Saints here is mostly a life of desire, he can never get his desire fully satisfied; and when you get any desirable meeting with the Lord, why, it is but a taste and away, your desires are but increas'd thereby, and your melancholly wants remain unsupplied; but within the vail all desire shall be satisfied, all wants shall be supplied; for *in his presence there is fulness of joy, and at his right-hand rivers of pleasure for evermore.* No clouds, no night, no desertion there, no such complaint as this, O why hidest thou thy face? The best communion and enjoyment here admits of interruption, but that which is above is uninterrupted; no tempting devil, no deceitful heart, no dismal cloud to darken their day, or interrupt their vision and fruition of God. Christ is here only passing by us, and as a way-faring man, that carries only for a night, yea, hardly for a night; no sooner does he enter, but he is away; no sooner does the heart begin to open to him sometime, than alas he is gone, Song 5. 6. *I opened to my beloved, but he had withdrawn himself, and was gone.* But then their enjoyment shall be full, and everlasting, and uninterrupted; for *so shall they ever be with the Lord.* Partial enjoyments will give way to eternally full enjoyments; for *when that which is perfect is come, that which is in part shall be done away.* (5.) The vail of church disorders and confusion shall be rent in twain. Many times you have reason to sigh and complain, that matters are all out of order in the church, the vail of confusion and disorder is upon it, and the glory departed, nothing but clouds in our sky. Indeed we would gladly expect the rending of these veils that are upon the Church, even in time, and even with respect to the Church of Scotland. It is with the Church as it is with particular believers; the Lord usually brings them to an extremity, before he gives them a deliverance; the darkest night may usher in the clearest day; *to them that fear his name, the*

Sun of righteousness shall arise. Whatever dark eclipse the sun may be under at present, do not say the sun is gone out of the firmament, because it is a cloudy day, the clouds may grow thicker and thicker; yea there may not only be clouds, but rain, and perhaps a terrible shower of wrath is coming, many things look like it: But though there should be both clouds and rain, say not the sun is gone, and will never return and shine again; he that rent the vail, will rend the clouds in his own time. Yea, the rending of the vail of the temple did foretell good to the church. It says that he will rear up a more glorious temple, such as is promised, *Isa. 54. 11, 12, 13. O 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 agats, and thy gates of carbuncles, and all thy borders of pleasant stones.* Why, what is the meaning of all this? See it *ψ. 13. All thy children shall be taught of the Lord, and great shall be the peace of thy children.* You say it is a time of great darkness in the church, so it is indeed; but here is a promise of light that shall arise, *all thy children shall be taught of the Lord.* Is it a time of great division and contention? So it is, but here is a promise of great peace, *great shall be the peace of thy children.* We hope there will be a more full accomplishment of this in the church, even in time; but when will all this come to pass? Why, we may come to be tossed with another kind of tempest before it come to pass; for see how the promise is ushered in, *O thou afflicted, tossed with tempest, and not comforted,* then follows the promise of a pleasant issue. But withal never expect a perfect church upon earth, we hope it will be more pure but it will never be perfect, till *that which is in part be done away.* The time is coming, when the bride, the lamb's wife, shall be presented to him without spot or wrinkle, when the union of the Saints shall be entire, and the communion of Saints shall be perfect; there will be no contention, no division, no disorder in the general assembly and church of the first-born that are written in heaven. (6.) The vail of *militant graces* will be rent in twain, and nothing but *triumphant graces* will have the throne; *Now remains faith, hope, and love, but the greatest of these is love.* Why, love is a triumphant grace, and faith and hope will resign to love the chair of state. There will be no need of militant graces in the church triumphant, no need of faith where vision is, no need of hope where fruition is, no need of patience where all tribulation is at an end, no need of any fighting grace where there is nothing but victory, light, life, love, liberty, joy, glory. You have a fighting life of it here, but then a song of victory, victory for evermore.

vermore. (7.) The vail of *infirmities* will be rent in twain. Here believers have infirmities on their bodies, that have no small influence on the actings of their souls; infirmities on their souls, darkness and dulness in their intellectual powers; infirmities of the new nature, though created in Christ Jesus, though supported by his power, and guided by his grace; yet still it is a weak thing, like a new-born babe: But none of these infirmities are in them that are within the vail, they are become perfect; *then shall we all come in the unity of the faith to a perfect man in Christ*, Eph. 4. 13. Then that Scripture shall be fully accomplished, *Isa. 30. 26. The light of the moon shall be as the light of the sun, and the light of the sun shall be seven-fold as the light of seven days.* (8.) The vail of *mortality* shall be rent in twain, *for this mortal shall put on immortality, this corruption shall put on incorruption, and death shall be swallowed up in victory.* The vail of *flesh*, the clay-tabernacle will be rent in twain; *we know that if the earthly house of this tabernacle were dissolved, we have a building of God, a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens; for in this we groan earnestly, desiring to be clothed upon with our house which is from heaven*, 2 Cor. 5. 1, 2. O was you ever brought to that man's saying, O mortality, mortality, O time, time, that will not haste away, to let eternity come! Was you never content to shake the sand-glass of time to get into eternity? Was you never content to take death in your arms, and say welcome, welcome, O friend, welcome news, that mortality shall be swallowed up of life. (9.) The vail of *incapacity* will be rent in twain. Now you are not capable of that glory which you shall be able to behold and contain in heaven; your eye is so weak, that you cannot behold the sun of righteousness shining in his strength. Tho' light be the most pleasing thing to the eye, yet the meridian brightness of the sun cannot be look'd upon without destroying the sight, because the faculty is not strong nor capable to receive the object; so it is here, we want a capacity to behold the light of glory; but within the vail, or in heaven, the faculty will be strengthened, and the capacity to hold an exceeding great and eternal weight of glory, the want of which hath made some in time, when their cup hath overflowed with consolation, to cry out, *Lord, hold thy hand, thy servant is a clay-vessel, and can hold no more.* Indeed it is little we get here below, and it is little we can hold, tho' we should get our fill; but in heaven the capacity will be so enlarged, that it will be able to hold a fulness of God, a fulness of glory, a fulness of the Spirit, a fulness of joy at God's right-hand for ever and ever. (10.)

The vail of *weariness* shall be rent *intwain*. Here we soon weary of praying and preaching, we soon weary of sermons and sacraments. I doubt not many here may be wearied to the heart with this day's work. Indeed little wonder that the carnal hearts say, what a weariness is all this work; for as one says, you may take a carnal man, tie him to a post, and then kill him with praying and preaching only. But even the spiritual man himself, while he hath a wearying body of death about him, he wearies of ordinances, he wearies of God's service; but in heaven within the vail, they shall serve him without wearying or fainting, *Rev. 22. 3.* There *his servants shall serve him*. Their weary service here is hardly to be called a service, but there his servants shall serve him indeed. O will it not be a mystery, and a great wonder, if we who cannot pray half an hour to an end, and hardly hear an hour to an end, but we'll be toil'd, as if we had done some marvellous work, shall be brought to heaven, and never weary of the service of heaven! Here is comfort, believer, you shall thro' all the years of eternity praise him, and never weary. In a word, all the veils of troubles and trials will be rent in twain, *there remains a rest for the people of God*. The vail of sorrow and anxiety shall be rent in twain; for *all tears shall be wiped from their eyes, sorrow and sighing shall fly away*. The vail of sickness and uneasiness of body or soul shall be rent in twain, *the inhabitant of that land shall not say, I am sick, the people that dwell therein shall be forgiven their iniquity*. The vail of wandering thoughts and vain imaginations will be rent in twain, you shall not have a wrong thought or conception of God thro'out all eternity; for all your heart-plagues, lusts and corruptions, that you have been wrestling with all your days, will leave you, and I'm sure, you'll leave them with such pleasure and satisfaction, and be so glad to part with them, that you'll hardly shake hands with them, but rather say, the back of my hand to you. Many a sad hour, many a sigh and groan have you cost me, but happy am I now I am quit of you for ever. And I cannot but say, that they who now have a glad heart to think of parting with these, and a meeting with Christ for ever, they have gotten some communion with him this day. *Finally*, The vail of time will be rent in twain, and the streams of time will be swallowed up in the ocean of eternity. O how will you say with wonder then, O hath such a black and ugly creature as I was, gotten glorious Christ in my arms, never, never, never to part again! O how will his kind looks dart a sweetness and joy inexpressible into your hearts, when you shall be led with the Lamb about the rivers of living

water, when time shall be no more? Take all this comfort into your hearts, believers, for the God of consolation allows you to rejoice for ever, and to *rejoice in the hope of the glory of God*, which you shall see, and be for ever possessors of within the veil.

Use fifth for exhortation. All I shall now say, is this, if the veil be rent in twain by the death of Christ, O then come and see, come and take, come and wonder, come and enter, come and sing. (1.) *Come and see.* When the seal was opened, *Rev. 6.* then the voice cried *come and see*; so when the veil is rent, O come and see, come and see. Turn aside and see this great sight, the veil of separation betwixt God and us rent in twain from the top to the bottom. What was to be seen within the veil of the temple you are told, *Heb. 9. 4, 5.* *There was to be seen the golden censer, the golden pot, the ark of the covenant, and over it the cherubims of glory overshadowing the mercy-seat.* What all these did signify, I cannot stand to shew; but, in short, they all pointed out the glory of God in Jesus Christ. Now is the veil rent, then look into the holiest, and see the glorious mystery of redeeming love; see the wisdom, power, holiness, justice, goodness, and grace of God, manifested brightly in the face of Jesus, who by his death rent the veil, that we might see heaven and the glory of it. (2.) *Come and take.* The pot of manna was within the veil, as you see in that forecited text, which signified Christ the bread of life. Now that the veil is rent, you may come to the holiest, and take manna; if you go away fasting this night, it will be your own fault, for you have liberty to come and take, since the veil is rent. Christ himself is the manna, and if you take him, you take all things with him that you need. Do you need a pardon? why, the opening of the veil is a proclamation of pardon, upon a jubilee-day. In the year of jubilee, the priests entered within the veil into the holiest, and there was a discharge of debt, and liberty proclaimed; so here is our jubilee, Christ our high-priest having rent the veil, and entered the holiest, he issues out his proclamation of indemnity, he proclaims pardon of debt. Many a bankrupt, drowned in debt, is in this green; but behold, the cry is, *go forth ye prisoners of hope.* There is a pardon in this pot of manna, if you'll but take it; yea, there is life to your souls, & death to your sins, in this pot of manna, if you'll take it. *Object.* But you'll say, I cannot take what is offered me: *Answer.* I wish you indeed knew your own weakness, and were sensible of it. *No man can come to me,* says Christ, *except the Father draw him*; but O, hath God drawn you so far, as that you're willing to take Christ, though you can do nothing, & willing that Christ should take you? Do you know what it is to believe?

lieve? It is not to do some great thing by your own power; no. It is a grace that hath two eyes; with the one it looks to a man's self, and sees his own utter weakness, saying, *Not that I am sufficient of myself to think anything as of myself*; and with the other it looks to God, and sees his infinite power, saying, *My sufficiency is of God*. So that to believe, is to see that you can do nothing, and to employ the power of God to do all things for you, and in you that you need. Now, when you're called to take Christ, you're called to take & employ the power of God to do all things you're called to do, but cannot do of yourself; this power of God is in your offer, & you may give employment to it, *Isai. 28. 5. Let him take hold of my strength, that he may make peace with me, and he shall make peace with me*. Did you ever know before that the power of God was at your service? Take hold of his power, and give employment to his power, saying, Lord, let this power of thine be put forth upon a weakling, that I may take Christ. Behold, the Father offers him for wisdom, righteousness, sanctification and redemption; there is manna indeed, which you have for the taking in this manner, saying, Lord, take me, and I'll take thee. Let thy power and grace be glorified upon me. If you be in earnest, it is a bargain; for he never called a sinner to take his Son upon any other terms, but that they only consent that Christ take all the work, and take all the glory. (3.) *Come and wonder. Behold the vail of the temple was rent in twain from the top to the bottom*. Come and wonder, that all hindrances are taken out of the way of your access to God. Wonder at the love of God in sending his Son to rend the vail, wonder at the love of Christ in rending the vail, that you might have access to God, wonder that it was rent at all, wonder that it was rent in twain, wonder that it was rent from top to bottom, wonder at the thing, and wonder at the occasion of it. *Christ gave up the ghost, and the vail of the temple was rent*. The rending of the vail cost him his life, it cost him his soul, his soul was made an offering for sin, and then the vail was rent; O, is there no wondring at this? It would be an evidence of a good communion to you, if you were filled with wonder. A short wonder is better than a long prayer. (4.) *Come and enter*. Not only see, and take, and wonder, but also boldly enter into the holiest, not standing in the outer court, as it were, or behind the vail gazing, or only putting in your hand by the rent vail, but come in wholly, and enter boldly. The vail is rent in twain, O then come and enter by the rent. You may all come boldly to the holiest, by this new and living way that is consecrated through the vail. O may such a dog, such a filthy dog as

I come? Yes, we use to say, *Open doors, dogs come ben*, the door is open, the veil is rent, let dogs come in and get a crumb. The *Gentiles* are called dogs in Scripture, and it is said, *without are dogs, murderers, forcerers, whoremongers*; but to all the dogs that are without the veil, we in God's name proclaim liberty to come in, and get what will save you and sanctify you. You'll say you have nothing to bring with you, no grace, no good: I tell you, there is none here, but they have something to bring to Christ with them. What is that? Have you not much sin and misery to bring with you, have you not much want, weakness and wickedness to bring with you? Come with all your ills in order to get all good; come with your sins and get grace; come with your guilt and get a pardon; come with your filthiness and get cleansing; come with your wants and get fulness. Let dogs come in and get a crumb, yea a feast; there is nothing to hinder you, since the veil is rent. The law is not in your way, for that is fulfilled; the flaming cherubim is not in your way, for Christ hath rent the veil of God's wrath, and divided the *Red-sea* of divine vengeance, that you might pass through. Have you a mind for heaven, men and women? Here is the way, it lies thro' the rent veil; and if you take not *this way*, you shall never enter there: For there are two porters that will keep all unbelievers out, namely, *justice* and *holiness*. *Justice* will say, I must be satisfied: *Holiness* will say, I must be vindicated, or else you shall never enter here. But if you come by this *rent veil*, you shall have open entrance into the heavenly kingdom. Christ will say to justice, let such a man in, for I paid you all his debt; holiness, let such a man in, for I gave you a perfect obedience for him, look upon him in me. This will satisfy both these porters to let believers pass. O then come and enter through *the veil that is rent*. Christless soul, who will satisfy justice and holiness for you? These porters will never be bribed by you: Therefore O come, and *enter by the rent veil*, for there is no other way to heaven. (5.) *Come and sing*. If you have made entrance, O sing glory to God in the highest that ever rent the veil. You might go home singing, if you took up the true meaning of the text, and turn it to a song, and sing it with understanding, *Behold the veil of the temple was rent in twain, from the top to the bottom*. Behold, the veil is rent, and shall never be whole again. Behold, the work is completed by the Son of God, the work is done, and shall never be undone. To the author and finisher of this great work be glory for ever. *Amen*.



CHRIST *the People's* COVENANT.

A SERMON preached immediately before the Celebration of the LORD'S-SUPPER, at *Dunfermling*, August 19. 1722. To which is annexed, The Substance of some DISCOURSES after the Sacrament, upon the same Subject.

By the Reverend Mr. RALPH ERSKINE.

ISAIAH xlii. 6.

— *I will give thee for a Covenant of the People.*

MY dear friends, if your ears be open, there are three things that you may hear this day. *1st*, You may hear what ministers will say; but that is a matter of small moment, and it is but a poor errand, if you be only come to hear what a poor mortal, sinful, fellow-creature will say to you: Little matter what we say, if God himself do not speak to your hearts. Therefore, *2^{dly}*, You may hear what God says to you: This is a matter of greater moment; for God's speaking can make us both hear and live, though we were as deaf as stocks, and as dead as stones. He spake the *old* creation out of nothing; and he can speak a *new* creation out of us, who are worse than nothing. Indeed it will be a wonder, if he do not speak terrible things in righteousness unto us, because of our sins; and really, if he speak to us out of Christ, it will be dreadful. Therefore, *3^{dly}*, You may come to hear what God says to Christ, and this is of the greatest moment of all. To hear what ministers say to the congregation is a little thing; to hear what God says to you, is a great thing; but to hear what God says to Christ, is one of the greatest things that can be heard. God in his word speaks to the sons of men, and perhaps you have noticed that: But he speaks also to the Son of God, to his eternal Son; and perhaps that is what you have little noticed to this day. Why, what says he to Christ? Is it any thing that we the people are concerned with? Yea, what he says to Christ is of the greatest concern to us, and it is this, *I will give thee for a covenant of the people*. O, might the great and eternal Father say to his great and eternal Son, who is one God with him and the eternal Spirit; yonder is a company of people meeting

meeting in *Dunfermling* about a communion-table, with a view to the sealing of the covenant; but their work will be to little purpose, if they view not THEE, my beloved Son, to be the spring, the spirit, the life, the all of the covenant: Their covenant will be but a poor bargain without THEE; and therefore, *Behold, I will give THEE for a covenant of the people!* O a sweet saying as ever was said in the world! And no wonder, for 'tis a part of a sermon whereof God himself is the preacher, and Christ is the text, and the Spirit is the voice that conveys it. If we had much of this Spirit with us, we might see how sweetly this glorious preacher handles this wonderful text, from the beginning of the chapter; O how sweetly does he speak of him in the first four verses, and how sweetly does he speak to him from the fifth verse and downward! *First*, How sweetly does he speak of him, *Behold my servant whom I uphold, mine elect in whom my soul delighteth, &c.* That Christ is the subject here treated of, you need not question, if you compare this first verse with *Matth. 12. 18.* where Christ expressly applies it to himself. And now, when the Father here speaks of Christ, every word is a word of commendation; he commends him for a good servant in his mediatory work, *Behold my servant, &c.* He commends him for a well qualified Saviour, *I have put my Spirit upon him; and he shall bring forth judgment to the Gentiles;* He commends him for a meek Saviour; *He shall not cry, &c. v. 2.* He commends him for a tender-hearted Saviour; *A bruised reed shall he not break, &c. v. 3.* He commends him for an able Saviour, that will go through his work maugre all impediments; *He shall not fail, &c. v. 4.* and *the isles shall wait for his law;* the isle of *Britain* not excepted, and not forgetting *Scotland* in the north-end of it. *Secondly*, How sweetly does he speak to him from *v. 5, 6.* And here notice both the divine preface to this part of the sermon, and then the divine discourse. (1.) The preface, shewing the glorious dignity of the preacher, *v. 5. Thus saith the Lord.* Here the glorious *Jehovah* is commending himself, as it well becomes him, and none but him to do. Who is it that is speaking? It is the Lord, the great Lord of heaven, earth, and mankind; it is the Lord of all the heavens that is speaking; he that created the heavens, and stretched them out; it is the Lord of all the earth that is speaking, he that spread forth the earth, and that which cometh out of it; it is the Lord of all mankind that is speaking, he that gives breath unto the people upon it, and spirit to them that dwell therein. Why then, he is the God that hath authority to make the following covenant with the Messiah, and give a commission to him. Therefore, (2.) Notice the divine discourse

discourse itself, and what he says to Christ, *ψ. 6. I the Lord have called thee, &c.* He had spoken sweetly of him, and here he speaks as sweetly to him; and in this speech is opened up to us the great mystery of the covenant of redemption betwixt the Father and the Son from eternity, and the opening thereof in time makes it a covenant of grace to us. And here we may see several parts of the indenture he binds and obliges himself unto.

The first piece of the indenture is, *I have called thee in righteousness.* Here is his vocation; he takes not this office, of being Mediator, upon him, without being called thereto; and God called him thereto in righteousness. He was rightly called, for the right of redemption fell into his hand; he was rightly called, for he was able for the work, and fit for it; he was rightly called, for he was willing to the work, and voluntarily offered himself; *Lo, I come, &c.* he was rightly called, for as God did him no wrong, so he did himself right, and provided for the glory of all his perfections in this way.

The second part of the indenture is, *I will hold thine hand*; that is another thing he says to him. Go, says he, and I'll hold thee by the hand all the way, I'll bear the expences of that hard service: Christ goes this warfare on God's charges, he bears equal burden in the work of our redemption. We are fools in our love, if we love not the Father as well as the Son. The three glorious persons of the adorable Trinity had all one will to it, and they go hand in hand about it; *I will hold thine hand.*

The third part of the indenture, or the other thing he says to Christ is, *I will keep thee*; I, says the great *Jehovah* to the God-man Mediator, I will keep thee, when the sins of an elect world shall all meet upon thee; when the curses of the law, the terror of justice, the vengeance of heaven, and the fury of earth and hell shall invade and encompass thee; I will keep and preserve thee, and make all these red seas to divide, and make way for thee to pass through triumphantly.

The fourth part of the indenture is in the words of our text, and it is one of the great and glorious things he says to Christ; *I will give thee for a covenant to the people, a light to the Gentiles, &c.* Whatever be their malady, I'll give thee to be a suitable remedy. Have they broken covenant, I'll give thee to be a better covenant. But what of that, while they are ignorant? Why then, *I'll give thee for a light of the Gentiles.* But what tho' they have light, if they have no sight too? for a blind man hath no benefit of the sun; why then, *I'll give thee to open the blind eyes.* But what though they have both light and sight, if they be still in a

dark prison, bound and fettered there? why, I'll give thee for this end; *To bring out the prisoners from the prison, and them that sit in darkness out of the prison-house.* O but these are sweet promises made to Christ, and in him to us; and the leading one, that comprehends the rest, is in these words; *I will give thee for a covenant of the people.* Where, without critical division, you may notice these two things, 1. The gracious designation and title that Christ bears, *a covenant of the people.* 2. His glorious ordination and appointment thereto, *I will give thee* for that end. 1. The gracious designation and title of honour that he bears, he is called a *covenant of the people.* And here he is described by his relation to the covenant, and by his relation to us by this means. His relation to the covenant is such, that he is designed the covenant itself; he is the head and the heart of the covenant, he is the foundation and top-stone of the covenant, the bottom and top of the covenant, the *Alpha* and *Omega* of the covenant, the first and the last letter of the covenant, the all in all of the covenant. The first covenant-head brake and fell; and he falling, all his seed fell: The second covenant-head stands; and he standing, all his seed stand in him; *My covenant shall stand fast in him.* Again, his relation to us by this means; to whom is he a covenant? Even a *covenant of the people*, of the *Gentiles.* O good news to us poor *Gentiles!* (2.) His glorious ordination and appointment unto this business, *I will give thee*; and here also every word hath some glory in it. Here is the glorious person ordaining him, in the pronoun *I*, *I Jehovah* do it; here is the glorious person ordained in the pronoun *Thee*, *I will give Thee*; here is the glorious manner of the ordination, it is by way of free and gratuitous gift, *I will give thee*; and here is the glorious reason and moving cause of the whole, even the sovereign will of God, *I will give thee.* But the further explication of these particulars, I refer to the prosecution of the doctrine.

OBSERV. *That, by divine ordination, Christ is the covenant of the people.* The only Scripture I name for the confirmation is, *Isa. 49. 8.* where you see the vision is doubled, because it is true.

The method I would endeavour, through grace, to follow, is, I. To offer some remarks concerning the covenant in general. II. Shew how Christ is the covenant, and in what respects he bears that name. III. Enquire for whose behoof he is so; and thus shew that he is the covenant of the people. IV. By whose authority he is so; and here speak of his divine ordination, and being given of God for that end. V. Offer some reasons of the doctrine, why he is given to be a covenant, and why a covenant

of the people. VI. Draw some inferences for application.

The *first* thing is, To offer some remarks concerning the covenant in general; and I confine them to these four, which are imported in the text and doctrine.

The *first* remarkable thing imported in the text is, That the covenant of works is broken, and cannot save us; and we are broken, and cannot save ourselves. There was a covenant of works made with the first *Adam*, and his seed, before the fall; and therein God was upon these terms with man, *do and live*; and if you do not, you shall die. In this law of works, there was a precept and a sanction. The precept is, *Do this*; that is, perform perfect and personal obedience; the sanction is, *If thou do not, thou shalt die*; importing that the reward of obedience was eternal life. The man that doth these things shall live in them; and that the punishment of disobedience was eternal death. The soul that sinneth shall die, *Gen. 2. 17.* Now, as by the fall of mankind, the precept of doing is broken, and the penalty of *dying* is incurred, and eternal life forfeited; so our salvation is impossible without a perfect righteousness; a righteousness of obedience, performing the precept of the law, and so entitling to life; a righteousness to satisfaction, undergoing the penalty of the law, and so delivering from death: The former is impossible to us, for we are dead in sins and trespasses, and so can never perform any duty acceptable to God, far less every way perfect obedience: The latter is impossible; for being both finite and sinful creatures, we can never give infinite and sinless satisfaction, and so we are broken and lost by the breach of this covenant. There are four things upon this particular, that, I presume, you all profess to know, namely, 1. The tenor of this covenant of works: *That when God had created man, he entered into a covenant of life, or works, with him, upon condition of perfect obedience, forbidding him to eat of the tree of knowledge of good and evil, upon the pain of death.* 2. The breach of this covenant; *That our first parents, being left to the freedom of their own will, fell from the estate wherein they were created, by sinning against God, and particularly by eating the forbidden fruit.* 3. Our concern in this original apostacy and fall in *Adam*; *That the covenant being made with him, not only for himself, but for his posterity; all mankind descending from him, by ordinary generation, sinned in him, and fell with him in his first transgression: For, by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned, or, in whom all have sinned.* 4. The fatal, woful effects of this fall, and breach of the covenant of works; namely, *That, by this means we have fallen into a state of sin and misery;*

tery; that our state is a sinful state, we being guilty of Adam's first sin, wanting original righteousness, and our whole nature being corrupted, whence proceeds all our actual sin; and that our state is a miserable state, having lost communion with God, being under his wrath and curse, liable to all the miseries of this life, to death itself, and to the pains of hell for ever. Why, *The wages of sin is death, and we are children of wrath; and, cursed is every one that continueth not in all things written in the book of the law, to do them.* It may be, it is long since ye knew these things in your *Catechisms*; but O, how long is it since you believed them? or, do you believe them yet? Have ye seen your fall in *Adam*, and your woful, sinful, miserable state by nature, through the breach of the covenant of works? If you were convinced of this, surely, the news of another covenant would be welcome to you. But then,

The *second* remarkable thing imported in the text is, That there is a covenant of grace provided for the recovery of some, by Jesus Christ, from a state of sin and death, to a state of righteousness and eternal life; or ye may take it thus, God having out of his meer good pleasure, from all eternity, elected some to everlasting life, did enter into a covenant of grace, to deliver them, &c. Hence such scriptural expressions as these, *By grace ye are saved, not by works of righteousness that we have done; for if there had been a law (namely of works) which could have given life, verily righteousness should have been by the law, Gal. 3. 21.* Now this covenant of grace may be considered either in its original transaction from eternity, or in its actual manifestation in time. *Ist*, Consider it in its original transaction from eternity betwixt the Father and the Son; God having, in his eternal decree of permitting the Fall, foreseen the ruin of mankind by the breach and violation of the covenant of works, graciously purposed, not to proceed against all mankind, according to the demerit of their transgression, in the execution of that death upon them, which that covenant threatened; and therefore a council of peace is called from eternity, and the proposal made concerning the shewing mercy to an elect number, in a way that should be to the honour and glory of God's holiness, which says, they must do perfectly; and of God's justice, which says, they must die eternally. Well, none in all the creation of men and angels were able to satisfy this proposal; then says Christ, *Lo, I come, Psal. 40. 8.* I offer myself to be their surety, to give a perfect obedience to the law, which was the condition of the covenant of works, and to give infinite satisfaction to offended justice, in answer to the penalty incurred through the breach and violation

violation of that covenant. *Lo, I come*: Since the law cannot be fulfilled without doing, nor justice satisfied without dying, lo I come to do both; and seeing this undertaking must be accomplished by one who is both finite, that he may die, and infinite, that he may conquer death and wrath; I offer to do it in their nature, and by an unspeakable mystery to become flesh, *Lo, I come*; let the impannelled criminal go free. The Father, being infinitely well pleased with this consent, encourages his eternal Son, enters into a covenant with him, calls him, qualifies him, promises to uphold him, in the whole work, and to give him for a covenant of the people; and that, for making his soul an offering for sin, he should see his seed, and see the travel of his soul and be satisfied, *Isa. 53. 11*. This is called by many, *The covenant of redemption*; not that it is another covenant of grace, but I take it as another consideration of the same covenant. It was made with Christ as the second *Adam*, and in him with all the elect as his seed. As it is made with Christ, it is properly conditional to him, the condition being perfect obedience, and complete satisfaction; but as made with the elect in him, it is *absolute*, consisting of free and absolute promises to them. But, *2dly*, Consider it in its actual manifestation in time; and here omitting, what might be said of the legal administration of it under the Old Testament, and the evangelical administration under the New, I shall only say, That as the transaction betwixt the Father and Son from eternity is the fountain, so this manifestation of it in time is the opening of the fountain; and the grace of God is manifested in this covenant of grace, several ways, (1.) In that he freely provides a Saviour for lost sinners, shewing by the gospel that he hath made this provision. (2.) In that he freely offers to sinners a mediator, and life and salvation in him. (3.) In that he not only calls, and commands them to come to him by faith, as the mean to interest them in him, and to believe in him for salvation; but (4.) Promises his Holy Spirit to work in them that faith, and all other saving graces. And though this, and all the other absolute promises of the covenant, shall be certainly accomplished, and actually applied to the elect only; yet in the external dispensation of the Gospel, and administration of the covenant, they are reveal'd and exhibited in a general indefinite way and manner, with an universal offer and command to all and every one that hear this Gospel, to plead them, and lay hold upon them; that in this way the hearers of the gospel may be left inexcusable that embrace it not; and that the elect may be gather'd in, made to believe, and come under the bond of the covenant.

The *third* remarkable thing imported in the text is, that there is an oneness and identity betwixt the covenant of grace, as made with Christ, and as made with us in him: Both are one and the same covenant; for here the Father is contracting with the Son, *I will give thee for a covenant of the people*; therefore that with the Son and with the people belong to one and the same covenant. And hence I find our standards make the covenant of redemption and grace to be one and the same covenant; Christ and the people are but two subjects of one and the same covenant. With respect to Christ, it had its constitution from eternity, with respect to us, it hath its application in time, therefore it is called, *The grace given us in Christ before the world began*, 2 Tim. 1. 9. *And eternal life, which God that cannot lie promised before the world began*, Tit. 1. 2. As the first Adam was our public federal head, and he and we included in one and the same covenant of works; so Christ, the second Adam, is our publick head, and the covenant of grace with him and us is the same covenant, though he alone is the head, surety and mediator, to whom some promises and precepts are peculiar: However, he being the covenant of the people, all things promised unto, or to be performed by the people, are secured in the contract with Christ; all the conditions of life to be performed, are found in him; yea, he undertakes, in that covenant, the removal of all obstructions and impediments from within, that would hinder their attainment of covenant-mercy, being given for a light to the Gentiles, to take away the inward blindness that is found in them; so that not only all necessaries for redemption, but also all necessaries for the powerful and effectual application of that redemption, are first promised in the covenant to him, and then to us in him, upon his fulfilling the condition of perfect obedience. Is justification promised? it is first to him, and then to us in him, *Isa. 53. 11. By his knowledge, or by the knowledge of him, shall my righteous servant justify many*. Is sanctification and the Spirit promised? it is first to him, and then to us in him, *ψ. 1st of this chapter, I will put my Spirit upon him, and he shall bring forth judgment to the Gentiles*. Is glorification promised? it is first to him, and then to us in him, *Rom. 8. 17. If children, then heirs, heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ*. He and the people are all in one and the same covenant; he, as the glorious head, surety, and representative, having all fulness in him, both of grace and glory, for our use and behoof; and we, as members of that body whereof he is the head, and in a way of union to him by faith; for all the promises, not only some, but all the promises of God are in him, yea, and

and in him *amen*: twice in him, importing, that as the covenant of grace, which is the covenant of promises, is made jointly with him and us. So is the constitution of the covenant, the promises are all made to him, and in the application of it, they are made to us in him; primarily and mediately they are made to him, secondarily and immediately to us in him. Hence the fourth thing remarkable imported in the text is, That Christ is the centre, in whom all the lines of the covenant do meet; and so, by an usual figure, of the part for the whole, he bears the name of the whole covenant; I will give him for a covenant of the people: The covenant of grace is said to be not only made with him, but he himself is the covenant. And this leads me to the

Second thing, To shew how Christ is the covenant, and in what respect he bears that name: And, (1.) Christ is the covenant of the people *radically* and *fundamentally*, being the root, basis, and foundation upon which the covenant of grace stands, the alone foundation. Other foundations can no man lay, than that is laid, which is Christ, 1 Cor. 3. 11. He is the sure foundation that God hath laid in *Zion*, Isa. 28. 16. The covenant of works being built upon something in man, it was not sure work, and so the fabrick tumbled down; but the covenant of grace and mercy is built upon a never-failing foundation, it is sure work to eternity; and therefore says God, *Mercy shall be built up for ever*; Why,--- *I have made a covenant with my chosen*. Christ is the antient and eternal foundation of the covenant; no other foundation is laid in *Zion* in time, but that which was laid in the counsel of peace from eternity. God hath promised nothing to us in time, but what he purposed and promised in Christ from eternity; he has *chosen us in him before the foundation of the world*, Eph. 1. 4. and promised eternal life in him before the world began. He is the foundation of all the blessings and privileges of the covenant, *being made of God to us wisdom, righteousness, sanctification and redemption*. He is the foundation of all the promises, graces and comforts of the covenant. This is a large field, but I go on. (2.) Christ is the covenant *relatively*, in respect of the relations he comes under to it. We find in Scripture, that he is called the *Mediator* of the covenant, Heb. 9. 15. Why? he brings God & man, that were at variance, to meet amicably; by the price of his blood he brings God to us, and by the power of his Spirit he brings us to God and makes up the difference. He is called the *testator* of the covenant, Heb. 9. 16. *Where a testament is, there is the death of the testator*: He hath signed all the articles of it with his blood, & so confirmed it, and made it a testament. He is called the *messenger* of the cove-

nant, *Mal.* 3. 1. When God would communicate his mind to us, it is in Christ; when we would communicate our mind to God, it is in Christ. Whatever message God hath to us, or we to him, Christ bears it, and makes the travel, be the journey never so dangerous; for this is he that came by water and blood, *1 John* 5. 6. He came by sea, by a sea of water for our sanctification, for if he wash us not, we have no part in him; and by a sea of blood for our justification, for without shedding of blood there is no remission: a dangerous voyage for bearing the message. He is called the *witness* of the covenant. *Isa.* 55. 4. *I will give him for a witness of the people*; he is the true and faithful witness. As he was an eye and ear-witness to the whole transaction of the covenant from eternity; so he sets his seal to the articles of it in time, and bears witness by his word, by his blood, by his Spirit. This he does effectually, sometimes in the hearts of his people, when he conquers all their unbelieving doubts and jealousies of his word, and suspicions of his love, or of his Father's kindness. He is called the *surety* of the covenant, *Heb.* 7. 22. He is the surety both for debt and duty: Surety for debt; the law demanded of us a debt of infinite suffering, the just demerit of our sins, which, if laid upon us, would sink us for ever; for the wages of sin is death: and also, it demanded a debt of perfect obedience, and universal holiness and righteousness. Now, we are insolvent debtors, drowned in debt, and unable to pay a farthing; and unless there be a surety for us, we cannot escape the prison of hell, and the everlasting wrath of the omnipotent God. Behold, the surety steps in, in this hopeless state we were fallen into, pays the debt to the least farthing, and put his name into our bond, was made under the law, to redeem those that were under the law. And then he is surety for duty, promising to put his Spirit within us, and cause us to walk in his statutes. He is surety for both sides of the covenant, surety that all that God hath said and promised shall be accomplished, and surety that all that we are obliged to do shall be done for us, and in us. O sweet and gracious covenant! In a word, he is the *servant* of the covenant, *Behold my servant*, &c. Wist ye not, says he to his parents that were seeking him, that I must be about my Father's business: What business? what service? The hardest service that ever was, even to satisfy justice, to fulfil the law, to conquer *Satan*, to purchase heaven, to save an elect world, to endure the contradiction of sinners against himself, in accomplishing this service. He is the performer of the covenant, yea, the performance itself. Christ, standing in all these relations to the covenant, may well be called the covenant of the people.

people. (3.) Christ is the covenant *substantially*, in respect of his being the very matter of the covenant, the principal part of it, the principal promise of it. He is the substance of all the promises, the first thing promised ; and whatever is promised else, is for his sake. He is the promised seed, spoken of to *Adam* and *Eve*, to *Abraham*, to *David*, Gen. 3. 15. & 22. 18. Luke 1. 32, 33. He is the substance of the prophecies, to him gave all the Prophets witness, *Acts* 10. 43. He is the substance of all the shadows, and Old Testament types : He is the true brazen serpent that heals diseased souls, the true manna and bread of life, the true sacrifice and paschal lamb, whose blood being sprinkled on the door-posts of the soul, saves from the destroying angel : Of all the types he is the antitype, the substance ; in a word, he is the substance of the whole Bible, and of all the Scriptures, *These are they that testify of me*. It is an odd text, that a gospel-minister cannot find Christ in, since the whole Scriptures testify of him, as if it said nothing else but Christ, Christ. Thus he is the covenant *substantially*. Again, (4.) Christ is the covenant *eminently*, in point of eminency, ornament and excellency : He is the very ornament of the covenant, the excellency and sweetness of it ; he is the blessing of all the blessings of the covenant, the mercy of all the mercies, the soul of all the privileges of the covenant : No blessing of the covenant is a blessing without him, for all blessings come with him ; *How shall he not with him freely give us all things ? Rom. 8. 32.* The covenant is nothing without Christ, the blessings of it are nothing without Christ ; he is the sweetness of all the blessings of the covenant, the marrow of all the mercies of the covenant, and the fulness of all the promises of the covenant ; they are all empty without Christ, for he is all in all : And therefore, O empty ordinances, without Christ ; O empty sacraments, if Christ be not there ; O empty ministers, if Christ be not with them ; yea, O empty heaven, if Christ be not there ; empty enjoyments, empty comforts without Christ. (5.) Christ is the covenant *meritoriously*, and in point of acquisition and procurement ; he does all that is necessary for the procuring the blessings of the covenant : His righteousness is the great condition of the covenant, the alone condition of it, properly so called ; it is the cause, the procuring cause, of all covenant blessings. All that is promised to Christ, or to us, is upon the account of his obedience, *Isa. 53. 10, 11, 12. By the obedience of one shall many be made righteous*, not by the obedience of any man for himself, *Rom. 5. 19.* He is the procurer of justification, *Rom. 5. 18.* The procurer of remission of sin, *Rom 3. 24.* The procurer of peace, *Isa. 53. 5.*

Yea,

Yea, the sum of it, for *he is our peace* ; the procurer of access to God, and communion with him ; all that are afar off, are made nigh, only by the blood of Christ ; the procurer of sanctifying grace, *Isa.* 53. 10. *I Cor.* 1. 30. and of eternal salvation. His death is the purchase of the heavenly inheritance ; and so he is the covenant *meritoriously*, in procuring all the blessings thereof. (6.) Christ is the covenant *efficaciously* or *efficiently* ; as he procures all by the price of his blood, so he applies all by the power of his Spirit. By this powerful Spirit of his in the efficiency of his application, by means of the law, he discovers to men their sad condition, while under a covenant of works ; by the means of the gospel, he discovers the excellency of the covenant of grace, and also their claim to it, in, and by the indefinite general dispensation of the gospel, and the promise of the covenant ; so that whoever will, may come, and put in for a share. But this is not all ; Christ, in his efficiency, does persuade and enable the poor soul to take hold of this covenant of Christ, himself, as the all of the covenant, and that with particular application to itself, for its own relief ; and not only to accept, but to trust to it for all grace and life ; and that upon the warrant of God's word of grace, renouncing all other ways of salvation, and resting only upon this, *I Tim.* 1. 15. *Acts* 15. 6. Yea, after the person is brought within the covenant, Christ is the great performer of all covenant duties, he performs all our works in us, *Isa.* 26. 12. We are to present no duty of our own to God for acceptance, or in order to obtain life and salvation by it ; but to present him with Christ, he being the covenant to perform all for us, and in us, which we are obliged to. In a word, he is engaged, as the covenant of the people, to be all, and to do all, to procure all, and to see all made effectual that concerns grace and glory : *I will give him for a covenant of the people*, says the Lord ; I will not enter into covenant, or deal with them in an immediate way, as with the first *Adam*, but I will take a surer course, I will give thee for that end ; thou shalt undertake all the matter therein ; I will look to thee for the performance thereof. Man hath broken covenant, I will not trust him again ; but thou shalt be thee covenant, the promise of life shall be made only in thee, and the condition of life shall be found only in thee, thus he is the covenant.

The *third* thing was, To shew for whose behoof he is a covenant ; and so to shew, that *he is the covenant of the people*. Men and women have a way of excluding themselves by unbelief ; but I am sure my text will exclude none this day, that are here, from a right to accept of this covenant, unless it be the devil himself.

self. He indeed and all the fallen angels, are excluded: And no doubt he has come here among us this day, to tempt people to exclude themselves, because he himself is excluded. But here is a foundation of faith for all the people that hear this gospel; Christ is the covenant of the people, infomuch that whosoever of all the people shall subscribe to this covenant, and go into it by faith, shall have the everlasting benefit of it. *Quest.* Why, say you, I'm (it may be) none of the people here meant, none of the elect, whose names are in that covenant and contract, and therefore my subscribing of it may be in vain? *Ans.* For the clearing of this, that Christ is the covenant of the people, you would know and remember, that there are two copies of this covenant, or, rather (if we may so express it) two writs of this charter, the one is an original written in heaven, and the other is an extract written in this Bible. (1.) I say, as to the original, it is written in heaven, and hath all the names of the church invisible inrolled in it, *Heb. 12. 23.* They are called *the church of the first-born, that are written in heaven*; or, as it may be read, *inrolled in heaven*. In this writing are the names of all the elect, of all that ever were, are, or shall be actually taken in within the bond of the covenant; and these are they of whom it is said, *They are chosen in Christ before the foundation of the world*, *Eph. 1. 4.* And again, *Whom he did predestinate, them he also called*, *Rom. 8. 30.* And again, *All that the Father hath given me, shall come to me; all that were ordained to eternal life, believed*: And of them Christ says, *I lay down my life for my sheep*. This original draught of the covenant, is a writ locked up in the cabinet of God's secret purpose; and secret things belong not to us, but the things that are revealed. Therefore, (2.) There is an extract of this original writ, and this extract is written in the Bible, which is the book of the covenant. This you have among your hands, and this copy of the covenant is sent open to you all to sign and subscribe, by giving faith's assent and consent to the covenant, or closing with Christ, the covenant of the people, as he is offered in the Gospel. Now, tho' this extract be a true copy, answering exactly to the original; yet, for rendring all inexcusable, to whom these presents are sent, if they do not subscribe, and for gathering in all the elect, this fair extract is directed to all, and every one of you, giving you full and sufficient warrant to sign and subscribe for yourselves; for you cannot possibly see your names in the original, till once you have signified your consent, by subscription to the copy which is here let down to the earth, to see how you are pleased with it this day. And if you sign the extract, as it is sent to you, then you may lay

claim to the original, and see your name there, which alone is the privilege of those that make the extract their own by signing it, for *the secret of the Lord is with them that fear him, and he will shew them his covenant*; he shews them sometimes their name in the original writ of the covenant. It is the settled order of heaven, that although some, who by faith subscribe the extracted copy, are kept in the dark, about their names being in the original; yet none shall see their names there, but those who subscribe their names here. *Quest.* But, for what serves my putting my name to the foot of a bond, if my name be not in the bond itself? Why then read the direction of this Gospel-covenant, and see if your name be there, and answer to your names; for I shall endeavour to be as practical, as I go along, as possible, that I may have the less to do in the application. For whose behoof then is he thus the covenant? Why, it is even for the behoof of these, whose names are here set down; and tho' they may not here find their particular names, *John, James, Mary, Martha*; yet their general names, yea, both their more general and their more special names are here. (1.) Their more general name is, *the people*, he is the covenant of the people. And here all sinners of mankind, who hear of Christ, have a claim to put in for a share in him, seeing the covenant is directed to them; whosoever they be that hear this Gospel, all saving benefits are preached to them by Christ Jesus, according to the ministerial commission, *Preach the Gospel to every creature*, Mark 16. 15. and according as the Apostle hath taught us to execute this commission, saying, *To you is the word of this salvation sent*, Acts 13. 26. And in this sense the Apostle says, *Tit. 2. 11. The grace of God, that bringeth salvation, hath appeared to all men*; or, as it may be rendered, as you see it in the margin of some of your Bibles, the grace of God, that bringeth salvation to all men, hath appeared. Let them straiten the Gospel-offer who will, they do at their peril; our commission is wide and full, insomuch, that this covenant is directed to all to whom these presents may come. If this be your general name, that you are one of the people, be what you will otherwise, then you are concerned to answer to your name, and put in for a share of the grace of this covenant, by subscribing, and saying, *amen* to it. Why, say you, that is a general name indeed; I dare not deny but that is my general name; then, men and women, do not put this covenant away from you. But, say you, is there no more special names of the people, whose covenant he is. Yea,

(2.) Their more special name is here set down in black and white; for who the people are, and what people in a special man-

ner is here meant, is cleared in the following words, *A light to the Gentiles, to open blind eyes, &c.* And here you will find both the name and surname of the people intended; and, I believe, your names and surnames, that hear me, will be found in it. *1st*, The name is *Gentile*. *2dly*, The surname is *Gentile, dark and blind, Gentile, bound and imprisoned*. *1st*, I say, the name of the people, whose covenant he is, is *Gentiles*; and I know well that this is the name of all that hear me, if there be not *Jews* here; if I thought there were any, I would drop some promise of Christ to, and concerning them, that might draw them to him also, if the Lord would put forth power with it. However, it is to you *Gentiles* that I am speaking; and O may I venture to say with *Paul* this day, *To me, who am less than the least of all saints, is this grace given, to preach among you Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ!* This is a part of the *mystery of godliness*, Christ preached to the *Gentiles*, *1 Tim. 3. 16*. It was a mystery to the *Jews* and primitive Christians, when Christ was first given by a preached Gospel to the *Gentiles*, *Acts 11. 17, 18*. Why? the *Gentiles were called the uncircumcision*, *Eph. 2. 11*. being abominable outcasts, whose entering into the temple was enough to pollute it; but now the Gospel declares, God will justify the uncircumcision by faith. The *Gentiles* were called, *Aliens, without God, without Christ, without hope, Aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers to the covenant of promise*, *Eph. 2. 12*. But now the covenant of promise is given and exhibited to the people that were aliens. *Gentiles* were called *dogs*; *It is not meet to take the childrens bread, and cast it to dogs*, says Christ to the woman of *Canaan*, one of the posterity, it seems of these accursed nations, that were devoted by that word, *Gen. 9. 25. Cursed be Canaan*. And indeed the *Gentiles* and *Canaanites*, as they were contemned by the *Jews*, and look'd upon as dogs; so, in comparison of the house of *Israel*, who were so much blessed, dignified and privileged of old, Christ seems here to allow it, and assert that they were cursed, that they were dogs: But now the tables are turned, the *Gentiles* are called; and, in this woman, the Lord gives an instance of what mercy was in reserve for these dogs; and we *Gentiles* may plead the same privilege at least, with that woman of *Canaan*, *Truth, Lord, yet the dogs eat the crumbs that fall from the Master's table*. The door of *Bethlehem*, the house of bread is open, *Acts 14. 27*. God hath opened the door of faith to the *Gentiles*, even to dogs; the door of the covenant is open and we dare not shut the door upon any dog in all this house; and therefore, as we use to say, *At open doors dogs come in*, allow me in this homely comparison; for, as all the *Gentiles*, so all the wicked

are called dogs, *Rev. 22. 15. Without are dogs, and sorcerers, & whoremongers, &c.* But the door being open to all sinners by this Gospel, you may come to Christ for salvation, as freely as a dog will come in at an open door; yea, more freely & boldly; for dogs many times come in uncalled, and therefore we beat them out again: but here is both a call to come, and a promise of welcome, *Whosoever will, let him come; and him that cometh, I will in no wise cast out.* Well, I say, the *Gentiles* are called dogs, and if that be a part of your name, man, woman, answer to your name, and take with your name, and take the blessing that is offered to you by name. If you have no better name than that of a dog, come with that same, and set it down at the foot of the contract, by subscribing your consent to have Christ to be your covenant; and tho' it be a base name, he will not refuse to take in your subscription. In a word, the *Gentiles* are called *heathens*, *Gal. 3. 8. The Scripture foreseeing that God would justify the heathen thro' faith, preached before the gospel unto Abraham, saying, In thee shall all nations be blessed.* Good news to heathens and pagans, such as we in our forefathers were; and this is the Gospel indeed, that was preached to *Abraham* long ago. *In thee shall all nations be blessed; in thee, what thee, the same thee that is in our text, which preacheth the same Gospel also; I will give thee for a covenant of the people, even the people that are called Gentiles, and Heathens, Uncircumcision, Aliens, and Dogs.* Well, there is the name of the people whose covenant he is, they are *Gentiles*. 2dly, The surname of the people is *Gentiles*, dark and blind, *Gentiles* bound and imprisoned; and see if the surname be not yours, Sirs, as well as the name. There are especially two surnames here that the people have. First surname is *dark and blind*; this is imported in these words, *a light to the Gentiles, to open blind eyes.* Well, is this your surname? Are you darkness itself in the abstract, are you in the darkness of ignorance, in the darkness of error, in the darkness of corruption, in the darkness of confusion, in the darkness of desertion, in the darkness of delusion? O here is a brave covenant for you to sign: It is a covenant of light; for he that is the *covenant of the people, is the light of the Gentiles.* But all the light in the world, without sight, will be uncomfortable; and therefore is another piece of your surname *blindness*, as well as darkness? Are you not only blear'd, and see ill, but blind and see none at all? Are you blind with respect to sin, and cannot see it in its power and guilt? Blind with respect to duty, and cannot see what to do? Blind with respect to God, and cannot see him in his beauty and excellency? Blind with respect to Christ, and cannot

see him in his glory, fulness, and righteousness? Blind with respect to ordinances, and cannot see the power and glory of God in the sanctuary; Blind with respect to providences, and cannot discern the signs of the time? Blind with respect to your interest in Christ, and cannot see whether that be secured or not? Blind with respect to your warrant to intermeddle with Christ and his institutions? Blind with respect to all spiritual and eternal things? Why, this covenant of the people is designed to open the blind eyes. And if darkness and blindness be the surname of the people for whose behoof Christ is the covenant, and if that be your surname also, why then there is room at the foot of this covenant to set down your name and surname both; this covenant of the people is a covenant of light to the people that are dark, and a covenant of sight to the people that are blind. Let all them that find this to be their surname, subscribe to this covenant and say, I am one of the dark people, and I come for light; I am one of the blind people, and I come for sight; there is my name, Lord, let it be recorded among the dark blind people of which Christ is the covenant. Again, the second surname of the people is *bound and imprisoned*; this is imported in these words, *To bring out the prisoners from the prison, and them that sit in darkness, out of the prison-house*. Now, whatever prison you are in, Sirs, if your surname be a *bound prisoner*, our text speaks to you. Are you in the prison of sin, a bond-slave and a servant unto lusts? Are you in the prison of Satan, in the devil's prison, led captive by him at his pleasure? Are you in the prison of the law, a debtor to do the whole law, and a debtor to bear the whole curse of it? Are you in the prison of carnality, clogged with the things of this world? Are you in the prison of a black league with death, and covenant with hell? Are you in the prison of a natural state, as a child of disobedience, and a child of wrath? Are you in the prison of temptations, either from without, or within, filled with dreadful suggestions and blasphemous injections; Are you in the prison of affliction, either upon soul or body, state or family? Are you in the prison of doubts, and fears, and despondency, with your soul cast down within you? Are you in the prison of unbelief, concluded under it, so as you cannot for your life get an act of faith elicite? Are you in the prison of wretched carelessness, unconcernedness, and indifferency, not caring whether you be loosed and delivered out of prison or not: Are you in the prison of atheism, and cannot believe a God, a Christ, a heaven, or hell? Are you in the prison of death, and in bondage through fear of death? Or, are you in the prison of security, fearing nothing, but sleeping in the arms

of

of the devil? What prison-house are you in, man? Answer to your name, prisoner, in such a prison-house that I have named. Is the door of the prison-house bolted and barred, that you cannot get out, and the heavy chains and fetters of hell about you, so as you cannot loose them any more than you can unhinge the axle-tree of the universe? Behold, this covenant of the people is a covenant of liberty for the people that are in prison. If I have not named the prison, or the chamber of the prison-house you're in, name it yourself, and say, I prisoner in such a prison-house, I have been so long and so long in such a dark prison, and lo I set down my name, to wit, *a bound prisoner*, consenting to be liberate by the Son of God, and consenting that he would work the consent himself, and do all that concerns my liberty: Why, man, down with your name that same way; and if you be not set at liberty in God's own time and way, you'll be the first that ever gave in a subscription and was not received: Nay, marked and recorded it shall be; for the covenant speaks to you by name and surname, saying, *Go forth ye prisoners of hope; the Spirit of the Lord God is upon me, for he hath anointed me to preach and proclaim liberty to the captives.* This covenant of the people then is drawn up already and signed. See who hath signed it, *ψ. 8. I am the Lord, that is my name.* He hath signed it by a name by which he is known in heaven and earth, even *Jehovah, I am Jehovah, I am the Lord, that is my name.* O glorious name subscribing this bond! That is his name; what is yours? Why, can you not say, I am one of the people they call *Gentiles*? I'm a *dark, blind, bound prisoner*; that's my name and surname both. Yea, be your name as vile and black as hell, yet down with it in capital letters; for the infinitely fair name of the first subscriber will set it off, his name will answer for all the defects and deformities of yours: And if you wait 'till you be in a better condition, and have a better name to sign with, you'll wait 'till doom's-day, and perish by the way; and all the money of your terms, conditions, and good qualifications, which you would bring as a price in your hands, will perish with you. Nay, you have nothing to do in this covenant, but bless God that brought it to your hand, and sign it with your heart. Christ hath a commission from his Father, and we in his name, to take in the subscriptions of all the people, whose name and surname I have mentioned; and I hope, I have not miss'd any one that is here. Thus you see who the people are, for whose behoof he is the *covenant*; and that he is well designed the *covenant of the people*, seeing all the people here named have a right of access to the covenant, a warrant to sign and subscribe to it; and

all the people, that are subscribers, have a right of possession to the whole good of the covenant, and to the seal thereof, the Sacrament of the supper.

The *fourth* thing proposed, was to shew, by whose authority or by what authority, Christ is the covenant of the people; and so to hint at his divine ordination to this business, in these words, *I will give thee*, &c. Where you have, 1. The glorious Person ordaining, *I*. 2. The glorious person ordained, *Thee*. 3. The gracious manner of the ordination, *Give*. 4. The gracious motive and ground, *I will give thee*. A short word to each of these.

1st, The glorious person ordaining Christ to this work, *I will give thee*; What I? I the Lord, I Jehovah, I the first person of the glorious Trinity. God the Father here is the first grand party of the covenant; yea, here is God the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, essentially considered, contracting with the Son, and ordaining him, personally considered, to this work. Now, this glorious person ordaining Christ to this work, imports, 1. The will of God and of the Father, that Christ, the second person, should come and bear the whole weight of the covenant. Hence Christ tells us, he had commandment from the Father, and that he came to do his will, *John* 6. 37, 38, 39. God the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, by unanimous counsel, ordained and appointed the Son to come in his own person upon the errand of man's redemption; and God the Father being the first in the order of subsistency, and so the first in operation *adextra*, therefore, the giving is primarily ascribed unto him. 2. His being the person ordaining, imports the divine authority of Christ's commission, in that he is given of the Father, and came from the Father, *Job* 16. 28. & 17. 8. where Christ commends that faith which believes his divine mission, his divine ordination to this mediatory work. 3. His being ordained of God, imports God's confidence in him, as being both able for, and faithful to perform the whole work that he gave him to do. He was confident that he would be a faithful and righteous servant; *By his knowledge shall my righteous servant justify many. This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well-pleased*. 4. His being the person ordaining, imports the Father's zealous concern for the redemption and salvation of men: *God so loved the world, that he gave his only-begotten Son*; *I will give thee*: His hand is first at the bless'd bargain, subscribing this covenant; shewing that he will do the whole work of the covenant by himself, and by his Son Jesus Christ, and will get the whole glory of it: And hence the strain in which he subscribes, *ψ. 8. is, I am the Lord, that is my name, and my glory will I not give to another*. He will let none share

of any of the glory of it but himself, either in the contrivement, commencement, advancement, or completement thereof.

2dly, The glorious person ordained, in the Pronoun *Thee*, namely, Christ, the second Person of the glorious Trinity, and the other party of the covenant, *I will give Thee*. And Christ being the Person here ordained, imports, 1. His having cordially assented and agreed to the bargain; God could not have given him, if he had not consented: But as he and his Father are one, so there is but one will betwixt them; and his consent is recorded among the decrees of heaven. *In the volume of thy book it is written of me, Lo I come.* 2. His being the person ordained, imports the insufficiency of all others for the work of man's redemption; *Him hath God the Father sealed; sacrifice and offering thou wouldst not, a body hast thou given me.* Though men and angels had put their shoulders to this work, it would never have been done; for *the redemption of the soul is precious, and ceaseth for ever*, as to the creature: He alone is the Messiah, chosen, constitute, promised, typified, to whom all the prophets gave witness, and we are not to look for another; insufficiency is engraven and stamp'd upon all others. 3. His being the person ordained, imports the alone sufficiency of this glorious person for this glorious work. O the glorious excellency of this person here given! and, O the glorious sufficiency of this person! *I will give thee. I have laid help upon one that is Mighty: This is he that is glorious in his apparel, travelling in the greatness of his strength, mighty to save: This is he that comes from Edom, with died garments from Bozrah, who trod the wine-press of the Father's wrath alone, and of the people there was none with him.* 4. His being the person ordained of the Father, imports the unparallel'd love both of him that gave, and of him that is given, both of the ordainer, and ordained: *Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us, and gave his Son to be the propitiation for our sins, 1 Joh. 4. 10.* And herein is love, that Christ so cheerfully undertook this work; *He rejoiced in the habitable parts of the earth, and his delights were with the sons of men, Prov. 8. 31.* Here are both the parties of the covenant, God and Christ, that glorious *I*, and that glorious *Thee*; *I will give Thee*: Two wonderful covenants. God foreseeing from eternity that mankind would be ruined, by violating the covenant betwixt God and man, set on foot a better project, even an inviolable covenant betwixt God and Christ, two unchangeable parties, mutually engaging for the relief and recovery of the lost sinner; and Christ bearing such a part of the work, as to get the name of the whole; *I'll give Thee for the covenant of the people.*

3dly, The gracious manner of this ordination, is imported in the word *give*, I will give thee. *A man's gift makes room for him*, says Solomon, and gives him place among great men, Prov. 18. 16. Men are esteemed and respected for the valuableness of the gifts and benefits they give; how much more should God's gift make room for him? Christ is God's gift, *I'll give thee for a covenant of the people*. And this giving of Christ implies several things which concern the manner of his ordination, to be a covenant of the people. 1. In general and negatively, God's giving of Christ does not imply, that he was about to alienate his own right to Christ from himself to us; no, he is still his only-begotten Son. When we give a thing to another, we alienate our own right to it, but it is not so here; what God gives we may have the benefit and use of it, but God still keeps a right over us and it. Hence, says the Apostle, *all things are your's, for ye are Christ's, and Christ is God's*. But, 2. More particularly and positively, God's giving of Christ for a covenant of the people, implies (1.) His eternal destination by the Father for this end, to be the covenant of the people, before ever they had a being. They were not so much as consulted in the matter, when the contract was signed in the council of peace betwixt the Father and the Son; and we have no reason to complain of injury done us here, for we have nothing to contract on our part. The breach of the first covenant left us worse than nothing, for the first *Adam* left us with a burden of debt, a burden of poverty and wants, yea, a burden of curses from the fiery law; and all that we can do, is to increase the debt, instead of being able to pay it off. Now, I say, God's giving him, includes his eternal destination by the Father for this mediatorial work, without our having any hand in it, or knowledge of it, or any obligation lying upon God so to do as he did, in the eternal transaction with his Son concerning the people whom he designed to save. There was no obligation lying upon Christ, to come in our stead, to be our surety, to take our guilt, and pay our debt, previous to his own consent; nor any obligation upon God to accept of a surety instead of the principal debtor; therefore God's giving of Christ, must imply a transaction, wherein the Son consented to be the covenant, and the Father consented to send him, and accept of his suretyship for lost sinners. (2.) God's giving of Christ, implies his actual qualifying, and sending him to accomplish that which was contrived from eternity. How he called and qualified him, you see in the preceding *verse*; he called him in righteousness, and qualified him with a supereminent unction of the Holy Ghost, *I will put my Spirit upon him, and he*

shall bring forth judgment to the Gentiles: Accordingly he received the Spirit above measure. How he sent him, you see in many places of Scripture; he gave him a body, a true body, and a reasonable soul, and then he gave him to the death in the fulness of time; for it pleased the Lord to bruise him: Justice awaken'd against him, *Awake, O sword, against my shepherd, &c.* He was put in the winepress of divine vengeance and bruised there; he was not only bruised in his name, being called a mad-man, and a devil; not only bruised in his estate, *while the foxes had holes, and the birds of the air had nests, but the Son of man had not where to lay his head.* Neither was he bruised in his body only, while they *pierced his hands and his feet*; but bruised in his soul, 'till it was *exceeding sorrowful, even unto death*, and 'till the agonies of his soul pressed the blood out of his body, even *great drops of blood*: No wonder, for he was plunged in the ocean of God's wrath, and suffered all the hell that was due to sin; sin being imputed to him as the covenant of the people, justice did not spare him, Rom. 8. 32. *He spared not his own Son, but gave him to the death for us all.* (3.) God's giving of Christ, implies, that the manner of his ordination for this work, was every way free and gratuitous; what freer than a gift; God gives Christ for a covenant of the people, without regard to any motive, merit, or solicitation of the people, yea, and in opposition thereto. This gift is free, in opposition to merit, either of condignity or congruity. If we be for merit of our own, we must be for hell, for that is all that we merit; if wretchedness, misery, and a mass of confusion and enmity, be accounted merit, then we may lay claim to it, but no otherwise. This gift is free, in opposition to constraint, force, or necessity: God had nothing from without to constrain him to contrive the redemption of men, or to give Christ for that end: tho' all mankind should have for ever been drowned in the flood of his wrath, God had remained as he was, as happy as ever; no force was upon him to contrive a remedy for man. This gift is free, in opposition to debt: God owed us nothing but wrath; but we owe many millions of talents to his infinite justice. In a word, it is free, in opposition to all motives from without God himself. There was nothing about us, to move him to pity us, ten thousand things to move him to destroy us. Upon what condition in us could God be moved to give his Christ to us, seeing our best condition, before he give him in possession to us, is a condition of sin and misery, death and thralldom? But then again, (4.) God's giving of Christ *for a covenant of the people*, his giving him thus, I say, implies a right and title that the people have to receive him: God's giving Christ is the foundation of our title to receive

receive him; faith, which is the actual acceptance of the gift, is the mean of putting us in possession; but it would be the height of presumption, thus to take and receive, if there were no giving, John 3. 27. *No man receiveth any thing, except it be given him from heaven.* As this receiving then supposes a giving of Christ, prior to the receiving, so this giving of Christ for a covenant of the people, implies the people's right, and title, and warrant to receive him. There is a twofold giving of Christ. *1st*, A giving of Christ in point of actual possession; and thus he is given to the elect soul in the day of believing; and this giving is the foundation of his title to all things in and through him; for, *How will he not with him freely give us all things?* Rom. 7. 32. And 'till a man have an interest in Christ thus, he hath no saving right to any thing, no right to a communion-table; nay, no covenant-right to the food of his common table. *2dly*, There is a giving of Christ in point of exhibition, and gospel-offer; and thus he is given to the whole visible church, in the dispensation of the word; and this giving is the foundation of our title to receive Christ, and of our claim of right to take this gift out of the hand of the giver. A right of possession none have, 'till they believe, and take the gift that is offered! but a right of access and warrant to believe, all have, whether they believe or not, and whether they take this gift out of God's hand or not. That Christ is God's gift to a whole visible church in this sense, is a great privilege, whatever the world think or say about it; and it is a part of my errand this day, to tell you of it: If it be choaking doctrine to any, and will not go down, we cannot help it; it is Bible-doctrine, and gospel-doctrine, and therefore we must preach it in his name, who commands us to preach the gospel to every creature. But, I think, it should be welcome doctrine to all that hear me, that Christ is given to all the people in this house, in the same manner that the *Manna* was given to all the people of old, *John* 6. 32. Where Christ, speaking to all the promiscuous multitude, and making a comparison betwixt himself, and the *Manna* that fell about the tents of *Israel* in the wilderness, says, *My Father giveth you the true bread from heaven;* where the revelation and offer of Christ is declared to be a giving of him, before ever he be received, or believed on. It is such a gift and grant, as warrants a man to believe and receive the gift; for this end he is given to a perishing world, *God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth on him, might not perish, but have everlasting life.* As the *brazen serpent* was given for a common good to the whole camp of *Israel*, that whosoever in all the camp, being stung by

the *fiery serpents*, looked thereto, might not die, but live; even so is Christ given as a common good to poor stung sinners, that, looking to him, they may be saved. Christ is given to all, in the dispensation of this gospel. And O, it should be glad tidings of great joy to all people, that *to us a child is born, to us a Son is given, whose name is called Wonderful*. This giving, in a general and definite manner, to all, in the gospel-offer, may be, and is, for the most part, where there is no receiving: but there can be no receiving of Christ for salvation, where there is not this giving: for a man can receive nothing, except it be given. This giving then implies a right, and title, and warrant to receive; he is so given to you, that all that are pleased with the bargain, have warrant to take possession. He is your own already, man, woman, in the former sense, whether you take him or not; as he said to the *Jews*, *He came to his own, and his own received him not*. But faith's improvement of this gift and grant, among your hands, would make him your own, in a peculiar sense, by actual possession. Thus, we have the manner of his ordination, to be the covenant of the people; it is even by a free and gracious donation. The next thing here was,

Fourthly, the gracious motive, ground and reason of this divine ordination, which is just the divine will *I will give*. This *verb*; must necessarily be borrowed from the former clause, *I will hold thine hand, and give thee for a covenant of the people; I will give, O sovereign reason!* No gift in the world so free as Christ; When men bestow gifts upon one another, there is some impulsive *cause* that excites them to it, drawn from their relation to, or interest in one another; drawn from services and favours received, or expected from each other: But no such impulsive cause here; we have *no relation* to God, but as *his enemies*; we can do him no service, but sin against him, therefore can merit nothing from him, *but his curse*. His reason of doing, then, must be his own sovereign will. Men may rack their wit, and dispute about the reason of God's actings; but there would be more calm reasoning in the world about gospel-truths, if all our reasoning did strike sail to the *sovereignty of free grace*, and stoop to that; he will, because he will; *I will give thee*. I think this *will* imports, 1. A consent and agreement: The *counsel of peace* is concluded, parties are both agreed; *I will*. 2. A complacency and satisfaction: God is well pleased with this device of his own infinite wisdom, well pleased with the ransom and ransomer, *This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased*; I take pleasure in giving him *to be a covenant of the people; I will*. 3. I think

think it imports authority: The supreme authority of the eternal Godhead, Three in One, is interposed in this matter, for ordaining Christ to this work; *I will*. And, 4. I think it imports an express command, *I will give thee*; and of this command Christ speaks, when he says, *This commandment have I received of my Father, to lay down my life for my sheep*: And when he says, *Lo, I come to do thy will*; by the which will *we are sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all*, Heb. 10. 10. In a word, it imports, that the sovereign will of *Jehovah* is the reason of all. And this may lead us to, and shall make me the more brief upon, the

Fifth thing proposed, namely, the reasons of the doctrine, why is Christ given for a covenant of the people? And here I might shew, 1. Why he is given. 2. Why given for a covenant. 3. Why given for a covenant of the people of the *Gentiles*.

1. Why is he given, or exhibited by way of gift? Why, the grand reason is told already, even *his sovereign will*. Christ, the great ordinance of God for man's recovery, is dispensed freely by a gratuitous gift, *that salvation may be by grace*, and that *free grace* may get the whole glory of it, from the *foundation* to the *top-stone*, with shoutings of *grace, grace* to it. The giving of Christ to all, in the gospel-offer, is from sovereign grace, and must be absolutely *free* and *unconditional*; for what in all the world is *the condition of the offer*? If men be in a sinful condition, in a miserable condition, in a lost condition, *that is all the condition and qualification*, that I know, necessary for making an offer of Christ as a Saviour to them. If any clog the gospel-offer with legal terms and conditions, they inroach upon the warrant ministers have to *offer Christ to all*, and the warrant that *all have to receive him*; yea, they inroach upon *sovereign grace*, which hath made this *grant and offer* of Christ, not to devils, but to men in the most extensive terms: *To you, O men, do I call, and my voice is to the sons of men*. Again, the giving of Christ to some, in actual possession, is from *sovereign grace* also: for tho' none can be possess'd of Christ and his benefits, till by faith they receive him; yet this faith to receive, is given, as well as the gift received by it, *Eph. 2. 8. By grace ye are saved through faith, and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God*. It is given, by vertue of an absolute promise of the covenant, such as that, *Thy people shall be willing in the day of thy power*; and so, the hand to take the gift, being itself given out of the covenant, the covenant takes hold of the man, before the man can take hold of the covenant. But,

2. Why is Christ given for a covenant? I offer you only one

great reason of it; he is given for a covenant, that God might have more glory out of the covenant of works, by the second *Adam's* fulfilling of it, than he lost by the first *Adam's* breach and violation of it. The law of eternal life and death was irreversibly stated only by the covenant of works; and tho' we be changed, yet the covenant of works is unchangeable: And as, by virtue of the stability of it, *all the Christless world are condemned, cursed, and die eternally*; so, by virtue of its being perfectly fulfilled by Christ, in whom only it is established, *all that are in him, are freed from condemnation, and live eternally*. What is the covenant of grace? I may say, it is Christ's fulfilling for us, *the covenant of works*. We were debtors to the mandatory and minatory part of the law, arraigned, at the instance of divine justice, to *pay the debt*: Christ substitutes himself *in our room*, came under the law, to *pay the whole debt* due thereunto; and now God gets more glory, by his doing so, than he lost by our sins. Herein he glorified his sovereign Majesty, whose authority was so heinously violated by such a *base creature* as man is, in that he receiv'd him not into his favour, without a becoming reparation, made to his honour, by the intervention of a perfect obedience and full satisfaction. Herein he glorified his infinite wisdom, in finding out a *mean to reconcile justice and mercy*; to *punish the sin*, and yet to *pardon the sinner*; to take vengeance on sin, to the very uttermost, and yet to *magnify his mercy*, while the sinner is justified, accepted, and saved, without his own suffering. This is that ----- *manifold wisdom of God*. Herein he glorified his free love, goodness, and pity, in subjecting his life to such a death, and his glory to such a shame, *and all to purchase such vile and worthless creatures as we are*, and to redeem us from eternal woe and misery: As also his almighty power is here glorified, in supporting the human nature of Christ under the *vast load of divine wrath, and law-curses*. Herein he glorified his holiness and faithfulness, in fulfilling not only *the promise of the law*, as a covenant of works, even the promise of eternal life, made to *perfect obedience*; which, tho' we forfeited in our own persons, yet we recover in Christ; the condition of life in the covenant of works being perfect obedience *personal*, and the condition of life here being perfect obedience *imputed*, and so the promise of life, upon the ground of a perfect obedience, fulfilled to us in him: but also divine faithfulness is glorified, in fulfilling *all the threatnings of the law*, while we, who come under the sentence of death in the first *Adam*, undergo that death in the second *Adam*. In a word, herein he glorifies his justice and righteousness, in the remission of sins, thro'

thro' the propitiation of Christ, *Rom. 3. 25. Whom God hath set forth to be the propitiation thro' faith in his blood, to declare his righteousness for the remission of sins that are past, thro' the forbearance of God.* Herein is vindictive justice displayed, in its greatest severity, in Christ's being the sacrifice and propitiation: And here is retributive justice illustriously declared, in the sinner's being rewarded, justified, saved, upon the blood and sacrifice, the obedience and righteousness of Christ; yea, all the perfections of the great God shine gloriously in the face of Christ, as in a beautiful and bright constellation, *2 Cor. 4. 6.* And for this reason he gave him for a covenant.

(3.) Why is he given for a covenant of the people, of the *Gentiles*? Why! not only to show his just displeasure at the unbelief of the *Jews*, as we see, *Acts 13. 46, 47. Rom. 11. 11, 19, 20.* but also to shew his sovereignty, that he will have mercy on whom he will have mercy; and to shew his truth, in fulfilling the ancient prophecy concerning the calling of the *Gentiles*. It is long since God promised by *Noah*, saying, *God shall enlarge Japhet, and he shall dwell in the tents of Shem, Gen. 9. 27.* Now of *Japhet* came the *Gentiles*, *Gen. 10. 5.* and of *Shem* came the *Jews*. By the posterity of *Japhet* were the isles of the *Gentiles* divided. The isles were solemnly by lot divided among them (and probably this isle of *Britain* among the rest) so that as *Japhet's* dwelling in the tents of *Shem* is a clear prediction of the conversion of the *Gentiles*, and their succeeding to the *Jews*, in their church privileges; so this directs us to understand the promise in the context, *The isles shall wait for his law:* He is given for a covenant of the people, a light of the *Gentiles*. In a word, he is given for a covenant of the people, to show the extent and all-sufficiency of his grace, and the intrinsic value of his blood. Suppose a prince were setting up a sanctuary, or city of refuge, the privileges whereof are not restricted to any sort of men, but extended to all, *Gentiles* as well as *Jews*; would not this declare, that the privileges of the place are full and ample, so as, whosoever comes to this sanctuary might be safe? Here also, in like manner, the sufficiency of the merit of Christ, and the fulness of his righteousness is declar'd, in so much that none can, with any shadow of reason, exclude themselves, be they what they will, *People, Gentiles, Dark, Blind, Imprisoned*; seeing all *Gentiles*, who are called *Dogs, Aliens, Heathens, Uncircumcised*, are included; and seeing the motto written upon the out-side of the door of the sanctuary, is, *whosoever will, let him come:* All comers are welcome, and refusers left inexcusable.

The sixth thing proposed, was the application of the whole.

This

This doctrine would admit of a vast improvement, which we must confine to as narrow bounds as possible; and we may improve it,

Ist, For *information*. If it be so, that Christ, by divine ordination, is thus the covenant of the people; in the glass of this doctrine, we clearly see many precious gospel-truths. And,

(1.) Hence we may see, in what way it is that the ruin we bro't upon our selves, by the breach and violation of the covenant of works, is reparable. We have brought ourselves into a most lamentable state by sin: and we are irrecoverably lost indeed, as to all that we can do for our own help; *O Israel, thou hast destroyed thy self*. Who can repair that ruin? There is a glorious *Me* that says, *In me is thy help*, *Hof.* 13. 9. Who that *Me* is, is explained in our text, even a God in Christ, the glorious *I* and *Thee*; *I will give Thee for a covenant of the people*. There is no help, no justification for them now by a covenant of works; but I'll give *Thee for a covenant to them*, which, tho' it be all works to thee, yet it shall be all grace to them. The world is busy casting the law of works into this and the other handsome shape, and pleasing themselves with a fancy, that in this way of works, they may have righteousness and life, to the disparagement of the way of grace, to the destruction of their own souls, and to the dishonour of Christ, who alone is the covenant of the people.

(2.) Hence we see the greatness of the love of God, towards poor sinners, in giving such a *great and glorious person as Christ*, and that for such a *great and glorious end*, as to be a *covenant of the people*; *God so loved the world, as to give his only begotten Son*, &c. Christ came not to be a covenant of the people, without commission, call, and ordination from his Father. He had authority from the Father to do all that he did about the covenant; *I will give thee for a covenant*. Let not our notions of God be so gross, as to think, that God the Father is of an implacable nature, full of severity; and that the Son only is of a pleasant meek nature, full of lenity towards sinners. Nay, God the Father was the first, in order of nature, that made the motion about man's redemption: Christ was appointed, authorized and given of him. Behold, the love of God hath gone to its utmost height, in giving Christ, for he cannot give a greater gift; and the love of Christ also hath gone to its utmost, in consenting hereto, and giving himself, and all this to be no less than a *complete covenant of the people*. Because the people can do nothing, therefore he leaves them nothing to do of themselves; *I will give thee for a covenant*.

(3.) Hence we may see a test of the true Religion. All schemes that

that center not in Christ, are to be rejected; and all schemes of the covenant, that make not Christ *to be the all of it, are to be renounced*. If I can find nothing in the covenant but Christ, surely I find eno', and I find all that my text makes of it; and if the world make it a new scheme, at their peril be it. But this I say, that every scheme that leads to *self*, and takes off from Christ, is a false and ruinous scheme; yea, every doctrine, that advances any thing to be a rival with him, and mingles our filthy rags with his excellent robes. The second *Adam* came not to piece up and amend old *Adam's* coat, as some express it, but to give us a wholly new garment of his own making, and dyed with his own blood: *I'll give thee for a covenant*. Our chief business 'as ministers of the Gospel, is to trumpet forth the transcendent excellency of Christ, and to desire *to know nothing but Christ, and him crucified*, as the all of the covenant, for making people both happy and holy.

(4.) Hence we may see the believer's freedom from the law as a covenant of works. *He is not under the law, but under grace*; having closed with Christ, Christ is now all the covenant that he is under: He is freed both from the *do* and the *die*, the command and the threatning of the covenant of works. They are made void to him thro' Christ: for he is not under it, either to be justified or condemned; he is not under its command to be justified for his obedience, nor under its threatning and sanction to be condemned for his disobedience, as it is a covenant; for, *there is no condemnation to them that are in Christ*. It is true, as the law is a rule of obedience, he remains under it, as much and more than ever, and stands obliged thereby to study perfection; and his disobedience may bring upon him rods and stripes, and all the terrible effects of God's fatherly displeasure, upon soul and body; but as it is a rule of acceptance, a condition of life, or a covenant of works, he hath nothing to do with it, nothing to expect from it, nothing to fear by it: He hath nothing to do with it, any more than a wife hath to do with a dead husband, *Rom. 7.4. Ye are dead to the law, by the body of Christ, that ye might be married to another, even to him that is raised from the dead, that ye might bring forth fruit unto God*. He is not to bring forth fruit any more to the dead husband, the law, but to Christ the living husband. He hath nothing to expect from it, no life, no righteousness, no happiness, no holiness by his own legal obedience, but only by Christ, a better covenant; and he hath nothing to fear by it, no hell, no death, no damnation, no condemnation, no liableness thereto.

And hence, (5.) We see what place the believer's obedience hath in the covenant of grace. His obedience hath no place here,

here, in point of causality, or proper federal conditionality; for this were to turn it into the same place it had in the covenant of works: where, tho' there was no merit of condignity (I know, few will dare to say so) yet there was a merit by paction; that is to say, there was a promise of life made to works and obedience, *do and live*. But in the covenant of grace, we assert, against all popish doctrine whatsoever, that there is no such reward of work, obedience, or personal holiness, upon compact and promise; because the tenor of this covenant runs upon the condition of Christ's obedience and righteousness, apprehended by faith. Gospel-holiness is of manifold necessity in the new covenant; but the promise of life is not here made to the work, but to the worker; and to the worker, not for his work, but for the merit of Christ: As for instance, *Be thou faithful to the death, and I will give thee the crown of life*; the promise is not made to fidelity, but to the faithful person, whose fidelity is a sign that he is in Christ, in whom all the promises are *yea and amen*. If the law had now the promise of life to our obedience, we should not have life and salvation any other way but by the law, and by the works thereof, *Gal. 3. 21. If there had been a law given that could have given life, verily righteousness should have been by the law*: Therefore our obedience now is not a cause or condition, but a necessary effect of the covenant, and qualification of all that are within the covenant; yea, all whom this covenant take hold of, it makes them holy: And therefore, *without holiness, no man shall see God*; because without holiness, no man hath this effective evidence of his being within this holy covenant.

(6.) Hence we may see what are the motives that now should influence the believer in his obedience. If Christ be the all of the covenant, and that he is loosed from all his former relation to the covenant of works, he is not to obey either from a legal hope of heaven, or slavish fear of hell: Not from a legal hope of heaven, for the covenant secures the purchase of that by Christ's perfect obedience; not from a slavish fear of hell, for the covenant hath secured freedom from that by Christ's complete satisfaction. The principal motive is the love of Christ constraining, the love of a God in Christ, who is *given for a covenant of the people*. God deals not with believers now according to the covenant of works, neither ought they to deal with him as if they were under it: They ought to mourn for sin, to repent, to confess, to beg pardon, but not in a legal way, as if they had to do with a wrathful judge, but as having to do with a merciful Father in Christ: They are to yield obedience to the law, not out of a servile

servile fear of hell and wrath, but out of a child-like love and willing mind; so far as the believer acts otherwise, so far he is under a Spirit of bondage. Neither ought the believer to act from a dread and fear of his being disinherited; so far as he does so, it is not an act of faith, but of unbelief; for he cannot view this covenant, and yet see himself left at an uncertainty. There is no liahleness to a forfeiture of its privileges, Christ is the *covenant of the people*.

(7.) Hence see, if Christ be the covenant of the people by God's ordination, why the believer is to take the law only out of the hand of a Mediator, and yet is not without law to God, when he is under the law to Christ. He is not to view it in the first covenant-form in the hand of an absolute God, but only in Christ, and as it is cast into a new covenant-form: And the original authority of the law is not hereby dissolved, nor obligation to obedience diminished, but rather strengthened and sweetned, in regard that this authority does now run only in this sweet and blessed channel, by the Father's ordination; yea, the Creator's authority and sovereignty is in Christ, and the whole fulness of the Godhead, and by the voice of God the Father from the excellent glory, saying, *This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well-pleas'd; hear ye him*. We are so much obliged, by the Father's appointment, to obey him, and take the law only out of his hand, that, if we do it not, we condemn the authority of the Father, and run cross to this divine ordination.

(8.) Hence see, if Christ be the all of the covenant, then believers have all things in Christ. Christ being the *covenant of the people*, this covenant is *all his salvation, and all his desire*. All his salvation is here; and well may the believer say, in the exercise of faith, in Christ I have all things at once, neither need I any thing more that is necessary to salvation; this covenant is all my salvation. He may say, in the point of justification, Christ is my righteousness, my treasure, my work, my covenant, my all; yea, my all in all, for in him dwelleth all the *fulness of the Godhead bodily*: And believers are compleat in him, *who of God is made to them wisdom, righteousness, sanctification and redemption*.

(9.) Hence we may see, if Christ be given for a *covenant of the people*, that the Gospel, strictly and properly taken, is a bundle of good news, glad tidings, and gracious promises. Our text is a sum of the Gospel, and it is a free promise; *I will give thee for a covenant of the people*. There is no precept or command here; the law is properly a word of precept, but not the Gospel. The law commands all, and the Gospel promises all. It were a disparagement

agement to the divine law, if it were not perfect and exceeding broad, if there were any duty we are called unto, not enjoined therein. Why? are there no commands in the gospel, say some? We are ready, Sir, to confound the dispensation of the Gospel, with the Gospel itself; and this makes much wranglings on this head. The Gospel, largely taken for the dispensation thereof, hath the whole law in it, subservient thereunto; but strictly taken, it is a quite other thing than the law of commandments. *Faith* and *repentance* may be called Gospel-commands, if you speak of the dispensation of the Gospel; but if you speak of the Gospel itself, they come in under another consideration. We are to distinguish betwixt *duties* and *graces*: Faith and repentance, as they are *duties*, are commanded in the law; but as they are *graces*, they are promised in the Gospel. We are to distinguish betwixt a new commanded duty, and a new presented object; the Gospel presents a new object of faith, a God in Christ: but the same law that was from the beginning, obliges us to believe whatever new revelation God makes: If we understand it safely, then we may say, the law obliges us to believe the Gospel; and therefore he *that believeth not* the Gospel, *is condemned already* by the law, *John* 3. 18. And his condemnation shall be more aggravated, than if this new object of faith, had never been presented, or if this new light had never come into the world, *ψ.* 19.

(10.) Hence, if Christ be given as the covenant of the people, then we may see the nature of faith, and its appropriating quality. When God says, *I will give thee as a covenant of the people*, faith says something by way of answer corresponding with the revelation and testimony of God: God says, I give; faith says, I take; God says, I give him for a covenant; faith says, I take him for a covenant; God says, *I give him for a covenant of the people*; faith says, I am one of the people, I take him for my covenant, my own covenant, my own all. It is the people's covenant in the general offer, but my covenant in the particular application of faith; faith breaks the shell, and eats the kernel. The general dispensation of the Gospel says, he is given for a covenant of the people; the particular application of faith says, he is given for a covenant to me; God says, I give him; faith says, I take him as a gift, a free gift; God says, I give him, it is I that give him; faith says, Lord, I take him as *thy* gift, as God's gift; God says, *I will give him*, it is my will to do it; faith says, *thy will be done*, even so I take him according to thy will, *amen*, so be it; *and all the people should say amen*, and every one for himself should say *amen* to God's offer, and receive and rest

upon

upon him alone for salvation, as he is offered; and in so doing believe, that thro' the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ they shall be saved, *Acts 15. 11.*

(11.) Hence, if Christ be thus given for a covenant of the people, see the ground of faith that all the hearers of the Gospel have: Why? the offer is universal to all that hear the Gospel, I give him for a covenant of the people. Let *Arminians* maintain, at their peril, their *universal redemption*; but we must maintain, at our peril, the universal offer: Necessity is laid upon us, and woe to us, if we preach not this Gospel to every creature. Christ is so far given to all the people that hear the Gospel, that it is warrantable for them to receive the gift; it is no presumption for them to take what God gives, they shall not be guilty of vitious intromission in so doing; nay, they shall be guilty, they shall be damned, if they believe not, and take not God's gift. It is true, reprobates will exclude themselves, but this Gospel-offer does not exclude them; they have as fair a revealed warrant to believe, as the elect have. We cannot say, you are an elect man, you are an elect woman, therefore believe; we have no such commission: Nay, God, by this Gospel, cast the covenant in among all the people, saying, whosoever will, let him take; whosoever pleases, let him take, and in taking, he shall have a proof of his being an elect. As it is said of the *Jews*, *To them belong the covenant of the promises*; so say I to you *Gentiles*, the covenant belongs to you, the promise is to you and your children; you have a right and warrant to take all, and this right was sealed to you in baptism, and is proclaimed to you in this Gospel, and you shall be inexcusable if you improve it not; you will have none to blame for your damnation but yourselves, and your own enmity and illwill; *You will not come to me that you might have life. I would have gathered you, and you would not.*

(12.) Hence we may see the certainty of the conversion of the elect; whose conversion in particular is God's great end and design in exhibiting Christ as the covenant to the people in general. It is with a design to give Christ to them in *possession*, that he gives him to a visible church in the gospel-offer. It is for the elect's sake that the reprobate have an offer of Christ; and if once all the elect were gathered, the sound of this silver trumpet of the gospel shall be heard no more. The dispensation of the gospel is the mean which he sanctifies and blesses to that end, for working and begetting of faith in all the elect, whose names, as I said before, are all recorded in the original draught of the covenant, which is indeed a sealed writ, that we have nothing to do with, till once we have subscribed the open copy that is here before us all.

However,

However, this work is not left arbitrary to the will of men, otherwise none would ever be willing; for all are enemies, and the power of enmity is insuperable by men: Therefore our text promises, not only the means, the general donation of Christ in the indefinite offer, but also the power, the effectual application of covenant-grace, to the conversion of all whom Christ did undertake for. Why? The covenant here exhibited, is proposed as a covenant of light, light to the *Gentiles*, to remove spiritual darkness; a covenant of sight, to open blind eyes, and so to remove spiritual blindness; and a covenant of liberty, to remove spiritual bondage to sin and Satan: all which denote effectual vocation, which is a being brought from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God. And hence we see, how effectual vocation and saving faith followed upon this very gospel-dispensation, *Acts* 13. 47, 48. So that an effectual application of covenant-grace is here promised to Christ, in behalf of all that were given to him: It is absolutely promised, that *he shall see his seed, and see the travel of his soul*. The election shall obtain, and all that the Father hath given him, shall come to him; and yet we see that the accomplishment hereof, is by ways and means of his appointment, in the general invitation and call of the Gospel. God, by his will of precept revealed, commands all, wherever the gospel comes, to believe; and he mocks none, for all that do believe, shall certainly be saved. And though none have power to make the means effectual, yet the utmost attendance to the general call of the gospel, is of the utmost concernment to your souls for eternity; for who knows that he is not of that number, whom Christ covenanted for, and will make it effectual unto? But so vast and comprehensive is this doctrine, that I might begin a new, to give a bundle of more inferences therefrom.

(1.) Hence we may see the miserable circumstances of all unbelievers, that hear this gospel, and yet refuse God's gift of Christ as a covenant. They continue under a covenant of works, both in its commanding and condemning power. That they are under its condemning power is evident; for, says Christ, *He that believeth not, is condemned already*: And that they are under its commanding power, is evident also; for, says the Apostle, they are *debtors to do the whole law*, Gal. 5. 3. In *Adam's* covenant, they remain under obligation to duties and punishment, as long as they are not interested in the new covenant. Though by the gospel they are obliged to seek a title to life thro' Christ's obedience, and freedom from wrath, through his satisfaction; yet, while this covenant is slighted, they remain obliged, in their own persons, to yield perfect obedience, upon pain of damnation.

damnation. If they be not under the command with the promise, *Do, and live*; they are under the command with the threatening, *Do, and be damned*. They are in a miserable state; for the least failure, in obedience to the command, brings them under the whole curse of the threatening, and wrath of the eternal God, while they will not have a better covenant.

2. Hence we may see the folly of all that prefer any ruining covenant to this covenant, which God gives for our relief. The covenant of works is now a ruining covenant, yet many prefer this covenant to Christ, the covenant of the people. They prefer their doing to Christ's doing, while they cannot believe they shall have acceptance with God upon Christ's doing and obedience; and yet they will hope, that if they do their best, then God will accept of them. O proud devil, that thus makes the dung of thy duties of more account than the perfect obedience of the Son of God! The covenant with hell is also a ruining covenant, and yet the world prefers this also to this glorious covenant, while they are in league with their lusts, and prefer their base idols to the Son of God, &c.

(3.) Hence we may see the difference betwixt the law, and the gospel, the covenant of works, and the covenant of grace. The law promises nothing but upon our doing; the gospel promises nothing but upon Christ's doing; he is the covenant of the people. The covenant of works promises life, if we obey in our own persons; the covenant of grace promises life, if we obey in our surety. The condition of the covenant of works, and the covenant of grace both, is perfect obedience; but here lies the difference, the condition of the covenant of works is perfect obedience *personal*; the condition of the covenant of grace is perfect obedience *imputed*, and conveyed to us by a faith of God's operation. Yet both law and gospel are sweetly subservient, the one to the other, and work to one another's hand, while the law declares what obedience God requires, and the gospel provides that obedience, and points out Christ as the all of it; so that faith does not make void the law, but establishes it, and makes it honourable, &c. Christ hath fulfilled the condition of the covenant, to the father's contentment; *The Lord is well pleased for his righteousness sake, for he hath magnified the law, and made it honourable*.

(4.) Hence we may see the difference betwixt God's covenant of grace, and our covenant of duties. Our covenant of duties is either private and personal, or publick and national. If by personal covenanting be either meant believing at first, and laying hold on God's covenant, or the believer's engaging, thro'

grace, to serve the Lord in all the duties of religion; it is indeed the duty and honour of every person, to be thus engaged. Publick and national covenanting is also the duty and honour of a land; it was the glory of *Scotland*, that we were solemnly in covenant, wherein our fore-fathers, for themselves and their posterity, engaged, and swore against popery, prelacy, superstition, and every thing contrary to the word of God, and to the doctrine, discipline, worship and government of the reformed church of *Scotland*; and that as we should answer to Jesus Christ in the great day, and under the pain of God's everlasting wrath, and of infamy, and loss of all honour and respect in this world. And, O may not our hearts bleed to think on our defection from old covenanted principles, and violation of engagements; yea, of the burning and burial of our covenants, and many grave-stones laid upon the sepulchre; also, the prevalency of abjured popery in this land, without being duly lamented, and the open introduction of abjured prelacy, and *English Popish ceremonies and services*, in many places of the land, without being duly testified against; but the zeal of many running in another contrary channel! Is it any wonder then, that the infamy and loss of honour and respect in this world, mentioned in that covenant, hath come upon us, while our honour as a nation, and glory as a Church, is sunk into the horrible pit and filthy mire of infamy, bondage, slavery, and contempt? However, covenant obligation to duty is what we still stand under; though many be ashamed of, and refuse to own these obligations, yet it is the glory of our land, however it be now defaced. And therefore, let us, even in our approaches to a communion-table, go forward, lamenting our sinful defection from the covenanted reformation, acknowledging our solemn covenant-obligation, and hoping, that the Lord will, in due time, revive a covenanted work, and pour out a spirit of reformation. But let us withal remember, there is a vast difference betwixt God's covenant and our covenant, betwixt his promise and our promise. We may break and change a thousand times, but the covenant of grace is unchangeable, and stands fast in Christ. Many poor christians mistake matters sadly, by confounding their covenant and engagement to duty, with God's covenant of grace. They covenant to serve the Lord, and the next day they break it! O! says the Man, the covenant of grace is broken: Gross ignorance! the covenant of grace is a quite other thing. Therefore,

(5.) Hence we may infer, if Christ be given for a covenant of the people, the transcendent excellency of this, above all other covenants,

covenants, whether of legal works, or gospel duties. For here the Father is promising to the Son, that he should be *a covenant of the people*; and so it imports all the excellent qualities and properties, that can be in a covenant. 1. If Christ be given of God for a covenant of the people; then it is a divine covenant, a covenant of God's making, and not of ours. It was made when we knew nothing about it; it was made when we were nothing; yea, when we were foreseen to be a company of lost and undone sinners: God made it with his Son, and established all the articles, promises, and blessings of it, before the foundation of the world was laid; yea, it is God that makes the elect soul, in a day of power, to take up the extract of it, to read it, to love it, to sign it. Again, 2. If Christ be given for a covenant of the people, then it is a free covenant altogether free, absolute, and unconditional to us. It is a covenant given of God, I will give thee for a covenant. Our legal hearts are still for giving something to God, and for giving him this and the other service, in hope of pleasing and pacifying him, and doing so and so, in order to acceptance with him. Nay, but says God, your giving me is vain, unless I give you; your giving is not the way of it, but I'll give, and you shall take. The legalist is always for giving, but the believer is always for taking; you must know that here you have nothing to give, but to take. There is an order indeed observed in the covenant, and in God's giving: There is a condition of connection betwixt one blessing and another. First the spirit of faith is given, and then by faith the man takes other blessings, and *receives of Christ's fulness, and grace for grace*. Here God gives all, and faith takes all. All that is required, is given; and all that is given, is freely given. Faith itself does but receive a right; it does not give one: It acts in a way of taking what God gives; it takes the covenant that God gives, it takes the righteousness of Christ, which is the meritorious condition of the covenant, and so is the means of our being accounted righteous. Not a promise of life, or of the eternal reward, can the believer lay claim to, but in Christ; for all the promises are in him *yea*, and in him *amen*; in him, in him, twice over, as I said already. Why? we cannot claim any promise in our own name, upon performing any gospel-condition, though by the helps of grace: for then, though it were never so small, it were of debt to us: But our only claim is in him, that is, in the right of our elder brother Jesus Christ; and thus it is a debt to him, but only of grace to us. And thus God is not a debtor to us, but to himself, to his own goodness

and faithfulness, and to his Son Jesus Christ. If either faith or obedience were a proper condition, then there were a suspending the acts of God upon some actings of the creature; which, says an eminent divine (Dr. Owen) cannot be without subjecting eternity to time, the first cause to the second, the creator to the creature. 3. Again, if Christ be the covenant of the people, then it is a full covenant, having all things in it. It hath grace and glory in it, happiness and holiness in it, peace and pardon, yea, Christ, who is all in all, is in it; for he is the all of it. Who can tell me of a grace, or gracious quality, that does not spring out of this covenant, and the promises of it? It takes in all the promises made to Christ, and to us. Some promises are constitutive of the covenant, as these betwixt the Father and the Son, concerning a seed; and here, Christ hath some peculiar promises appropriate to him, which are not afforded to us in the same manner and degree. Others are executive, or referring to the execution, and application of it, as *Heb. 10. 11, 12*. Some are principal, and concern the end, eternal life; others less principal, and concern the means, whether internal, as the Spirit and Faith, or external, as ordinances, all is comprised in the covenant. 4. Again, if Christ be the covenant, then it is a sure covenant, *the sure mercies of David*. This foundation of God's stands sure: This covenant is secured by the oath of God to his eternal Son, *Once have I sworn by my holiness, that I will not lie unto David*. He hath sworn, that the bargain shall stand, inasmuch that if all the devils in hell should attack the weakest believer in Christ, or that ever looked towards a covenanted Christ, they cannot ruin him, it is impossible; for the covenant, in which he is wrapt up, is established, drawn up, and concluded betwixt two unchangeable persons, in presence of that consenting, unchangeable witness, the Holy Ghost, one God, and of one and the same Will essentially with the Father and the Son; *The Lord hath sworn, and will not repent, thou art a priest for ever*. The parties of the covenant of grace are not God and man, but God and Christ; and the believer is no otherwise a party, but in Christ. And here is a bottom of everlasting consolation, that Christ and he, are within one and the same covenant; and it stands as sure to them, as it stands fast in him. In a word, if Christ be the covenant, then it is a glorious covenant, a holy covenant, an everlasting covenant; but I omit a great deal of particulars, that I might here mention.

(6.) Hence we may infer, what is the marrow of the gospel-feast in the sacrament of the Supper; it is even Christ, given of God to be the covenant of the people: For in the sacrament,
Christ,

Christ, and the benefits of the new covenant, are represented, sealed, and applied to believers. To take the sacrament, is nothing but a mock, if people do not in it sacramentally, really, and believingly take Christ, as the covenant of the people. Yea, the sacrament of the Supper is the seal of the covenant, confirming to the believer all the promises thereof; *this is the new testament in my blood.* The covenant is sure enough in itself; but the believer is never too sure of it, while he hath unbelief in him: and therefore God hath condescended to give us all that we could require of the most faithless and dishonest man upon the face of the earth, that we may believe him; not only his word, and writ, and oath, but his seal too; and all hath enough to do, to confirm the believer's faith; yea, nothing will confirm and strengthen his faith, but the same Almighty power of God which wrought it at first, even the power whereby he raised Christ from the dead. Yet, in these means, he uses to convey his power for that end, and therefore the believer is to use them: I say, the believer, because none, who by unbelief refuse the covenant, are to meddle with the seal thereof, to profane it; yea, they that use the seal, and refuse the covenant, they seal their own condemnation: for, being under the covenant of works, they seal no other covenant, than that which they are under; and so they seal themselves up under the bondage and curse of the covenant of works, which is the heavy curse of the great God. But now, passing all other uses, I come to close with a word,

II. For *exhortation.* If God hath given Christ to be the covenant of the people, then the native exhortation is, 1. That all *the people* take the covenant that God is here giving them. And, 2. That all who take this covenant, take the seal thereof in the sacrament of the Supper. But at this time I confine myself to the first of these. The first exhortation is to all the people that hear me, that seeing God makes offer of his Christ to you, and gives him as a covenant of the people, you would take his gift off his hand. I am come to make an offer of Christ, as the all of the covenant, to you in his name, who is the covenant, and in his Father's name, who gives him for a covenant of the people. If you go to a communion-table, and take the seal of the covenant, before you take the covenant itself, you'll but mock God, and set a seal to a *blank*; yea, you'll seal your covenant with hell, & trample under foot the blood of the everlasting covenant. And therefore, I call you all, before hand, to come and take the covenant. I know not how the cail will be entertained; many will slight it, but yet we must make the offer in God's name, who bids us preach the gospel

to every creature. I know, that you cannot and will not embrace the offer, without divine Almighty power be extended; but he uses to make the gospel-offer the channel of his power to win souls to himself. I know, moreover, that as you are unworthy of such an offer, and I most unworthy to make such an offer; so you would mind, it is not me you have to do with, but the great and eternal God that is offering his Son to you for a covenant this day: And as it becomes such a glorious God to make such a glorious offer; so it becomes no vile sinner here to refuse the offer? And chuse or refuse you must, there is no middle; either you must receive or reject Christ this day, for he is offered universally, to all the people here, for a covenant. I know further, that it is one of the hardest things in the world, for men to persuade themselves, that God is in earnest in offering Christ to them, and giving Christ to them in particular; and yet, because this is the very porch and avenue of faith, O plead that God would deliver you from such blasphemous thoughts, as tend to give the lie to the God of truth, who swears by his life, that *he hath no pleasure in your death*. Men shall find to their cost, that he called them in earnest to believe, when he damns them in earnest for their unbelief; *for he that believes not, shall be damned*. I know further, that many deceive themselves with a temporary faith, thinking they take Christ, when there is no faith of divine operation, but a counterfeit faith of their own forging. However, the covenant must be opened, and Christ offered, tho' he should be a stumbling block to many, over which they fall, and break their necks; for the covenant will draw some to it powerfully and sweetly, to raise a divine building on a divine testimony. I offer then a whole covenant, a whole Christ to you, in his Father's name, who gives him for a covenant; will not you take, when God gives? It is true, God is not speaking immediately to you in this text, but to Christ, saying *I will give thee for a covenant of the people*; but still so much the better for you, seeing it is on your behalf, that God, who cannot lie, the eternal God, is speaking to his eternal Son in your favours. There is the surer ground, and stronger argument for your faith, that you may say, Lord I take thee at thy word, and it is not thy word to me only; if it were directed immediately to me at the first hand, I am such a black filthy monster of hell, that I durst not credit it; but it is thy word, to the fair, fair *Immanuel*, who is thy heart's darling and delight, in whom thou art well-pleas'd; and I think thy word to him must be a sure word, and it is thy word to him concerning me. Whatever I be, I am sure thou wilt not go back of thy word to him;

him; and lo, I take thee at thy word, and upon thy faithful word to him, who is the true and faithful witness; I agree to that contract, and put in my name, consenting to have him for a covenant to me. O sure work, if that be the way of it! as sure as God is faithful and true to his eternally beloved Son. Well, men and women, do you find in your heart, thus to take the covenant in the bulk? Need I say any more for motives? Consider,

1. What for a state you're in, while you're out of this covenant. You're under a covenant of works, and so under the wrath and vengeance of God, under the bondage and curse of the law; yea, you're in covenant with hell and death by that contract; you have nothing to expect, but a terrible death shortly, and a horrible hell eternally.

2. Consider, that this covenant is the last bargain that ever God will make with you or for you. The covenant of works is broken, and you're damned for ever, if you be not under another, for that bargain is blown up. This new covenant is a plank after shipwreck tho' it was contrived and transacted before the first was broken, yea, from eternity, yet it is a new bargain proposed to us after the old is gone; and if you refuse this, there is not another covenant to save you: *There remains no more sacrifice for sin, but a certain fearful looking for of judgment, and fiery wrath, that shall consume the adversaries.*

3. Consider, that this covenant is a bargain made ready to your hand. It is not a covenant of your making; it was made before the world was made, and drawn up in the counsel of peace, and the all of it presented to you in Christ, who is the great ordinance, institution, and appointment of the Father, for your relief and recovery from sin and misery; for *him hath God the Father sealed,* sealed and authorized him to be the bread of life to perishing souls, sealed and *given him for a covenant of the people.* God hath sealed and made ready a covenant to you; and all that is required of you, is only, that you will not discredit God, and make him a liar, but through grace set to your seal that God is true, receiving his testimony concerning his Son.

4. Consider, that you have a good claim and right to this covenant, or a warrant to accept of it. You have a warrant, by the call and command of God, to believe; *This is his commandment, that ye believe in the name of his Son:* You have a warrant sealed to you already by your baptismal Sacrament; it was a sealed right to believe in Christ, and to take him for a covenant; and you're obliged thereby to *take hold of this covenant,* and if you will not set your hand to it this day, you practically renounce your baptism,

and the devil hath a strong hold of you. You have a warrant from the general indefinite promise and publication of this covenant to you: *The promise is to you, and to your children, and to you is the word of this salvation sent: I'll give him for a covenant of the people, a light to the Gentiles.* So that it is published and directed to you, man; to you, woman; you have a good claim to take it for your own. It is a covenant for you, for every soul of you within the four corners of this house; even you that are thinking, O it is not me that is meant: Yes, it is you. Away with unbelief, and let your heart say, this is a covenant for me: That is a believing with application; and wherefore am I sent here, but to tell you that this covenant is for you? You're welcome to it, whosoever will.

5. Consider upon what terms you may have this covenant. On what terms? The condition of the covenant is already fulfilled; Christ hath brought in everlasting righteousness, and God hath accepted it, and is well pleased with it, and on this account promises all other things freely: not a farthing have you to pay for this covenant, it is God's gift, *I'll give thee for a covenant.* There are but two words necessary to make up this whole business; the one is a word from God, saying, *I give him* for a covenant; the other word is from you, saying, *I take him* for a covenant to me. The first word is said already, *I give*; and if you want faith to say, *I take*, this the covenant hath in the bosom of it. The Spirit to work faith is promised in it; for he that says, *I give him for a covenant*, says also, *I have put my Spirit upon him, and he shall bring forth judgment to the Gentiles*: Yea, with the same breath that he is given for a covenant, he is given for a *light to open blind eyes*, and for *liberty to open prison-doors*. Now, faith to take is covenanted, and this whole covenant, and all salvation in it, is laid to your hand; all is given, when the covenant is given. Why, Sir, I think you leave me nothing to do at all. Yea, as much as you can do, and that is just nothing. If you can believe by your own power, then I'll take back my word; but that I know you cannot do: And I give you as much to do as my text allows, which offers all, when it offers Christ for a covenant to you. But will you tell me, what the worse are you, that you who can do nothing, get nothing to do; and that he, who can do all things, gets all the work and all the praise? Are you not pleased with these terms, to have all freely, without money, and without price?

6. Consider, that the most part of the world rejects this covenant, and despises this free gift of God. The legal unbelieving heart will not have Christ at that easy rate; the devilish proud spirit of man is not set for taking a covenant from God, but for making

making a covenant with him: For as ill as they are at keeping covenants, they cannot believe that God will give all for nothing; and therefore they will not take, without making some bargain of their own; yea, they think, that this way of taking Christ for all, is an enemy to holiness. And, because they thus contemn and reproach this holy covenant of free grace, which only can furnish them with holiness, therefore God hath blasted all their holiness, insomuch that there was never less holiness, or more wickedness in a christian world. I say, the most part of the world reject Christ the gifted covenant, few in the world will have him, few in *Scotland* will have him: And, *is it nothing to you, all ye that pass by?* Do you think it a small matter, to see the world crucifying the Lord of glory, and, interpretatively, renewing the bloody tragedy again, that was acted at *Jerusalem* really? And will ye have a hand in the murder also? The more they be that reject him, the more should ye receive him. He hath long been set before you in a preached Gospel, and you have long refused him, and you know not but this may be the last communion-offer that ever you'll get of him: *To day if ye will hear his voice, harden not your hearts.*

7. Consider, that you cannot please God, nor glorify him so much any way, as by taking this gifted covenant out of his hand. *As Abraham staggered not at the promise through unbelief, but was strong in the faith, giving glory to God,* so taking this covenant of promise, is the way to give glory to God. You'll please him better than ever your sins displeased him, yea, it is impossible to please him any other way; for *without faith it is impossible to please God:* But in this way you'll please him, and content his heart; yea, you'll give more satisfaction to his justice for all your sins, than your everlasting damnation would do: For this is a covenant with him by sacrifice, a sacrifice of sweet-smelling favour, giving infinite satisfaction; for he that is given for a covenant, is given for a sacrifice, by which God is pleased and glorified to the highest.

8. To name no more, consider, that this covenant can answer all objections; and the very proposal of it in the text is such, as may obviate all, on whatever ground you state them. *I'll give thee for a covenant of the people, a light of the Gentiles, to open blind eyes, and to bring out prisoners out of their prison-house.* There is no room, no place for any objection here; for the tenor of the covenant answers all difficulties. Whatever be the prison-house you're in, this covenant not only knocks at the prison-door, but breaks open the door, and comes in, saying, there is my hand of power to help you out, will you take my help? *O Israel, thou hast de-*
stroyed

stroyed thyself, but in me is thy help: Will you have it? Let your heart say, Lord, it is welcome. Are you in the prison of the lowest hell, that ever any was in upon earth? This covenant comes so low as to lift you up, if you do not reject the counsel of God against your selves. Would you wish to be free of all that deadness, hardness, blindness, stupidity and enmity, which you reckon make you unfit, and unprepared for coming to Christ, and taking this covenant? Why this covenant is adapted for curing these plagues; and when you take this covenant, you take it as a cure for all these diseases, which never can be cured till you take this remedy; for to cure your selves, and then come to this covenant, is impossible; but to come to this covenant, and get the cure of all maladies that affect you, is God's instituted means of salvation. Would you wish to be free of that temptation, that you are none of the elect? Accept of this blessed bargain, and your election is sure. Who dare say that you're a reprobate, poor worm of yesterday's date, will you speak as if you had been upon the privy-council of heaven from all eternity? Will you rather beguile the devil, by saying, whatever I be, this covenant constitutes my duty, and therefore I'll venture upon the covenant at the call of God? But, if I be not one of the elect, I will not get grace to venture, or grace to believe. What mean you, man, by grace to believe? Is not Grace to believe conveyed by such a call as this? And therefore, if you slight this call, you slight the grace that would make you believe; and therefore, O let not the devil make a fool of you. Would you wish to be free of that temptation, that you have *sinned the sin against the Holy Ghost, and that there is no mercy for you*? Why, if you embrace this offer this day, you may be sure you was never guilty, nor ever shall. Tell me the clause of the text, that secludes you from meddling with this covenant; and why will you debar your selves? What is the case that this covenant cannot answer? Are there any here, that have false and fickle hearts, that break all bonds? O here is a suitable covenant for you. If you cannot keep the covenant, the covenant will keep you. The bastard covenants of your own making, will not keep you, but this covenant will, *Jer. 32. 40.* Are there any here that want through-bearing in the world, and are fear'd for straits, and even temporal difficulties? Here is a covenant that says, *Bread shall be given thee, and thy water shall be sure; yea, thou verily shalt be fed, and in the day of famine shall be satisfied.* Are there any here, that cannot get rest among all the creatures? Here is a covenant that says, *Come to me, all ye that are weary and heavy laden, and I will give you rest.* Are there any here,

that

that think themselves poor abject creatures, saying, O I am but a burden to myself, and a burden to all that are about me; no body cares for me, and I fear God cares not for me either; I am cast out at all hands? O here is a covenant that says, *He will gather together the outcasts of Israel.* Is there any here fear'd for death, and knows not how to get through that dark trance? O here is a covenant fit for you, that says, *O death, I will be thy plague, and death shall be swallowed up in victory.* Are there any here labouring under desertion? Here is a covenant that says, *I'll lead the blind in a way they know not, I'll never leave you, or forsake you.* Are ye for this covenant? Is there any here labouring under temptations? Here is a covenant that says, *The God of peace will bruise Satan under your feet shortly; and my grace shall be sufficient for thee.* Is there any here labouring under the power of sin and corruption? Here is a covenant that says, *I will put my Spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes; I will subdue your iniquity:* Yea, he who is the covenant says, *For your sake I sanctify myself, that you also might be sanctified.* And again, *The water that I shall give him, shall be in him a well of water springing up to eternal life.* Is there any here saying, I am a lost creature? The covenant is saying, *I come to seek and save that which was lost.* Is there any here saying, O I have sinned to the uttermost? This covenant says, *He is able to save to the uttermost.* If you say, you cannot believe, the covenant says, *Christ, who is the all of the covenant, is the author of faith;* and the Spirit of faith is given when the covenant is given, all grace is given when it is given. Are you content to have this covenant, and all the grace of it? If you say, you cannot repent, the covenant says, *Him hath God exalted with his right hand, to give repentance.* What is the case that the covenant cannot answer? Why, say you, you're calling us all, both wicked and godly, to accept of this covenant; but does not God say to the wicked, *what hast thou to do to take my covenant in thy mouth, seeing thou hatest instruction, and castest my law behind thy back.* Very true, he says so, *Psal. 50. 16.* Yea, the voice of God in the law, says, *Vengeance upon you;* and there is no escaping that vengeance, but by *bearing and believing* what the voice of God in the gospel-covenant says, and by taking it, not in your mouth to abuse it, but in your heart to love and improve it for your sanctification as well as for your justification, for making you holy as well as happy. God's covenant is a holy covenant, and it works out sin, and advances holiness in all that are under it. What, would you have me believe in Christ before my life be reformed? may some say. Yea, I would have you believe

lieve in Christ, in order to reformation, and taking him for a covenant, in order to your sanctification. Why then, say you, I'll take Christ and my lusts both. I defy you, man ; if you take him, you must let these go away ; yea, it is impossible to take him, and keep your lusts too : for whenever the covenant of grace is embraced, the covenant with sin and hell is abandoned. And, therefore if any come to this covenant, to seek a shelter to any one lust under it, it is no coming at all, it is no faith, but fancy : yea, it is a mocking of God, and his holy covenant, and will bring a curse upon you, instead of a blessing. To come to this covenant, is to come to the *lamb of God, that takes away the sin of the world* ; it is a coming to Jesus, to be saved from sin. But O, say you, I cannot think that the covenant of grace says a good word to me ; I have been making God to serve with my sins, and wearying him with mine iniquities. Indeed the law and covenant of works says, you are a dead man, the soul that sinneth shall die : but see what the covenant of grace says, *Isa. 43. 24, 25. I, even I, am he that bloteth out thy transgression for my name's sake.* Take this covenant then, and pardon with it, as well as purification. O, but what says the covenant to one who hath been neglecting prayer, and forgetting God all my days ? Why, there is no word in the law for you but fury, *Pour out thy fury on the heathen, and the families that call not on thy name. The wicked shall be turned into hell, and all the nations that forget God.* But there is a word even for such in the new covenant, *I am found of them that sought me not.* O come, and take the treasure you was never seeking after to this day, and it will sweetly determine you to seek his face all the days of your life. O but what will the covenant say to such, whose case you have not touched, and who think their case nameless, and that ministers cannot find out a name for them, because they are just hidden amongst the mist of the bottomless pit, among the reek of hell, so as they cannot be found out ? Why, the covenant hath a word to you, *Isa. 62. last, Thou shalt be called, sought out, a city not forsaken ;* there is a name for you, *thou shalt be called, sought out.* This covenant is sent this day to seek you out from the bottom of the dark prison that you are in, whatever it be ; will you take the benefit of this covenant ? are you for it, men and women ? will you have a Christ to be a covenant to you ? Young people, will you have him, that you may not live in the devil's service ? Old people, will you have him, that you may not die with the devil in your arms ? Drunkard, will you have him, that you may get a drink of the new wine of consolation ? Unclean person, will you have

have him, to wash you, that you may be fitted to walk with him in white? Swearer, will you have him, that your tongue may be fitted for a *Hallelujah*? Men and women who hath seven devils in you, will you have him, who hath the seven spirits that are before the throne (that is, the eternal Spirit with his various operations) that he may put the devil out of you, and put his Spirit within you? Whosoever will, may have a covenant this day, that will make you up for ever. Is there any here that despises all this love, saying, I will keep my lusts and sins, say you what you will; it is but a new scheme, perhaps, out of your own head; I have no fancy for that covenant? Say you so, man! then as the Lord lives, you have spoken this against your own life. I protest against you, in the name of God, and I shake the dust off my feet, in witness against you, that on the 19th day of *August* 1722, at a communion of *Dunfermline*, Christ, and in him all the covenant of grace, was offered to you, and you refused him; and if you live and die in that mind, I summon you to answer for this refusal, before his awful tribunal at the great day. But, because I am courting a bride for my glorious Master, I would fain speak her fair on a marriage day; therefore, O refuser and despiser of Christ, will you bethink yourself yet, and return again; many a slight have you put upon this glorious Christ, and yet he is content to take you for all that, he is loth to take a denial; and therefore I would ask, in his name, before you give him a total refusal, will you tell me, where will you do better? Will a broken covenant of works be a better bargain for you? or will the black covenant with hell, and with your lusts and idols, be a better bargain for you? or, is the vain perishing world a better bargain? No, no, the devil himself does not think so, whatever he suggest to you. But, again, before you give him a total denial and refusal, will you tell me, how you will do without him? or, if you make a shift while you live, O how will you die without him? and how will you stand in judgment without him? and death and judgment may be at hand. There are many dead, and gone to eternity, since the last communion here; and this may be the last communion-invitation that you ever will get: If you refuse Christ now, it may be the last offer that ever you will get of him; he hath taken many refusals of your hand already. And, finally, before you refuse him wholly, think again what you are refusing; is Christ a despicable person, of no more worth but to be slighted by you, and trampled under your feet? Is he a hateful object, whom yet the tongues of all the glorious seraphims are not worthy to adore? Is the everlasting covenant a matter of moon-shine? Is

the love of God, the blood of Christ, the eternal interests of your immortal souls, and the divine glory, all matters of indifference to you? Is the great *Jehovah's* giving Christ to be a covenant of the people, a contemptible thing? And is this a gift not worth the taking? O no, no, say ye, surely it is a worthy offer. Why then, by the awful authority of the eternal God, and by the blood and bowels of his eternal Son, I adjure you to take him and his Father's blessing, and all the blessings of the *everlasting covenant* with him. O, say you, I think I am gained and overcome by this offer and proposal; but I know not if it be a passing tho't that will vanish, or a real faith that will abide the trial; I fear it be but loose work, and a temporary flash. Why, man, the covenant can resolve you in that difficulty; and it says, *Fear not, for I am thy God, I will strengthen thee, I am thy salvation.* Are you content to take the covenant for this end, to discover the defects of your faith, and to work in you the faith of God's elect? Can you say, that it is not in your faith, but in Christ himself, that you are seeking salvation; that you are not building your faith upon your faith, nor your hope upon your hope, but both your faith and hope upon the covenant. Can you say, that whatever be wrong about you, and about your faith; yet you see there is nothing wrong about Christ and the covenant, but that it is well ordered in all things and sure, and such as can right all that is wrong about you? Can you say, however I am in the dark about my faith, yet I have sometimes found out my unbelief, and that I could no more believe, than I could move the earth from its center; but yet the *joyful sound* of the Gospel-grace hath touched my heart, and made me take up so much *glory* and *excellency* in Christ, that I think all the world nothing in comparison of him; and I think my heart's desire is, O to have him for my prophet, to take away the darkness of my mind; as a priest, to take away the guilt of my sins; and as a king to take away the power of my lusts. Fain would I have him, that thus my soul may be blest in him, and his name may be gloried in me. Why then, whatever you think of your faith, and of yourself, as the blackest monster of sin and guilt that ever was out of hell; yet it seems you have the faith of God's elect. I would fain hope, that some souls in this assembly are taken hold of by grace, and content to sign this covenant with their heart: And woe's me, that there should be any here that will let all this love and grace, and this good prize go by them, and they never have a heart to it. But yet, some that through grace have a heart to sign, may be saying, *O I cannot write, I cannot believe, I cannot subscribe, though I think I*

would

would do it with a thousand good-wills. Say you so, man? I'll tell you good news, Christ hath the book of the covenant in the one hand, and the pen in his other hand, ready to set down your name, and to subscribe for you; only declare before witnesses that you cannot write, and do you touch the pen, saying, Lord, set down my name, consenting to every article of the covenant, and pleased with the whole frame of it: If you say so? well, it is done, for he hath the pen of a ready writer; your name is within the bond already. But if grace will help you to a new act of faith, a stronger act, read over the covenant again, and hear how the great *Jehovah* is speaking, and not I, and speaking to his only-begotten Son that lies in his bosom, saying, *I will give thee for a covenant of the people.* Now, let faith say, Lord, I take thee at thy word; I hear thee speaking to thy beloved Son concerning me a poor, dark, blind, and bound *Gentile*; wilt thou ever go back of thy word to thy Son? No, in despite of the devil, I think that is the surest word that was ever spoken; it is to him thou speakest, and to me in him; and therefore, behold, I take thee at thy word: black and ugly as I am, the covenant can make me fair and clean: Thy grace hath conquered me, thy love hath drawn me, and I am pleased with the bargain; and I see it is the best bargain that ever was, for advancing thy eternal glory, and my eternal good; I see it is all my salvation, and all my desire; I see it is well ordered in all things and sure: Why then, the Lord be thanked, that it is a done bargain, and that God's gift is received. And therefore, having taken the covenant, never stand to take the seal in the sacrament of the supper.

*The SUBSTANCE of some DISCOURSES after the
SACRAMENT, upon the same SUBJECT.*

NOW, my friends, it were not fit I should detain you, by speaking to the several sorts of people here; I shall only drop a few words in the general. I think, if my heart deceive me not, the great thing I was helped to seek, some time before this solemnity, was not only assistance to ministers, and to my self, so as to be carried through the work, for I thought that would soon come to little account; but I would have had a day of power among you that are the people, that the glory of the Lord might shine among you. And now, what shall I say? O to whom is the arm of the Lord revealed? Hath the right-hand of the Lord done valiantly, even the man of his right-hand, whom he hath made strong for himself? Hath the Lord appeared as yet for as much

much of the work as is over? or shall we expect that he will appear in the work that is yet to follow? or shall our prayer just only return to our bosom again? I would ask you, what welcome entertainment hath Christ, the Father's gifted covenant, got among you this day? He hath given him for a covenant of the people, and who of all the people have welcomed the Father's gift? I fear there are many fools here, that have a price in their hand, but no heart to the bargain. But to all the despisers of Christ, and all the refusers of Christ in *Dunfermline* this day, in case the Lord may catch you with a word yet before you go, I have a word to say to you, whether you have been at the Lord's table or not. Altho' the sacrament-table is drawn, yet the covenant-table is not drawn, it is covered yet, and Christ is the feast that is set upon it, and you are all welcome; for all that have eaten, there is bread enough, and to spare, in his Father's house. Christ as the covenant is offered to you, man, to you, woman, to you that are before me, and behind me, and round about me in every corner of this place; tho' I do not see you, yet God's eye is upon you, and his word is directed to you: Yea, this covenant is directed and offered to you, he is the people's covenant; let the people come, be who they will, even the vilest monster of sin out of hell; God's giving him in this Gospel, is your warrant for taking him: And if you will not hearken to this Gospel-offer of Christ for a covenant to you, I charge you, in God's name, and as you will answer at his tribunal, to declare before him and your own consciences, what ye have to say against him: Is it that you are not holy? Nay, you shall not have that to say, for to the unholiest soul here this covenant is offered, for this end, to make you holy; and never shall you be holy, till you come and accept of it. Is it that you have not grace to come? Why, man, when this covenant is offered, Christ and all the graces in him is offered; and among the rest, grace to draw you: And if you will not put away this grace from you, it will take hold of you. Is your objection this, I fear my unbelief, enmity and ill-will, put away all that grace? Why, that is the thing most to be feared; and yet, if that be indeed your fear, there is the less ground of fear; for this covenant is offered to you, to take away your ill-will and enmity. Are you content to have God's gifted covenant for that end? Really I know not what good thing it is in all the world that you want or need, but what is offered to you in this covenant, for Christ is the all of the covenant; and he, who is the all of it, is all in all: And therefore I charge you again, before you bid him farewell, to declare what you have to say against him, whom God is giving

giving for a covenant. Shall I take your silence for a confession, that you have nothing to say against him? Then, by the glory of God, Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, by the eternal salvation of your immortal souls, by all the joys of the redeemed, and torments of the damned, I charge you all, and every one of you, to welcome *the covenant of the people* that God is giving, and that by your hearty saying, *even so I take him*, as the Father offers him in the Gospel, to be a whole covenant to me, to do all my work in me, and for me.

What say you, drunkard, swearer, whoremonger, scarlet-coloured sinner in *Dunfermline*? what say you communicant and spectator? It may be, the thing that keeps you back, is, *O I am unworthy to have him*. True; but unworthy monster of hell as you are, if you think him worthy to be received, I charge you again, by all the blood that he shed at *Jerusalem*, and by all the bowels of compassion that move within him, that you do not refuse him, but welcome God's gift, welcome God's sent; saying, *Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord*. If, after all, you are saying, stay, a little, Sir, let me take it to advisement for some days; no, no, men and women, I have no commission to allow you a day, or an hour's delay; *To day if ye will hear his voice, harden not your heart*: If you refuse to day, I know not but *you may be in hell to morrow*. What if the next hour the breath should go out of your body? and if your soul be removed out of your body before it flee in to Christ, *you are gone, you are undone for ever and ever*. If God's omnipotent grace and almighty power, which only can make you willing to accept of his offer, be not accompanying this call, he needs not our apology. He is the sovereign, that's obliged as a debtor to none but himself, and his own pleasure, and his Son's righteousness; yet still you are obliged to obey his call, and your wilful rejecting is inexcusable. And therefore, if, after all, this gift of God *for a covenant of the people*, be slighted by you, you not being content that God should rend and tare the old contract that was betwixt you and your lust, but esteeming it above this covenant, betwixt God the *giver*, and you the *refuser*, be it; let him and you reckon together, I hope I am free of your blood this day; for there will be blood in the case. If you will not have the blood of the everlasting covenant to wash you, to justify you, to sanctify and save you, nor believe that God gives it to you to be received for that end, then there will be blood for blood: *He that believeth not, shall be damned*. Remember what a free offer of Christ you have got this day; you have nothing to pay for this covenant, I'll give thee for a covenant; you have nothing to pay for a pardon, the

condition of the covenant is fulfilled by Christ, and in it is a full payment of all debt ; and therefore, so freely is the pardon and life offered to you that you cannot have it till you have nothing to pay for it. See how the creditor deals with the debtor in the parable, *Luke 7. 42. When they had nothing to pay, he frankly forgave them both.* Now, the legal old covenant-heart of many says, with the wicked servant, *Lord, have patience with me, and I will pay thee all ;* I will grow a better man, I will fall a repenting and reforming, and then I hope God will pardon me : That man hath something to pay, at least he fancies so, and therefore he hath no forgiveness. But when a poor soul is brought to this, *O, I have nothing to pay ;* if I be the payer of my own debt, it will never be paid for me ; the debt of satisfaction will never be paid for me ; the debt of obedience, the debt of duty ; I have nothing to pay my debt ; nay, not the least farthing of the debt, were it but a good tho't, it can never be paid by me. Why then, that man stands fair for a full remission, according to this free covenant ; *When they had nothing to pay, he frankly forgave them both.* Are you for this new covenant-way of it, to come and bring nothing, and get all freely out of the covenant that belongs to grace and glory, debt and duty, happiness and holiness ? Now, what shall I say to God, when I go back to my closet, where I was pleading the last week, that he would shew his glory, and draw some of you to himself ? Shall I go with a complaint upon you, and say, *Lord, they will not come ;* they prefer their base lusts to the glorious Lord Jesus ; the drunkard prefers his cups to thee ; the whoremonger prefers his whoredom to thee ; the covetous man prefers the world to thee ; the legalist prefers his own righteousness to thee ? Shall we complain to this purpose ? or, will you give occasion to Christ to complain upon you to his Father ; saying, *Father, thou didst give me to be a covenant of the people, but yonder is a people in Dunfermline, that care not for me, and despise thy gift ; They will not come to me, that they might have life.* O will not the Father frown upon you, when the Son complains upon you ? And, O, If you continue of that mind, he will frown you to hell. But O may we hope, that some at least have subscribed their names to the covenant this day ? We would go back to God with a song of praise in our mouths, and glorify his name for the wonder of his grace ; yea, if I may so express it, Christ would with a glad heart, shew his Father the copy of the covenant that you have signed, and that was offered and directed to you, as to the *Gentiles*, to these that were under darkness, blindness and bondage, and in the prison of sin, death, and wrath. Will not the Father be pleased, when
the

the covenant-roll is read over, with the names of all the subscribers and assenters to the covenant, and your name among the rest? There is one that subscribed his name thus, I, one of the people, one of the *Gentiles*; I, one of the blind and bound prisoners, assenting and consenting. Well, may God say, Was not the covenant directed and offered to the people of that name? Yes, Father, it was. Why then let the name stand there registrate to eternity, it shall never be blotted out for me; him that cometh I will in no wise cast out. Since they had no better name to sign withal, than the name of sinner, apostate, back-sliding, criminal, leper, blackamore, slave, and hell's drudges; yet assenting and consenting to this covenant, this covenant that they have subscribed, shall make their names better than that of sons and daughters. They shall have a name among the living in *Jerusalem*, even a new name, and the white stone, that no man knoweth but he that receiveth it. Now, as we have a commission from the Lord to tell you, that you're welcome to him; so, O shall we have a commission from you, to tell him that he is welcome to you? Since God the Father declares, that you're welcome to his Son, saying, *I will give him for a covenant of the people*; shall we go and tell him, O God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, yonder people have taken thee at thy word, and are saying in their hearts, thy Son is welcome to them? O if Christ and you welcome one another this day, whether it be the first welcoming to some of you, or a confirmed welcoming to others, if he and you, I say, be welcoming one another this day, glory, glory to God, that ever this day dawn'd. Eternity will be duration little enough to praise him for this day. Glory, glory to God for the three happy meetings; glory to him for the happy meeting betwixt the divine and human nature in one person, that is the glorious person given to be a covenant to you; glory to him for the happy meeting betwixt justice and mercy, who have kiss'd one another, and said, we are both pleased, and are honoured by him, who is given *for the covenant of the people*; and glory to him for the happy meeting betwixt the Saviour and the sinner; betwixt the covenant and the people; is it a meeting indeed? Hath the Lord God of the *Hebrews* met with you in *Dunfermline*? Hath the covenant taken hold of your hearts? O glory to him then, for it is a meeting never to part, the covenant will never quit the hold again; and therefore, *as you have received Christ, so walk you in him*; as you have received God's gifted covenant, so make use of it and improve it. When you find you have no righteousness, look to the covenant to furnish you, for his name shall be called

THE LORD OUR RIGHTEOUSNESS. When you find you have no strength, look to the covenant to furnish you; for it says, *My strength shall be perfect in thy weakness.* When you find you have no life nor liveliness, look to the covenant to furnish you; for it says, *I am the resurrection and the life.* When you find little of the Spirit's influences, look to the covenant to furnish you; for it says, *I will pour water upon him that is thirsty, and floods upon the dry ground.* When you find you have much sin and guilt in and about you, look to the covenant for pardon; for it says, *I, even I, am he that blotteth out thy transgressions for my name's sake.* When you find your lusts and corruptions to be powerful and prevalent, look to the covenant for mortification; for it says, *Sin shall not have dominion over you, for ye are not under the law, but under grace.* When you find little or no holiness taking place in your hearts and ways, look to this holy covenant, and it will make you more holy than ever the covenant of works could; for this covenant of grace does present the law with a perfect holiness, whether you take it as the law of works, or a rule of life in the hand of a Mediator. As the law is a covenant of works, the believer hath, by this covenant, a perfect holiness in his hand, a divine righteousness answering to that: And as the law is a rule of life in the hand of Christ, the believer hath, by this new covenant, a perfect holiness also, not only by vertue of his union to Christ the fountain of holiness; but in his own person, he hath a perfection of parts here, and a perfection of degrees hereafter. But as to this perfection of parts in time, it is indeed many times so low, that the believer can hardly discern it. Why, may one say, the thing that frightens me, is, lest I be a practical *antinomian*, and a Gospel *hypocrite*: because, though I think my heart goes in to the offer of Christ as a covenant, yet I can never find the powerful and sanctifying virtue of this covenant, to destroy my lusts and corruptions, but still iniquity prevails against me: And can I take comfort in the covenant, in that case, without abusing free grace to licentiousness? For clearing this, I shall only say to you, that if you can nourish and cherish sin, and yet take comfort in the covenant, that comfort is suspicious, and flows from a fancy, and not from the faith of God's operation; for *he that hath this hope, purifieth himself, even as God is pure.* Faith purifies the heart, wherever it is in exercise; and to take comfort in or from the covenant, and yet take pleasure in sin, at the same time, is a dream, and a delusion that the believer cannot be under, unless he be in a fit of temptation. But as to sin prevailing, sin may prevail against a believer, and yet he may have comfort in the covenant;

as *David* had when he says, *iniquities prevail against me* ; they are against my will, against my heart, against my prayers, and against my inclinations ; and he immediately adds, *As for our transgressions, thou wilt purge them away* Psal. 65. 3. But thou, poor soul, that says you never found the sanctifying virtue of the covenant ; why, did you never get grace to wrestle against sin ? that is some virtue. Doth prevalency of sin never humble you to the dust ? that is some virtue. Do you see and lament your own unholiness ? that is some virtue. Doth the sense and feeling of the power of sin, never make you long for complete victory and freedom from sin ? that is some virtue. Did the power of a body of death never make you look upon yourself as wretched, saying, *O wretched person that I am, who will deliver me from it* ? that is some virtue. Did the prevalency of sin never drive you to the blood of Christ, the fountain open for sin and for uncleanness ? that is some virtue. Are you never glad of any victory you got over your corruption ? yea, that is some virtue. How do you find it with you, when the light of the covenant is shining on your soul ? Do you not find your heart rising against sin ? then that is some virtue. How do you find it with you, at times, when iniquity is prevailing ? Do you not find yourself uneasy, and out of your element, till the Lord return ? that is some virtue. Do not you deny the sanctifying virtue of the covenant ; and what can be the reason of it, that even though you sign the covenant, and go into it, yet you find so little of its powerful sanctifying virtue ? I'll tell you one reason of your fickleness and inconstancy this way : It may be, when you signed the covenant, you put not your name at the foot of the bond, but set your name too far up, as if you were a party covenanting ; you are to sign as a party consenting, but not as a party contracting. The covenant was drawn up, and signed by two unchangeable parties from eternity, the Father and the Son ; and you, forsooth, would have your name in the midst of the contract, as if you were promising, and contracting something for your part conjunctly with him, who is the first, and the last, and the all of the covenant. Remember you are but a poor assenter at the best, and therefore put your name lower down ; for your work is just to do nothing, but to consent to take him, to do all your work in you, and for you ; for, says the Lord, in my context here, *My glory will I not give to another*. He accounts it the standing of his glory, to perform all that is within the covenant ; and he will not let any footy scullion of hell, like you, or me, count our doits among his gold. The higher place that you take for your name in the covenant, the more fickle are you ; but the

lower place, the more stable: Therefore, when you sign the covenant a-new, put your name further down, below his who is the covenant of the people; let him be the all of the covenant to you, the worker of all your work, and you but an on-waiter; for his glory he will not give to another. Perhaps some may be saying, O Sir, the thing that fears me at this occasion, is this, I am put all in confusion, with the differences that are among you that are ministers. What do I know, but the reproach of a *new scheme* does justly belong to some of you, and that I may be in a delusion? What do I know, but your way of opening the covenant of grace may be such as others will call an enemy to the law, and to holiness? Why, what shall I say to you, poor thing? Let God be true, and every man a liar. The Lord forbid that we should speak wickedly for God, and talk deceitfully for him. If there be any person here, that never found this doctrine of grace have any other tendency than to lead them to licentiousness, I'll pawn my life, that he is not a believer, but a person ignorant of the mystery of the Gospel. But what say you, believer, cannot your experience bear witness for God, and his gracious covenant, that however vile and unholy you find yourself to be, yet, when the *new covenant cord of free grace* is wrapt about your heart, does it draw you to the *love of sin*, or to the *love of holiness*? The more lively faith you have of Christ's being your treasure, your righteousness, your covenant, your all, for debt and duty both, do you not find holiness the more lovely to you, and his love constraining you the more to delight in his service? Let the *word* of God, and the experience of all the *saints*, in an agreeableness thereto, decide matters of this sort. But, O poor believer, do not cast out with Christ, tho' even many of his friends should cast out with one another; be not stumbled in a day of reproaches and offences; *blest are they that shall not be offended at Christ*; let your hearts go in to the offer of Christ as a covenant, to make you both *holy* and *happy*. Now if you have got little this day, leave the complaint upon yourselves, for God and his ordinances are not to blame; your iniquities do separate betwixt you and your God: And yet, say not you have got nothing, if you have got but a crumb, for that portends that there is more coming in the Lord's time and way. Why, what is a crumb? If you be made more humble than you was, that is a crumb. Have you got more light into the covenant? that is a crumb. Have you got more desire after Christ? that is a crumb. Are you longing more to be free of sin, and like unto Christ? that is a crumb. Have you got so much as gives you a stomach for another marriage-supper?

per ? that is a crumb. If you have got not so much as a crumb, believer, it may be waiting for you in a closet, or a secret corner ; and, in the mean time, the Lord may be calling you to reflect upon some old long since experience, when you get a more sensible gripe of the covenant than now ; and to live by faith, and wait at wisdom's door. And you that have been fed, and feasted this day, O resolve, through grace, henceforth, a stated war against all Christ's enemies within you, and without you ; and do all you can, to keep the ground you have gained upon enemies ; and sit not down secure, otherwise Satan will soon trip up your heels. Ly not down to sleep after meat, for God hath fed you, to run the race that is set before you, and to strive who shall run fastest in the way to heaven, *Following Christ the fore-runner* ; you are to follow none, but as they follow Christ : The most godly ministers are but limited examples ; you are to follow them so far as they follow Christ, but no farther. *Be ye followers of me (said Paul) as I am of Christ* : Take the word of God for your rule, and gospel-truth for your standard, and the rather that there are many in this generation, who would be content that some gospel-truths were scraped out of the Bible ; but let your prayer be, *Lord, send forth thy light and thy truth, that they may guide me*. In a word, your life must be a living by faith upon the covenant, the unchangeable covenant, that is established betwixt two unchangeable parties, the Father and the Son. Here is a sure ground of faith ; whereas the reason of your staggering is, because you put in your self as the one party, who are but a changeling that changes every touch ; but it is concluded betwixt two unchangeable parties, whereof none of them ever rues the bargain. O, says, the poor soul, tho' I have been helped to consent to this covenant, and subscribe it with all my heart, yet I fear I play the devil, and my heart break loose again. Yea, it may be so ; but this covenant says, I'll have you to heaven, if you were even a devil ; I'll draw you back again, tho' you were even in the very mouth of hell : And I think, you will find he hath done so heretofore, believer, when you thought you so far down in the pit, that the Lord would never return again to lift you up ; he hath returned, and surpris'd you, and, it may be, has done so at this occasion. O bless him, and serve him, and improve his covenant ; yea, let me tell you, believer, you having embraced the covenant, it lies upon God's honour to keep you, because he stands engaged to his Son ; this word of honour is past.

Some, it may be, are still questioning their right to believe. their right to take Christ, their right to subscribe to this cove-

nant ; they stand, as it were, at the back of the door, saying, what right have I ? Indeed, if you were a party and actor in this covenant, you might speak at that rate ; but that you are not, you are only to be assenter and consenter. Your legal heart dreams always that God will not accept of you, unless you do so and so : But know that God and Christ do all here ; and they have bound themselves, by this covenant, to do all : And if you will do any thing, stay till you be able to do more than God hath done, than Christ hath done ; and that will never be. God engaged, in this covenant, to hold Christ's hand, and to uphold him in the work of redemption ; the Father bears equal burden in the work, and all the three persons of the glorious Trinity hath one equal will to it ; and therefore, seeing a Trinity hath done it, the work is completely done. O what fools are they then, that refuse to join in with this covenant, because of their own short-coming, and because they cannot do so and so ? Why, you can do all that you are bound to do in this covenant, and that is just nothing at all ; for Christ is the covenant, and the all in all of it. If ever you do any thing acceptable in God's sight, it is the covenant of grace that does it in you. But now as to your right to come to this covenant, what right would you have, but much mischief and misery, to be a right on your part ; and the offer, call and command of heaven, to be a right, on God's part ? There is all the right to believe that I know. You would have a right founded on some righteousness of your own ; you would have in your clouded cloke with his fair robe ; but God will have none of your blackened righteousness. The right is now, welcome, hard heart, to get softening grace out of this covenant ; welcome, guilty soul, to get pardoning grace out of this covenant ; welcome, filthy sinner, to get sanctifying grace out of this covenant ; welcome, chief of sinners, sinner above all sinners, welcome, to come and get salvation out of this covenant. Will you then object, and say, O I cannot turn from sin, and I must do that before I come ? Why man, will you tell me, who but the devil taught you to take Christ's room, and to take his work and employment out of his hand ? His name is Jesus, because he saves from sin. O let him in, and he will speak for himself ; he will say to the devil, stand by, for I have broken your head ; he will say to sin, stand by, for I have condemned you by the sacrifice of myself : He condemn'd sin in the flesh. Yea, he will say to justice let me through to heaven, with all my ransomed at my back ; for I have given you full satisfaction. O let him speak for himself. Christ hath got the management of all about the covenant ; and when we take him,

we take holiness with him, we take perfect holiness in him for justification, and we get an imparted holiness from him for Sanctification. What is the reason of your want of holiness? Because you do not take Christ? What is the reason that some, who take Christ, have little holiness about them? Even because they take him very awkwardly, if I may so call it, they take him backwardly. If we were better at taking what God gives, we would find more holiness springing up; whole taking of him would make whole holiness to you, but your broken taking of him makes broken holiness. O he is the performer of the covenant, and the performance itself, the doer of all our work in us and for us: And if our taking him, and believing on him, were more perfect, our holiness would be more perfect too; for faith purifies the heart. A poor lean faith makes poor lean obedience and sanctification. O if you could get Christ once in your arms, you get all that the Father hath promised: But, poor soul, the best way for you, when you find your own weakness and wickedness, and fear the Father's wrath, is to take Christ, as it were, and shut him into the Father's arms, and that will please him. When you get Christ in your arms, you want no more, you have all you need; and when God the Father gets Christ in his arms, he wants no more, he hath all that he seeks; *This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.*

Know this covenant, as it is enlarged upon, in the text and context. (1.) It is a covenant for *light, a light to the Gentiles*. Christ is the wisdom and light of poor souls, and teaches them all the good lessons that they learn; What lessons? Why, he tells them that is the way to heaven, saying, *I am the way*; he preaches himself, and it becomes him well so to do: He shews them how a man is made full, by emptying himself; *When I am weak, then I am strong*. If any say, I'll do my part of the covenant, he his part, why that is all wrong; if you make him not the all of the covenant, you make him nothing. He teaches a man how to discern his voice, *My sheep hear my voice*. He causes them to discern a spiritual preaching, a gospel-preaching, a spiritual prayer, a spiritual exercise. Some will tell us, it is the great and the learned folk of the world that know preaching best; yea, some learning may make them know how words clink together; but he who is the *light of the Gentiles* makes all whom he *savingly* enlightens, to know his voice in a preaching. *The spiritual man judges all things*: he teaches them to read God's will out of a providence, and to see more of God in some providences, than others see in all his ordinances; he teaches them to make use of the enemies weapons against themselves.

themselves. Why, says, Satan, will such a vile thing as thou art, come to Christ? Yea, says the soul, because I am vile, I am the more fit. He teaches them how to dwell beside the fountain, and how to live near God; and the man that doth this cannot live upon two prayers in the day. You that never knew any more about prayer, than your morning and evening set times of prayer, it seems you was never taught by him that is the light of the *Gentiles*. O take him, and he will teach you how to cry *Abba Father*, and to rejoice and work righteousness. O when Christ comes, and discovers himself to the soul, with his royal robe on him, that soul is filled with joy and peace in believing.

(2.) It is a covenant for *sight*, to *open blind eyes*; a man that is called *Jesus*, opened mine eyes, says the blind man. O there are many sorts of blind people, that need to go to Christ for opening their eyes. Some are blind *Atheists*, who say in their hearts, there is no God; they see not the majesty of God, they see not the justice of God, they see not the grace of God, &c. O that they were flocking to him, who is the opener of blind eyes. Some are blind civilians, they are very civil in their walk, but as far from grace as the former; they do not discern the things of God, know nothing about cases of conscience; there are some men's prayers and preaching they understand not, if they be spiritual and evangelical: The man knows not himself, but is pure in own eyes; his neighbours, it may be, will call him a good man, an honest man, and he judges himself to be what people call him, and yet he is a rebel and traitor to God; he hath not much ill that men can challenge, but O there are many things, that God can challenge him for. God can see his vice in the thing that he thinks to be virtue and innocence; he may pray, and is content, and conceited to hear himself pray, and he sees no fault in his prayers. O, have not such need of Christ to open their eyes? Some are blind in the matters of religion, they think all their sins are sins of infirmity. No doubt we are sinners, say they, and great sinners, who want their faults more than we? O blind souls! know that Christ is the opener of blind eyes. There are blind folk that know their bodily case, but not that of their souls; they observe bodily providences, but not soul providences; they know not down-castings & up-risings of soul: O go to Christ, & he will let you see. Some are blind with respect to any distinct knowledge of the gospel, they see not the ground of faith; they would build their faith on their little bit of holiness, rather than on God's holy covenant, that only can make them holy; and hence their holiness is alway to seek: They see not how a man is justified in

a moment, by an imputed righteousness, a righteousness complete and full; they see not how justification can be complete, without somewhat of their own, to make it look fair in God's sight: O seek into Christ, that he may open your eyes. Again, many are blind with respect to true faith, they cannot give a reason of their faith, they have lost their text, and cannot give a ground upon which they believe: It may be, they will say, they have believed all their days. O stranger to faith! the Son of God is given to be the opener of blind eyes, he is a covenanted eye-salve for all blind folk. But then,

(3.) It is a covenant for *liberty*, to *bring the prisoners out of the prison-house*. The Son of God is the looser of prisoners, by his covenanted indenture with the Father, *the Spirit of the Lord God is upon him, for he hath anointed him*: Why, Christ knows all the prison-houses, and all the bands; he was made like unto us in all things, sin only excepted; *such a High priest became us, &c.* Yea, Christ carries all the keys of the prison-house; the keys of hell and death are in his hand; he opens, and none shuts; and shuts, and none opens. The devil, it may be, hath the poor soul bound hand and foot in the prison; but in comes the king of nations, the gingle of whose keys make all the devils tremble, and he orders the goaler to remove his chains; then, *Dumb and deaf spirit, I charge thee to come out of him*, says Christ to the possessed man in the Gospel: So says he, when he comes to a loose prisoner, *Thou wicked unclean spirit, I charge thee to come out; thou covetous and worldly spirit, I charge thee to come out; thou atheistical unbelieving spirit; thou lying and swearing, thou drunken and debauched spirit, &c.* I charge thee to come out, let that soul go free; and *if the Son make you free, then are you free indeed*. It may be the law hath the man in chains; for by the law is the knowledge and conviction of sin. The law comes and seeks his master's rent, saying, *Pay what thou owest*; and the Spirit of God comes along with the law, and convicts the man; and he every day hears himself proclaimed a broken bankrupt; he is carried to prison, and there he lies fearing the wrath of God, and the execution of the curse and threatning of the holy law: But behold, the Son of God comes, saying, *Open to me the gates of righteousness*, his name is THE LORD OUR RIGHTEOUSNESS. The law is exceeding broad, but there is a righteousness as broad as it can be. Many are long in this prison, because they take a threatning, and dwell upon that; but if you believe the Gospel-promise, and hold to the Gospel-righteousness, you shall be loosed. Others dwell long in this prison, because, if they take a promise, they take a conditional

conditional promise, and make no right use of it, such as that, *To you that fear my name, shall the Sun of righteousness arise.* There is a sweet promise, the Sun of righteousness his arising; but then the condition of *fearing his name*, that knocks off their fingers, and hinders them from applying it, because they think they want the condition: Therefore, man, either take an absolute promise that hath no condition in it at all, promising the condition too; or else, if you apply the conditional promise, take Christ for the condition to make up all to you, and then you will find a loosing of prison-bands. If you will not be content, every day, & every hour of the day, to be indebted to God & to free grace, you will lie & rot in your prison. Many abide long in this prison, because they would fain live to two husbands, both Christ & the law. *We cannot live to Christ, unless we be dead to the law, Gal. 2. 19, 20.* but the man would embrace Christ for a husband, and yet stand seeking to answer the demands of the law: But whenever the law demands any thing of you, you must send the law to Christ, that he may answer it, and then you will be loosed. Some abide long in prison, because they build the faith of God's love on the work of God, and not on the truth of God; and hence it is, that when God's work within them divines, then their faith divines also; but faith will never be firm and stable, 'till it build more upon the truth of the covenant. The stable Christian lives by bills of exchange; but the weak unstable soul counts all by what he hath in his pocket, by what he hath in hand, and not by what he hath upon bond. But how does Christ, the covenant of the people, open the prison-door? Why, he even teaches the poor soul to say, let Satan, sin, justice, and the law, come along with me to Christ; and what I cannot answer, he can; what I want, he hath enough to supply. Come, and lay all my sins upon my back, that I may away to Christ with them, and get more mercy and grace, for Christ is the all in all of this new covenant: And in this way, the prisoner is loosed, to the devil's shame, and to Christ's honour. Stand to your liberty, poor soul, and let your sins and wants hasten, and bring you forward to venture upon Christ, that he may loose you. O that the day of the Son of man were come, when *Zion* will get a thousand atheists at a draught, when Christ will get a multitude of prisoners set at liberty.

(4.) It is a *glorious* covenant, contrived wholly for *glorifying* God, and *debaſing* self; therefore it follows, *I am the Lord, that is my name, my glory will I not give to another, nor my praise to graven images.* God accounts it the standing of his glory, to perform all that is in this covenant, and not to give any creature a share

of it; he will not break his credit, having once engaged himself in covenant; and he will not suffer any to gather up the rent and revenue of it but himself, *My glory will I not give to another*. It stands on his glory, his word of honour, his word royal; he himself will do all, and no instrument shall have the glory of it. If you give instruments any of the glory, it is the way to blast the instruments; and blasted may they be, rather than that Christ should want any of the glory due unto his name. Therefore, for the Lord's sake, if you get any thing this day, do not give the glory to any instrument; for, says God, *I am the Lord, that is my name, and my glory will I not give to another*: And, for his glory's sake, do not think of doing any part of the work yourselves; there shall none get any of his glory but himself. Means belong to you, and, in God's name, I charge you to make use of them, and the obligation to duty lies upon you: But if you have any regard for the glory of God, let God have the glory of the whole performance; not I, but grace: Either the Lord will bring you to this, or he will bring you to nothing. Let it be your maxim in religion, *to make always much room for the free grace of God in Christ*.

What shall I make of all this you have been telling me? Why, have your hearts gone into the covenant of free grace? Then I call you to a duty, such as you have, *ψ. 10. Sing unto the Lord a new song, and his praises from the ends of the earth*. Whence you may notice, that when God is giving a full and free covenant, then it is a fit time to enjoin a duty; for then the man is at this, O what shall I render to the Lord? Nothing advances holiness so much as the getting a full and free covenant: Why, because Christ walks in the midst of the covenant, and he is the covenant, and the whole of the covenant; and when the covenant comes, he comes; and his very presence warms the heart, and that warmth enlarges it, and then the man is at that with it, *I'll run the ways of thy commandments, because thou enlargest my heart*. Yea, when the free covenant comes to a man, and gets the throne, then holiness will run of course. The narrowness of your thro'ts of free grace hinders all your holiness, for Christ will not sit down where the covenant gets not the throne. When the free covenant comes, it makes *self* go to the door, and bids pride be-gone; for holiness hath a charge never to lodge in the same room with pride. When the covenant comes in, pride goes out; and when pride goes out, holiness comes in, for he gives grace to the humble; and the most *sweetly* humbling thing in all the world, is a view of the free covenant, where God gets *all the glory*, and self nothing of it: Nay, when the covenant comes, it makes self
think

think shame of itself, and hide its face with blushes. In a word, when the covenant comes, it contains in its bosom all the furniture that is necessary for making a man holy; and also this covenant shews to a man that much is forgiven him; and when much is forgiven him, he loves much; and where there is much love, there is much holiness, for the love of Christ constrains him: Therefore, where this covenant never comes, holiness never grows; but when the covenant of grace in its freedom and fullness takes place with a soul, there holiness flourishes. Would you know wherefore there is so much wickedness, and so little holiness in *Scotland*, for all the talking of holiness, as if the free dispensation of Gospel-grace would mar it? The *very reason* is, little of this covenant is known: men keep fast hold of their sins, because they will not take hold of this covenant. Where there is nothing of this covenant, there is no holiness; where little of this covenant, there is little holiness; and where much of this covenant takes place, there is much holiness.

The new covenant brings in the new song, *ψ. 10. Sing unto the Lord a new song*, and the new song is the new obedience, and the new obedience is the obedience of faith and love, and the obedience of faith and love is Gospel-holiness. O then, let the Gospel-covenant have room, or holiness will never thrive: Take in the covenant, and it will make you sing, *Sing to the Lord a new song, and his praises to the end of the earth; for he that offereth praise glorifieth God.* And the more you glorify God, the more will your holiness be like that of the redeemed above, who are singing the new song in the new *Jerusalem*.

*The COMER'S CONFLICT: or, The Beginner's
Battle with the Devil, when essaying to come
to CHRIST by Faith.*

In some DISCOURSES before and after the *Sacrament of the LORD'S-SUPPER*, at *Kinglassie*, July 20, 21. 1735.

By the Reverend Mr. RALPH ERSKINE.

LUKE ix. 42.

And as he was yet a coming, the Devil threw him down, and tare him.

HERE is the history of Christ's healing a lunatick child, whose father came to the disciples, and they could not cure him; and

and now he cometh to Christ. As we ought to come to Christ ourselves for healing, so we ought to bring our children to him ; and when servants and other means can do us no good, we ought to go to the master, and look beyond all ministers and servants. After Christ had reproached the disciples for their unbelief, he gives the poor man an encouraging word concerning his son. *Bring thy son hither*, verse preceding. Bring him to me. We ought to bring our sons, our daughters to Christ, to bring our diseases and all our various cases to Christ. But after this encouragement, follows a trial in the text, *As he was yet coming, the devil threw him down, and tare him*. Here is, 1. An excellent duty, that is, *coming* to Christ. 2. An eminent trial and heavy dispensation that befel the comer ; *The devil threw him down, and tare him*. 3. The time and juncture when this heavy trial and great affliction befel him, namely, *As he was yet a coming, the devil threw him down, and tare him*. Hence observe, 1. The best course that any can take for relief from whatever ails them, is to come to Jesus Christ the Saviour. 2. They that come to Christ for help will be an eye-sore to hell and the devil ; he will be sure to fly upon them. 3. They that come to Christ for help and healing, tho' they may be sure he will help and save them, yet they may find their case worse before the relief come ; they may be thrown down, and torn as it were to pieces by the way. Or thus, Christ may undertake to deliver people, and yet their distress may grow upon their hand before their deliverance come. Here is Christ undertaking, *Bring him hither to me*. Here is the person coming with hope of deliverance, *he is on his way coming to Jesus* ; and yet behold here is a dreadful dash, a mighty trial to faith and hope, both in the Father and the Son : Yea, after he was come to the physician, and the healing word spoken, as you see, *Mark* 9. 25, 26. where this same history is recorded with other circumstances, *The spirit cried, and rent him sore before he came out of him, and so he was as one dead, insomuch that many said he is dead*. Why then,

People that come Christ, and whom he undertakes to heal and help, may have their distress growing on their hand before their deliverance come, which yet will certainly come.

It is in this case as it was with *Israel in Egypt*, God saw their affliction, and undertook to come & save them, and yet behold before their salvation comes, their bondage becomes heavier than before. The darkest time of the night may be before day break. Thus it was with *Israel* in returning from *Babylon* to rebuild the temple in the days of *Ezra* and *Nebemiah*. The King gives commandment to go and build, God stirs up the civil authority to give

give encouragement to them ; but quickly the haters of *Zion*, misrepresenting the work, procure an order to cause them to desist from it. This doctrine then is verified both with relation to God's publick work towards a church, and his particular work on the souls of his people, as you see it was with the ruler of the synagogue, *Mark* 5. 23. that applied to Christ in behalf of his daughter at the point of death, that he might come and heal her. Christ went with him ; but see what sad news he gets from his house, *Trouble not the master, for your daughter is dead* ; and now they look'd upon the matter as hopeless, though yet Christ was on his way to save her. Method, I. I'll speak a little of coming to Christ. II. Enquire in what respects may matters grow worse with people, even when they are thus coming to Christ. - III. Inquire into the reasons whence it is that people who come to Christ for help, and whom he undertakes to help, may find their distress grow before their deliverance come. IV. Make some application.

I. To speak a little of coming to Christ. There are only two things I notice here. *1st*, Coming to Christ for help imports, (1.) A view that vain is the help of man, vain is the help of creatures, vain is the help of ministers, means and ordinances of themselves. Thus it was here with the Father of the child, *I besought the disciples, but they could not help*. So they that come to Christ find *all other refuges fail them*, *Psal.* 142. 4. other physicians were of no value : None come to Christ till they can do no better, yet he is content with such comers that see there is no other shift for them.

(2.) This coming to Christ imports a putting the work in his hand, *Master, I beseech thee to look upon my son* : He prays, and he brings him to Christ at the Lord's call. They that truly come to Christ for help, they put the work in his hand, and give him employment in his saving offices, looking on him as able, and willing, and ready to save ; the disease is half cured when it is laid at Christ's feet. Happy they that come thus to him, trust him with their souls, and trust him with their cases ; see *Psal.* 37. 5. *Commit thy way unto the Lord, trust also in him, and he will bring it to pass*.

The *second* head proposed, was to enquire in what respects may matters grow worse with people, even when they are thus coming to Christ. Here are two things recorded, *The devil threw him down, and he tare him*. (1.) They that come to Christ before they get the deliverance that is insured to them, they may meet with down-casting providences ; they may be cast down with discouragement and despondency for a while, cast down with fears and doubts, cast down with jealous apprehensions, & unbelieving thoughts.

thoughts. Believing souls after their coming to Christ, much more as they are coming at first, may be greatly cast down, Psal. 42. 6. *O my God, my soul is cast down within me.* They may be cast down with a multitude of perplexing thoughts, despairing thoughts, and manifold objections and scruples, their mind raised, or rather unbelief frames within them.

(2.) They may not only be thrown down, but *torn* by the way: The devil threw him down, and *tare* him. Whenever a man begins to come to Christ, and the devil fears he shall lose his possession, then he rages against that man, and would tear him to pieces. Therefore think not strange that beginners in religion, and such as are coming, or but lately come to Christ, or even those who have come formerly, and are coming again to him, may be mightily assaulted and attacked by all the powers of hell. So long as people remain at a distance from Christ, the devil does not meddle with them, *He keeps the house, and the goods are at peace:* But in coming to Christ, they may lay their account to be torn by torments, torn by terrors, and blasphemous suggestions; they may lay their account with fiery darts: When we expect the Lord is about to remove one burden, he may lay on another, that he may have the more mercy on us.

The *third* head proposed, was to enquire into the reasons whence it is that people, who come to Christ for help, and whom he undertakes to help, may find their distress grow before their deliverance comes: Whatever malicious hand the devil hath in this matter, God hath a holy hand in permitting it. (1.) It is to shew his wisdom and power. 1. His wisdom, how he can advance his work by the stops in the way of it, and enrich his people by impoverishing them, enlarge them by imprisoning them, and *give them meat out of the eater, and sweet out of the strong.* 2. His power, and how he can support them under, and deliver them from their distress; which would not appear so much, if their distress came not to a height. He suffers them to be dejected and torn, that his wisdom and power may appear the more evidently in lifting them up, and healing them.

(2.) It is to check the unbelief that attends our faith in coming to Christ. Sometimes when we commit our case to him by faith, we do not exercise this faith to a patient waiting for the Lord. Christ's first word to his people is, *Come to me*, Mat. 11. his last word is, *Abide in me*, John 15. It is well done to come, but, alas! we do not abide; and therefore to check our unbelief in coming, as it were but a step, and going back the next step, he

shews the need of going forward, by letting loose the enemy, and suffering matters to grow worse with us.

(3.) 'Tis to raise the worth and esteem of his mercies in the hearts of those that come to him. We usually do not know the worth of a mercy, till we be deprived of it, nor the worth of deliverance, till the distress be extremely great. Help is then highly esteemed, when we can say, *I was bro't low, and he helped me.*

(4.) It is to try our faith, whether or not it be such as will not only come to Christ, but also stay with him till he works the deliverance; and if we can keep our eye upon the deliverer, when the deliverance is delayed, our eye upon the promise, when cross providences appear, and can hope against hope. He designs the trial of faith for the present, and a more glorious issue thereafter.

The *fourth* head proposed, was to make some application. Is it so, that people that come to Christ, and whom he undertakes to heal and help, may have their distress growing on their hand before their deliverance come, which yet will certainly come? *Ist*, Hence see what a cruel enemy the devil is to immortal souls and their eternal salvation. For whenever a soul begins to mind religion in earnest, and to come to Christ for help and deliverance, then that soul becomes the object of the devil's spite and malice. As long as people remain graceless, and christless, and formal, the devil will let them enjoy themselves, and hugs them asleep in their security; but whenever they begin to come to Christ, then he will attempt to cast them down and tare them, and stirs up all his wicked instruments either to discourage and ridicule them, or to tare their name and reputation to pieces, and to persecute them with tongue or hand, and to raise a hue and cry against them, as if they were turn'd distracted, and out of their wits. As they are coming, the devil throws them down and tares them.

2. Hence see the reason of all the melancholly moods, heavy damps and great discouragements of many beginners, that are setting on in the Lord's way; though *wisdom's ways are ways of pleasantness*, yet Satan, who is a liar from the beginning, would make the world believe that it is a bitter and unpleasant way, and that the beginning of religion is but the *beginning of sorrow.*

3. Hence see the difference between the conviction of the Spirit, and the temptation of Satan: and the difference between the distress of soul that arises from a law-work before conversion, and that which arises from the assault of the enemy of our salvation. Whenever conviction begins, and the soul comes to be troubled for sin, and under fear of hell and wrath, Satan indeed fishes in the muddy water, and mixes his temptations with the

Spirit's convictions, and if he can bring all conviction to nothing, either by force or fraud, he will do it, that the convinced soul may never come to Christ for cure; Satan will stand at his right hand to resist him. But the difference between them is,

(1.) The convictions of the Spirit are before a man comes to Christ, and tends, as a severe *School-master*, to lead him to Christ, Gal. 3. 24. But the temptations of the devil are especially when a man is coming to Christ, in order to keep him from coming. If the Spirit of God by a law-work seem, as it were, to cast down the man, and tare him to pieces, the design is to drive him to Christ for help and healing, and to provoke him to come to the Saviour, and fly to the city of refuge. But the design of the devil's temptations, when he throws down and tares the soul, is when he is coming, or as he is coming to Christ, in order to detain him from coming, or discourage him in coming.

(2.) The convictions of the Spirit are humbling, tending to make the soul despair of help in himself, or in God out of Christ. The temptations of the enemy are terrifying, tending to make the soul despair of help in Christ, or in God through him. The former shuts the door of hope by the law, but the devil would shut the door of hope by the Gospel.

4. Hence see there is no ground to blame religion and religious duties, notwithstanding discouragements and downcasting trials in the way of duty. Though matters grow worse with you in the way of duty, and in the way of coming to Christ, blame not yourself for coming to Christ, because the devil attacks you by the way. You have enough to charge yourself with, though you charge not yourself foolishly. It would be far worse with you, if the devil and your own wicked heart prevail to take you off from the use of promising means. When, like *Peter*, you cast yourself upon the water to come to Christ, be not frightened, though the devil raise a storm, the Lord Jesus *sits upon the floods, and is mightier than the noise of many waters*, Psal. 93. 4. Never think the worse of Christ, though matters seem to grow worse with you, when you come to him for rest, and yet find trouble, for it is the devil and the ill heart that breeds all the trouble. Keep up honourable thoughts of the Lord Jesus, believe he can do for you, and wait till you find that he will do. Fetch wind from all crosses providences to hasten you nearer to your resting place; for all that come to him shall find rest in spite of the devil. Some begin rest here in time, however disturbed by the devil from time to time, and by unbelief, until rest be perfected in heaven.

Again, Hence see the mark of a true believer & comer to Christ.

If the devil be no enemy to your faith, you may know it is a false faith. Many have a faith that the devil is pleased well enough with, and therefore he never troubles them nor it; but if you have saving faith, it will be the eye-sore of hell, or if you be truly coming to Christ, you may expect the devil will be upon your top. No sooner doth true faith begin, but the fight of faith begins. Some may bless themselves they were never assaulted by the devil, and yet they are but sleeping in his cradle, he is rocking them. Try your faith; if it be from heaven, it will meet with opposition from hell: *We wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities and powers, &c. Eph. 6. 12.* Therefore we are called, as part of the christian armour, to take *the shield of faith, whereby we shall be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked, &c. 16.* The devil may let you peaceably go about duty, read, and pray, and communicate, because you may do these things carnally and formally, and go to hell when all is done: But if once you begin to come to Christ, or to go about any duty believingly, then you are on the way to heaven, and if the devil can, he will draw you back, and throw you down with discouragements, and tare you with temptations, either as you are coming, or after you are come. But it is always the best faith that is most opposed by the devil.

Again, A word, (1.) To you that never yet came to Christ for help and salvation. O stay not away from him for fear of the devil, lest he throw you down and tare you. Better be thrown down by the way in coming to Christ, than thrown down to hell with the devil, at last by the hand of God, who will throw you and the devil down to hell, if you do not come to Christ. Better that the devil tare you to pieces when there is a Jesus at hand to deliver you from him, than that God himself tare you to pieces when there shall be none to deliver, *Psal. 50. 22. Consider this, ye that forget God, &c.* Come, otherwise you remain slaves to the devil and your lusts. O be sensible of your slavery and malady; know none can save you but our Lord Jesus Christ; he is a mighty Saviour, and a merciful one. *No name is given under heaven whereby a sinner can be saved but the name of Jesus.* Put the work in his hand; put your soul in his hand. *Bring him here to me,* says Christ to the man here. O come and bring your children with you, hear him saying, Bring your son to me, bring your daughter to me, bring your soul and your case to me, O bring your disease to me; bring your hard heart to me, and I'll soften it; bring your filthy heart to me, and I'll cleanse it; bring your heart possess'd of the devil to me, and I'll cast out the devil; bring your seven devils to me, and I'll cast them out.

(2.) To

(2.) To you that are coming in answer to his call, O be not dismayed, though the devil throw you down, and tare you as you are coming. Here is a Jesus ready to lift up whom the devil throws down, ready to heal whom the devil tares, ready to help all that are hurt by the old serpent; it is his trade to *destroy the works of the devil*. You may be always sure that it is an evil spirit that is dealing with you, that would mar and hinder you in your coming to Christ, for the voice of the Spirit of God is, *Come, the Spirit and the Bride say, Come*. The Spirit of God, as a Spirit of bondage, may cast down the soul before it come to Christ, and in order to its coming; but it is not the Spirit of God that casts down the coming believer; no, *We have not received the Spirit of bondage again unto fear*, Rom. 8. 15. After coming to Christ, and believing in him, it is only the devil that casts down and tares you. Fear not the lion of hell, here is the lion of the tribe of *Judah* to defend you. It is unbelief, and departing from Christ, that may bring you to the greatest danger; therefore *fear not, only believe*.

Note, This application was enlarged in some other inferences, upon the *Sabbath-day*, but the notes of that sermon were not written; what follows was delivered upon the *Monday*.

S E R M O N II.

Preached on *Monday July 21. 1735.*

LUKE ix. 42.

And as he was yet a coming, the Devil threw him down, and tare him.

THIS doctrine may be applied at this time in an *exhortation* or *advice*, particularly to those that are tempted and torn of the devil, when they essay to come to the Lord Jesus Christ, in order to your being fortify'd thro' grace against his assaults and fiery darts. There are only six sorts of temptations at present I would endeavour to fortify you against. 1. With reference to heart-blasphemy. 2. With reference to heart-wandering 3. With reference to the omission of duty. 4. With reference to the commission of sin. 5. With reference to unworthy apprehensions of God. 6. With reference to self-murder. There are temptations with reference to all these, that you need to be fortified against. While you are coming to Christ, Satan may attempt to throw you

down, and tare you in all these, and many other respects; but I shall touch a little at each of these.

First, There are temptations of Satan with reference to blasphemy, whereby he would throw down and tare in pieces, as it were, the souls of those that would come to the Lord Jesus Christ. They may be tempted to *dreadful blasphemous thoughts*, which are not to be named, they are so detestable and abominable. They are *fearful injections* upon the mind, and *very terrifying* to the weak believer that is coming to the Lord Jesus Christ. In order to your being *fortified against these*, I would offer you the following *advices*.

(1.) Be not terrified with them, since they harm you more by their horror, than by their guilt. It is true, the guilt of them is so great, that it is unpardonable to him to whom it belongs. These are Satan's sins, and not thine, and he shall answer for them, and not thou. Tho' he lay these brats at thy door, he is the father of them. Such thoughts are like lightnings cast into a room, they have a great deal of horror; but as the lightning springs not from any cause in the room, so these thoughts proceed not from any thing in thee; not properly from thy corruptions, for unregenerate men themselves abhor them; & tho' the seed of all sin be in our nature, yet scarce, if ever, doth this sin spring up even in reprobates: Nay the devil himself doth not think of God that which these thoughts signify. Since thou dost not actually, nor did originally in *Adam*, give consent to these thoughts, they are not thy sins. Suppose some villain should meet a chaste virgin in a field, and ravish her, if she struggles and cries, she is innocent by the law of God: This is her affliction, not her sin. She may mourn for her suffering, not her guilt; especially she doing nothing to provoke him. It may be the villain finds her at prayer, as the devil doth find thee, when he casts in these thoughts. Therefore be of good comfort, thou art more afraid than hurt: For a careless wandering thought in prayer, hath more guilt in it than these have. When Christ was in the wilderness, the devil appeared to him in a visible shape; he knew it to be Satan, yet he was not in the least terrified. We should endeavour to imitate him. If one attempt suddenly to strike our eye, tho' we know he doth not intend to strike it, yet it cannot but wink; so we can scarce choose but be terrified with these thoughts, but we must resist and conquer such fears. I say not we should not abhor such thoughts, for then we should be worse than heathens, but we should not be terrified out of our faith, or duties, or comforts thereby.

(2.) Do not give over your duties for these blasphemous tho'ts and injections; for tho' these thoughts are not thy sin, yet they may

may be the cause of thy sinning, if they cause thee to abstain from prayer, &c. You, may be, think it better not to pray than to have these thoughts ; but thy prayers may do thee more good than these can do thee harm, and how wilt thou conquer if thou cast away thy weapons ? Neither hasten from your duty, for thus you do the devil too much homage ; his temptations should make you pray the more, not the seldomer, or shorter.

(3.) Think not over these thoughts again, even when thou goest to God to complain of Satan and his dreadful assaults ; for if thou yield not to the tempter, these blasphemies are not the matter of confession, but rather of complaint ; as a woman that is ravish'd doth not confess, but lament her affliction. Neither speak them over, when you go to a minister or Christian friend for advice or comfort ; but only mention in the general, that horrid thoughts and blasphemies trouble you ; they will understand what you mean, but perhaps they had as good Satan should inject such thoughts, as to hear you name them.

(4.) Pray much against these blasphemies, and thus study to be gainers by them, and to be avenged upon Satan, which you may, if you do as they did, *Acts* 19. when they heard that some would speak against their goddess *Diana*, they cried out for the space of two hours *Great is Diana of the Ephesians* ; so that whosoever should go about to speak against *Diana*, could not be heard. Do thou likewise, when Satan casts in blasphemous thoughts, break thou forth into blessing and praising of God, and if thou canst not do so, try to read or sing some psalm full of praises, as *Psal.* 103. 105. 116. 145. &c. and if thou art private enough, read or sing them with a loud voice ; and when Satan shall see that thou art the gainer by his temptations, he will be weary of tempting thee. These blasphemies are Satan's railings and revilings against the God of heaven ; therefore you are to do with them as *Hezekiah* did with *Rabsbakeb's* railing letter, *Isa.* 36. 21. he went and spread the blasphemy before the Lord. He did not so much as read over the letter, but spread it before the Lord. So, without naming over that blasphemy, you should pray against it, that God would suppress this smoak that ascends out of the bottomless pit.

You may lawfully dispute and argue with Satan against some of his blasphemies ; as when he tempts you to question the being of God, and the truth of divine revelation, as the archangel disputed with the devil about the body of *Moses* ; so when you are tempted, for example, to doubt if the Scripture be the word of God, you may consider the plain arguments that prove it, and ask Satan, why dost thou fly before it ? If the ark were not the ark of

God, why doth *Dagon* fall before it? If it were not the word of God, why doth Satan tempt me not to believe it? But do not depend upon thy arguing. Satan is too strong for thy reasoning, be-take thyself to the Lord Jesus by prayer. Though Satan may stand out against thy arguments, he will not be able to stand against the prayer of faith. The archangel said, *The Lord rebuke thee*. Tho' he will not fly at thy rebuke, yet he will, and must, at the rebuke of God. And by the way, see the excellency of Christ above the archangel. Christ rebukes Satan by his own power and authority; for he said not, *The Lord rebuke thee*, but, *Get thee behind me, Satan*.

2. There are temptations of Satan with reference to heart-wanderings in duty. Satan knows, that if he can get these flies to come and rest in this precious ointment, they will putrify it. He knows if the thoughts wander, God regards not what the tongue says; and if he can spoil your prayers, he fears not what good any ordinance can do thee. If your thoughts be earthly, he cares not how heavenly your words are. Herein Satan gets assistance from the evil heart, *Matth. 15. 19. Out of the heart proceed evil thoughts*. They arise out of the heart as sparks out of a furnace; they stay not in the heart but are active, and ascend up to the head, and they come out of the heart, not as sparks out of a flint, by concussion and violence, forc'd out; but they *proceed out* of it, says Christ; they come out of themselves, and they proceed always in a continued act.

Satan's temptations to heart-wandering in duty are also furthered by a multitude of business, and that two ways.

1st, If we come from a multitude of business, for our hearts are like the troubled sea, it must have some considerable time before it be compos'd, though the winds that raised the storm cease; so when we come from business, there must be some time after our business is ended before our hearts can be sedate and quiet, and fit for prayer; nay, in this our hearts are worse than the sea, because

2dly, Future business will distract us before it come. The sea is not tumultuous before the wind blow; but the business we have to do will trouble us before it comes to be done. It is a hard thing to keep business out of our thoughts when we pray, and make it stay till our prayer is ended.

Now to fortify against these, I offer the following four advices shortly. (1.) O study to mortify the love of the world: Where our love is, there will our thoughts be. To set your love on the world, and your thoughts on God, you'll find altogether impossible; *He that loveth the world, the love of the Father is not in him*. O seek to mortify this.

(2.) Lay

(2.) Lay up your treasure in heaven; *For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also*, Matth. 6. 21. The heart of the Jews went after their covetousness, *Ezek. 32. 31.* When they were hearing the word, they could not keep their thro'ts where their bodies were, but they would be where their love was, and where their treasure was.

(3.) Let not the world be your familiar friend, for familiar friends come in without knocking or asking leave; therefore be thou a *stranger in this present world*, *Heb. 11. 13.* They were not strangers in this or that part of the earth, but in the whole earth: Be a stranger to the world, & the world will not visit you in prayer.

(4.) Make prayer your delight, not your task. Children are subject to look off their books, because they delight not in them; but when they are playing, they are eager and earnest. The bird flutters in the cage, but sits quietly on the tree, and sings there. *I will go to God*, says David, *to God, my exceeding joy.* *Psal. 43.* When our thoughts find satisfaction, they set up their nest, and wander not.

3dly, There are temptations of satan with reference to omission of duty; as for example, he represents to them the difficulty that there is therein. O I cannot pray nor hear aright, I cannot meditate nor mortify aright, therefore I may let it alone. Now, in order to fortify against this temptation, consider,

(1.) That this is necessary; you must be *exercis'd unto godliness*, exercised in keeping a conscience void of offence towards God and man, and be *stedfast and immoveable always abounding in the work of the Lord, knowing that your labour shall not be in vain in the Lord*, 1 Cor. 15. last. As for the wicked, who are otherwise disposed, having no heart nor will to the Lord's service at all, what can they expect at his hand, but this, *Take these mine enemies, that would not that I should reign over them, bring them hither, and slay them before me? Yea, he will come in flaming fire to take vengeance on them that know not God, and obey not the Gospel*; it is therefore absolutely necessary,

(2.) To consider, that it is possible to serve the Lord acceptably by his own grace. Tho' duty be difficult to nature, yet, if you get the Spirit of God to help you you'll do well enough, and God hath promised his help, *Isa. 40. close. He giveth power to the faint, and to them that have no might he increaseth strength, &c. They that wait on the Lord shall renew their strength.* Hence all the faints of old, and of late, have try'd the Lord's way, and found that the way of the Lord was *strength to them*; yea, *that wisdom's ways are pleasantness*: Their delight was in the law of the Lord; in keeping of his commands
there

there is a great reward. One smile of God's countenance is worth all your pains, tho' you were at a hundred times more. There is always some sweets in religion that accompany the sedulous exercise thereof. Tho' the soul hath nothing to claim on the account of its own works or duties; yet the Lord is graciously pleased to own and countenance his own way, when the soul is found in it, beside the glorious and gracious reward that abides it in heaven.

Therefore let faith batter down this temptation of Satan, saying, What though Satan present difficulties in the way, Christ under-went greater difficulties: He hath born the burden and heat of the day: I'm not called to go and satisfy justice, Christ hath done that to my hand; I am not called to go and fulfil the law as a covenant of works, Christ hath done that to my hand; I am not called to work for life, but to work for love, to him that worketh all my works in me, and for me, and who, as he calleth me to this work of love, so promised to work in me both to will and to do; and therefore in his name and strength I will go forward, *making mention of his righteousness, and his only*; and in his name I'll grapple with the devil himself, for Christ hath conquered him to my hands.

4thly, There are temptations of Satan with reference to the commission of sin. He will suggest to them that it is but a little sin, and God will not be angry for a little sin; such as a lie in jest, an idle word, &c. Can such a little sin indanger the soul! Now, to guard you against this temptation, consider,

(1.) That the first sin which bro't all mankind into a miserable state, was in appearance but a small and little sin: It was but eating a little forbidden fruit, the tasting of an apple; yet, had it not been for Christ's satisfaction, it would have destroyed irrecoverably all the posterity of *Adam*. There was a man, Sirs, that gathered a few sticks upon the sabbath-day, you would have tho't that was but a little sin; yet, God's thoughts are not your tho'ts, for God thought that sin worthy of death, *Num.* 15. 32, and 35 verses. *Ussab's* putting his hand to the ark, and touching it when it tottered, seem'd to be but a small sin; and yet you know he was smitten instantly with death for it, *2Sam.* 6. 7. It is dangerous to give even a little wrong touch to a tottering ark.

(2.) Consider the nature of every sin. Though some are comparatively small, and others greater, that is, by reason of several aggravations more heinous in the sight of God than others; yet in themselves none are small. The least sin is against an infinite God, an infinite authority, and cannot be expiated without infinite satisfaction; and it is not little promises, or little threatenings

nings that your little sins do slight; yea, there is no little ingratitude towards God in little sins: There is great unkindness to God in little sins. To displease God, your best friend, for a little sin; O ungrateful thing! *Is this your kindness to your friend? The wages of every sin is death eternal.* It is not little misery that every sin doth expose you to. Will you make light of the wrath of the infinite God? Then do not make light of little sins. In a word, remember that boldness in little sins will be an encouragement to greater. Sin is of an incroaching and bewitching nature: A little thief may open the way to a greater. The devil tempts people to go from one degree to another; he tempts them to the reverse of the *blessed man*, mentioned *Psal. 1. 1.* He tempts them to *walk in the counsel of the ungodly*; having taken a walk with them, he tempts them next to *stand in the way of sinners*, which is more; and then having stood a while with them, he tempts them last of all *to sit in the seat of the scornful*, even to the height of wickedness. The devil first makes you sit down with the *drunkard*, then to drink with him, and at last to be drunk. Thus he leads people from unclean thoughts, to unclean looks, words and actions: Therefore let faith resist this temptation, and set you upon your watch against that which you call a little sin. No man that ever saw sin truly, can call any sin little or small, nor can it ever be, till there be a little law to break, a little God to offend, a little guilt to contract, a little wrath to incur; all which are impossible to be, blasphemy to wish, and madness to expect.

5thly, There are temptations of Satan with reference to unworthy apprehensions of God. Satan may suggest very strange thoughts of God, very base thoughts of God, most unsuitable apprehensions of him, such as are not to be spoken of; and the prince of this world hath much in us who are so ignorant of God, to further these mishapen thoughts of God. And to fortify you against these assaults, there are these two directions I would offer concerning the way how we are to conceive of God.

(1.) We are to conceive of him as inconceivable: For the thoughts we are to have of him are overwhelming thoughts. As long as we are merely active, and are able to master our thoughts of God, they are utterly unworthy of him. Whatsoever we know, comprehensively I mean, except we see it to be infinitely beyond us, that is not God, nor to be ador'd. I have read a dialogue between a Christian and a Gentile: The Gentile seeing the Christian very fervent in prayer, and seeing no image before him, asked him whom he worshipped; he answered, I know not. Why then do you worship him? I therefore worship him, says.

says he, because I cannot know him. It seems strange, said the Gentile, to see one so seriously worship that he knoweth not. More strange it is for one, said the Christian, to worship that we can comprehend. If we are not lost in our thoughts of God, our thoughts of God are lost. When we throw a stone into a pond, it makes circles larger and larger, and quickly they come to the shore : But if one should throw a millstone into the midst of the calm ocean, though it would make larger and larger circles, yet it would not reach the shore, because the strength would be spent long before it come the length : So when we think on the creature, we easily enlarge our thoughts so as to see an end of their perfection, and to be more than comprehensive of their excellency ; but when we think of God, we can never know him to perfection, *Psal.* 119. 96. Here our knowledge must end in admiration, and our love in extasy. Nay, we must conceive of God as above all words, above all knowledge, and above all admiration, above all love, and above all extasy. But let us go to Scripture : God knows best how to speak of himself, and we may safely acquiesce in Scripture expressions, *Neh.* 9. 5. *Thy name is exalted above all praise, above the praise of men and angels ;* this is a very high expression, but doth this reach him ? Nay, if it did, God should not be exalted above all praise, since this would reach him.

(2.) We are to conceive of God in Christ : Christ must be eyed in our addresses and acts of worship. All the former considerations set us but at a greater distance from God, and make us afraid of God, and fly from him, if we go no further ; and indeed human reason can go no further. The utmost it can do, is but to think of mercy without a promise, which is a very arbitrary thing ; and we see that God hath not shewn mercy to the fallen angels ; for never was any devil converted, therefore we must necessarily have thoughts of Christ. *We are to honour the Son as we honour the Father ;* And to honour him,

1st, As a king. God hath exalted Christ *far above all heavens,* and hath *commanded us to do all in his name,* *Col.* 3. 17. And *whatsoever you do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus.* *John* 5. 23. He orders that *all men should honour the Son even as they honour the Father.* I shall relate a history to this purpose ; it is this, *Theodosius* the emperor having made an edict for the giving liberty for the *Arians* to preach, *Amphilochius* took this course for prevailing with the emperor to recal that edict. *Theodosius* having made *Arcadius* co-emperor and *Cæsar* with him, several bishops came to salute the emperor, to congratulate *Arcadius*, and to signify their consent to *Theodosius's* act, and by their respect and hon-

our done to *Arcadius*, to shew that they took him for the successor of *Theodosius* in the empire; among others came this *Amphilochius* bishop of *Iconium*, who, after he had done obeisance very submissively to *Theodosius*, was going away without shewing any respect to *Arcadius*, tho' he sat by *Theodosius* in all his royal robes. *Theodosius* therefore called to *Amphilochius*, saying, Know you not that I have made *Arcadius* my son emperor with me; upon which *Amphilochius* went to *Arcadius*, and striking him on the head, said, he was a very hopeful boy. *Theodosius* being very angry at this indignity done his son, commanded him to prison. *Amphilochius*, after he had gone a little way, turned back, saying, O *Theodosius*, you are angry that I give not your son the same honour I give you, since you have made him equal in maiesty to your self; and, think you, God will be well pleased that you suffer the Arians to abuse Christ, whom he hath set at his right-hand in glory, and will have all men honour the Son as they honour the Father. Upon which the edict was reversed. I may say, Can you think that God will accept your worship to him, be it never so great; if you take no notice of Christ, be sure God will reject you and your services. But then again,

2dly, As God will have Christ to have the glory of his kingly office, so also of his priestly. Thus, suppose some great monarch, his son consenting, should lay upon his son the punishment due to some rebellious subjects, intending his son's honour as well as their pardon; the king sends forth a proclamation to them, to let them know that his son had satisfied justice, & procured a pardon; but many of them not trusting to this, would not come in, but would send the king gifts and presents to gain his favour; the emperor scorns their gifts upon that account; especially they thus robbing his son of the honour of making their peace, and thereby also plainly shewing, that they thought their crime was not so great, but a small matter would make it up, such as their gifts. Surely, if gifts would have done the business, his son had greater gifts than theirs; so that he needed not have died or suffered. The reddition of this simile may be easily made: God abhors our prayers, alms, and all our services, if we bring them as satisfactory to his justice, and sprinkle our puddly waters, our tears, upon the mercy-seat, and fill the holy place with the stinking savour, the stinking vapours of our prayers, which are unperfum'd with the incense of Christ's righteousness, or that are no better than the reeking steems of a dunghill; I say, to go to the holy place with these, instead of the incense of Christ's merit and intercession, is not to make an atonement, but a provocation. This makes *Pope's* *auferities* to be acts of pride, instead of being acts of mortification.

3dly,

3dly, God will have him get the honour also of his propheticall office; for it is by his Spirit that he instructs and teaches us how to pray as well as perform. By his merit we have acceptance, and by his Spirit assistance. If a child should write some excellent tract in the mathematicks in *Greek*, we would infallibly conclude some did learn him, or dictate to him; so when you pray in the Spirit, and spiritually, for such or such spiritual blessings, who do you think dictates to you? This is not your mother-tongue; doubtless it is the Spirit of Christ that helps your infirmities. In a word, Christ by his active and passive obedience, whereby he hath satisfied justice, &c. hath a wonderful interest with God, more than all the angels of heaven, insomuch that God delights to pardon the greatest of sinners for Christ's sake. Therefore in prayer conceive of God as a great, an infinitely great God, and as a God in Christ. Look on God through Christ, keeping the humbling sense of your own distance and provocation; look upon God as thro' Christ the most compassionate fondest Father in the world; if he give thee not *every thing* thou thus askest, it proceeds not from his unwillingness to give, but thine unfitness to receive.

Sixthly, There are temptations with reference to self-murder. Satan many times tempts people, particularly those that are coming to Christ, he throws them down and tares them, urging them to tare themselves to pieces, to make away themselves, and cut off the thread of their own life. This is a subject I seldom or never took occasion to speak in this manner upon; but now I think it the more necessary that we are living in a time, wherein we are compassed about with awful instances of professors being left under the power, and swallowed up with the violence of this temptation; yea such instances thereof, as have perhaps made the hearts of many here present to *tremble*. And since what hath been may be, and not knowing but in such a great company as is here, some one or other may be under such temptations, I would offer these following *advices* shortly, to *fortify* you against these assaults.

1. Consider that self-murder is a sin against the very light of nature, and the very letter of the law of God, *Thou shalt not kill*; and you may be sure that no thought of this sort that enters into your heart, can be from God, for it hath the very image of the devil upon it; *he was a murderer from the beginning*.

2. Yield not to the tempter; for tho' this is a temptation incident to God's people, insomuch that perhaps there are few of them that have not been thus tempted, as our Lord Jesus himself was, to whom the devil said, *Cast thy self down from the pinnacle of the temple*; yet we read of no saint in Scripture that yielded to the

the tempter. We are therein told of none but wicked wretches that destroyed themselves, such as *Saul, Achitophel, and Judas*; and sure you would not desire to be like them.

3. Consider the contrary practice of the saints in Scripture, both in their best and worst time. Old *Simeon* got an armful of Christ, and did he now attempt to cut off his own life, that he might get away to heaven? No, he wishes to be away, but he puts himself in God's will; *Now lettest thou thy servant depart in peace.* *Paul* is wrapt up to the third heaven, and his desire of death must have been very great; yet he is content to stay till he was dissolved. Again, on the other hand, if pains of body, and terrors of mind, might contribute to strengthen such a temptation, *Job* did not want his share of both; yet instead of putting a period to his own days, though indeed he cursed the day of his birth, and wished for the day of his death, yet he says, *All the days of my appointed time will I wait, till my change come.*

4. Consider that by such horrid suggestions as these, you are tempted to assume to yourself a prerogative that belongs to God only, *Deut. 32. 39.* It is he that lives for ever and ever, that says, *I kill and I make alive, I wound and I heal.* Your life is not your own to dispose of, and as you cannot lengthen your life, so you may not shorten it. Therefore,

5. When you are thus tempted, keep not the devil's counsels, nor be thou his secretary; go to some faithful minister, or experienced Christian, and tell them how you are tempted; for this temptation is partly conquered, when it is revealed.

6. These who think they shall be damned and go to hell when they die, it is the greatest madness in the world for them to hasten their death. That the fear of hell should make them leap into hell, is so contrary to all common sense, that it is a wonder that any one should so much cease to be a man, not to say a Christian, as to do a thing so contrary to nature, and much more to grace. Let me ask you, can you endure to be among blasphemers? Can you endure to blaspheme God yourself for a year together, or an hour, and to spend it all in cursing and blaspheming? If thy soul abhor this, why will you leap into hell, a place of everlasting blasphemy? I read of one, who having been a long time tempted to make away herself, at last resolved to do it, for the thoughts of the torments of hell were not prevalent enough to deter her; but as she was going to destroy herself, it was brought to her mind, that in hell she should blaspheme God for ever, which she abhorring to do, upon that very account forbore. If you were to be only in a state of horror and torment it were sad enough; but, for thee to

put thyself into a state of blasphemy, how canst thou endure to think of it ?

7. Take heed of fighting against Satan with human reason, for this *Leviathan* laughs at the shaking of this *spear*, his scales are too close to be pierced by it : But take the sword of the Spirit, which is the Word of God, which divides between the joints and the marrow, say to Satan, *It is written, thou shalt not kill.*

8. Pray, pray much ; for the sword of the Spirit must be wielded by the skilful arm of the Spirit. If thou goest out in confidence of thy being able to manage Scripture by thy own strength and skill, it will fare with thee as it did these, *Acts 19. 15, 16. They thought to cast out devils by the name of Jesus, but the devil rent and wounded them, and made them to fly, saying Paul, I know, and Jesus I know, but who are ye ?*

The great argument that the devil uses to persuade thee to self-murder, is by persuading thee that thou art a reprobate ; but thou mayest consider that Satan cannot know that thou art a reprobate : Was Satan, think you, on God's council when he made his eternal decrees ? Satan, who is not so much as one of God's hir'd servants, but a slave and a malefactor kept in chains, he is so far from being of God's council, that he is not so much as one of his family. If thou sayest thy conscience tells thee that thou art a reprobate, know that no man living can tell who are reprobates, nor can any man know himself to be a reprobate, except he hath committed the sin against the Holy Ghost, which no man hath committed, that is sorry to think that he hath committed it ; *for it is impossible that such a man should be renewed either by, or to repentance,* Heb. 6. 6.

You that walk in darkness, and see no light, that are haunted with these temptations, consider what a God we have to do with ; we serve such a great Lord, that all the monarchs of the world are beggars to him ; and such a gracious Father is our God, that the tenderest parents in the world, and your dearest friends, are tyrants ; yea, wolves and tygers compared to him. And if we should provoke them, as we provoke him, and they could as easily crush us as God can, we would quickly find that their tenderest mercies are cruelty ; whereas the several providences of God will be to thee not like the *gall of asses*, bitter and deadly, but like God's *rubarb and aloes*, by which thine iniquity shall be purged, *and all the fruit of it shall be to take away thy sin* ; and tho' for the present the afflicting hand of God upon thee, is not joyous but grievous, yet if thou art exercis'd thereby, it will bring forth in thee the quiet fruit of righteousness. Lay aside therefore your fears of hell, and hard thoughts of God.

But

But now, to add no more particulars, let me exhort you, and all that hear me, to come to our Lord Jesus Christ whatever opposition from hell stands in your way ; and tho' the devil should throw you down and tare you as you are coming, yet Christ will lift you up and heal you. O what ails the world at our Lord Jesus ? Will you tell me, sinner, what ails you at Christ ? what ails you at his person ? is he not the *brightness of the Father's glory, and the chief among ten thousand* ? Is he not the *rose of paradise*, the heart of heaven ? What ails you at his offices ? Is he not a prophet that can teach you, a priest that can atone for you, a king that can conquer for you ? What ails you at his relations ? is he not a shepherd to feed you, a physician to heal you, a father to pity you, a husband to cherish you ? What ails you at his doing to fulfil the law for you, or his dying to satisfy justice for you ? What ails you at his yoke, is not his yoke easy and his burden light, his ways pleasantness and his paths peace ? What ails you at his grace and glory ? What ails you at him Sirs ? O ! is he not worth your while, tho' you should run through hell to come to him ? Is there not a heart in all this company that would fain be at him ? Alas ! would you rather go to the devil than come to Christ. That a comely Jesus cannot get two or three hearts in all this company, O pity, pity ! and a thousand pities, that the beauty of the godhead cannot get a lover ! Will you all be so mad as to run by Christ to other lovers, while he begs your love, as if he were upon his knees, and sends us to pray you in his stead to be reconciled with him, and come to him ? And therefore, Sirs, in his blessed name I pray you, go not by him. I beg it as the *best favour* you can do to my master and me, that you come to him. I beseech you by the mercies of God, and by the bowels of Christ, that you come to him ; he will *welcome* the worst of you that will come to him, & if you but *strive* to stretch the wither'd hand, or put out the wither'd heart toward him, he will help you to it, and embrace you with hand and heart both. He is content to come to you on any terms, and will you not come to him ? He stands at the door of your heart, and waits that you'll but allow him to come in, and let him have access. I have you a hard heart, he would be in to soften it ? are you pleased ? I have you a filthy heart, he would be in to wash it ? are you content ? I have you a wicked heart, he would be in to renew it ? are you satisfied ? If you will not come to him, will you let him come to you, that he may make you willing ? Consider what is a coming. O is not a day of calamity coming, & why will you not come to Christ ? Is not a day of death coming, and why will you not come to him ? Is not a day of judgment coming ? and why

will you not come to him? Or why come you to any thing else? Why come you to ordinances, if you will not come to Christ, for he is the life of ordinances? Why come you to sermons, if you come not to Christ, who is the substance of all sermons? Why come you to a communion-table, if you will not come to Christ, for he is the heart of the communion? Why do you hope for heaven, if you will not come to Christ, for he is the all of heaven, the heaven of heavens? A thousand heavens are lighter than a feather when laid in the balance with him. Had I the tongue of a seraphim, I could not commend him enough to you; but O may he commend himself to your heart, and cause you to throw your immortal soul into his saving arms, notwithstanding all the discouraging temptations of Satan, and whatever objections & oppositions stand in the way of your coming to him.

The Self-humbling, and CHRIST-exalting Influence of DIVINE DISCOVERIES.

Opened in a SERMON preached July 13, 1729. immediately after the Celebration of the Sacrament of the LORD'S SUPPER, at *Dunfermline*.

By the Rev. Mr. RALPH ERSKINE.

JOHN iv. 29.

Come, see a Man which told me all things that ever I did; Is not this the Christ?

IF our glorious Lord Jesus has been here present this day, conversing with us as he did with the woman of *Samaria*, discovering us to ourselves, and discovering himself to us; if he hath been telling us what vile sinners we are, and what a glorious Saviour he is, so as *the entrance of his word hath given light to us*, to see our blackness on the one side, and his beauty on the other: surely it cannot but lead us to some such self-condemning and Christ commending exercise, as here this woman is employed in, *Come, see a man that told me all things that ever I did; is not this the Christ?*

In the preceding part of this chapter, there stands recorded a very notable conversation betwixt Christ and this woman, the particulars whereof are too many to be considered at this time, tho' some

some of them may fall in our way when we speak of the circumstances of her conversion : Only in the general, our Lord Jesus, as a wearied traveller, sitting down by *Jacob's well*, and this woman coming to draw water, he asks a drink from her, both to quench his thirst, and to take occasion of conferring with her, with a design of mercy to her soul. She apprehending him to be a *Jew*, refuses to give him a drink, upon an old quarrel that was between the *Jews* and the *Samaritans*, whereupon Christ shews her how she mistook her own mercy, and that he had better water to give her than that which she refused to give him, *ψ. 10.* and that if she knew what a valuable mercy were at her hand, she would have turn'd a supplicant to him, and not suffer him to be so to her. But she still reasoning against his offer, he points out further the excellency of what he offered, *ψ. 13, 14.* This raised some natural desire in her : But our Lord resolving to take hold of her heart, and knowing that the richest offer of his grace in the world, will work no desire in the heart of sinners, further than what is natural and carnal, unless he *effectually* convince them of their *sin* and *miser*y, and *savingly* manifest himself to them ; therefore he takes this method with her. *1st*, He convinces her of her *sin* and *miser*y, and lets her understand that he knew all the lewdness and wickedness she was *guilty* of, by shewing her how *many adulteries* she was chargeable with, *ψ. 18.* Whereupon she begins to conceive some high opinion of him as a prophet, and to seek further light from him with reference to the *right way* of worshipping God, there being controversies about religious matters, and *particularly* about the place of publick worship, betwixt the *Jews* and the *Samaritans*. And indeed the woman's discourse here shews, that tho' she was a profane *Samaritan*, yet she was no *ignoramus*. She had knowledge of the *controversy of the day* she lived in, and the grounds thereof, and knew that the *Messias* was to come ; yet her knowledge was no sanctified knowledge. But now her conscience being awakened with a sense of sin, she is solicitous to have her mind informed, and accordingly is instructed at large by our Lord Jesus, both concerning the place and the right manner of worshipping God. And thus from one thing to another he leads her on, until, *2^{dly}*, He manifests himself to her, *ψ. 26.* Christ's discourse about the change of religion that was to take place, brought the woman to mind of the *Messiah's* coming ; *I know*, says she, *that Messiah cometh, which is called Christ ; when he is come, he will tell us all things :* And while she is expressing her high estimation of, and great desire after this coming *Messias*, Jesus says unto her, *I that speak unto thee am he.* Christ may be present

with people, and speaking to them, and yet they can't know it, till he reveals himself, as here he did to this woman, *I that speak unto thee am he.*

No sooner did Christ thus kindly discover himself to her, than immediately this sweet conference is broken up, by the return of the disciples, who had *gone to the city to buy meat*, ψ . 8. The sweetest fellowship with Christ on the earth is but of a short duration, and the most pleasant manifestations may meet with *very sudden* interruptions, and poor sinners may have such a sweet time in Christ's company, that even the *company* of disciples may be an interruption to it.

But now how she was affected with this discovery is evident from two things. *1st*, She forgets her errand that she came upon; she left her water-pot, and went her way. Having got a taste of *the excellency* of Christ, and a drink of the living water that he gave her, she minds no other water now, nay, she forgets all other things that before were in a great esteem with her. *2dly*, She spreads the name and fame of Christ in the place where she dwelt, *Come see a man*, says she, *that told me all things that ever I did; is not this the Christ?* Wherein we may notice, 1. An invitation, *Come see a man*; having got a taste of his goodness, she would have the men of the city to taste and see with her. 2. A commendation, a man *that told me all things that ever I did*; a man that hath discovered himself to be God as well as man, in that he hath ript up my heart and life. He had discover'd her lewdness to her, and thereby represented all other things to her as seen by him. There is here implied a humble sense she had of her sinfulness, which Christ hath given her a discovery and conviction of, and by his searching word she understood that he was the searcher of hearts, and so commends him as *a man that told her all things that ever she did*. 3. A conclusion, by way of interrogation and expostulation, *Is not this the Christ?* importing no manner of doubt about it in her own breast, but a strong affirmation pointing at him unto them. He had told her what she was, and in this glass she saw her own vileness; and he had told her what he was, and in this glass she saw his glory, and by both these means he had discovered himself to be the true *Messias*, the God-man, the promised *Emanuel*, *God with us*; and her heart being full of Christ, and overflowing with the living water of the Spirit that he had given her, it vented itself and ran over in his praise and commendation unto others, *Come see a man that told me all things than ever I did; Is not this the Christ?* I shall endeavour some further explication of this text, upon a note of doctrine. Passing over many others, what I mainly fixt upon is,

Obs.

Obf. *That thofe faving discoveries of Chrift, that make perfons to condemn and abafe themfelves to the loweft, lead them at the fame time to commend and exalt Chrift to the higheft.*

Self-searching, foul-humbling, and fin-discovering manifeftations, iffue in Chrift-exalting commendations. I think 'tis remarkable in this woman, that kindly humiliation did not take place in her, till after that Chrift had clearly manifefted himfelf to her, faying, *I that fpeak unto thee am he.* 'Tis true, when Chrift firft difcovered her wickednefs and lewdnefs to her, ſhe appeared to be ſelf-condemned and convicted, faying, *I perceive that thou art a prophet*, and a true prophet indeed, that can tell me how many acts of lewdnefs I have been guilty of; her confcience flying in her face, and ſubſcribing to the truth of what he told her: But yet, as her firft conviction appear'd to be very partial and weak, in that (as ſome think, ſhe ſeem'd to ſhift any difcourſe about her own vileneſs, and ſtarted a queſtion about a national difference betwixt the *Jews* and *Samaritans*, to divert that ſubject concerning her baſeneſs; ſo I think, we may conclude, that her convictions before were very legal, driving her rather to her works and duties than to Chrift, for inſtantly ſhe falls a queſtioning him about the means of worſhipping God, as if when now ſhe was convinced of her ſin againſt God, her only way of getting to his favour, was by endeavouring to pleaſe him by her duties of worſhip, whom ſhe had diſpleaſed by her wickedneſs and lewdneſs. And indeed the firſt thing that an awakened confcience looks to, is the law, *the firſt husband*. But now when once Chrift diſcovers and manifeſts himſelf to her, ſhe is kindly humbled unto a ſenſe of her vileneſs, yea, and of all heart and life-wickedneſs repreſented to her under that, and in the light wherein Chrift diſcovered himſelf, ſhe ſaw all her abominations; *he told me all things that ever I did*. She is now humbled and abaſed to the loweſt. Why? her ſenſe of ſin is not now partial, but full, *He told me all things that ever I did*. Neither is it now legal, but evangelical; for it was now in the glaſs of a ſaving manifeſtation, in the glaſs wherein Chrift diſcovered his glory and excellency, that ſhe ſaw all her own filthineſs & deformity. And while ſhe is thus debaſed and humbled by the diſcovery of Chrift, how does ſhe commend and exalt him to the higheſt? She commends him to her neighbour-citizens and puts the greateſt honour upon him, both as he is the true God incarnate, that by his omnifcient eye could ſee, and ſo declare to her, *all that ever ſhe did*, and as he is the true *Meſſias*, the anointed of God, *Is not this the Chriſt?* The truth of this doctrine might be cleared from many ſcripture-paſſages, That ſav-

ing discoveries of Christ tend to make persons condemn and debase themselves, and to commend and exalt Christ; as it was with *Job*, chap. 40. *ψ.* 4, 5. God having manifested his glory, he cried out, *Behold I am vile, what shall I answer thee? I will lay my hand upon my mouth*, as being unworthy to speak in the presence of such a great and glorious one; therefore he adds, *Once have I spoken, but I will not answer, yea twice, but I will proceed no further*; and *Job* 42. 5, 6. See how the discovery of Christ makes the Prophet *Isaiab* to condemn and debase himself to the lowest, and to commend and exalt Christ to the highest, *Isa.* 6. 1, 5. He saw the Lord sitting upon a throne high and lifted up, and his train filling the temple; then says he, *Woe is me, for I am undone, because I am a man of unclean lips, and I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips; for mine eyes have seen the King, the Lord of Hosts.* To this purpose we may see *Isa.* 45. 22. and downward, *Look to me and be saved, all ye ends of the earth, for I am God and there is none else.* Why, what will issue upon that saving sight of Christ? both the abasing of himself, *ψ.* 23. *To him every knee shall bow*, and the high commendation and exaltation of Christ, *Surely*, ver. 24, 25. *shall one say, in the Lord have I righteousness and strength; in him shall all the seed of Israel be justified, and shall glory.* But passing many other proofs, I suppose it will be found evident in the experience of all faints, that every manifestation and discovery of Christ tends to work both these effects at the same time, even to make them condemn and debase themselves to the lowest, and to commend and exalt Christ to the highest. This subject is very large, but I design, for shortning the work, to confine myself especially to the circumstances and effects of the discovery that Christ here gives of himself to the woman of *Samaria* in the following method. I. I shall shew what we are to understand by Christ's manifesting or discovering himself to a person. II. What are these sin-discovering and soul-debasing effects of Christ manifesting himself; or when may one be in case to say, that Christ hath told him all things that ever he did? III. What are these Christ-exalting commendations, wherein such discoveries of Christ vent themselves; and so notice the particular import of what the woman here says, *Come see a man that told me all things that ever I did; is not this the Christ?* IV. I will shew the reasons of the doctrine; whence it is that saving discoveries of Christ have such a self-debasing, and Christ-exalting influence. And then, V. Make application of the whole.

I. I will speak a little of Christ's discovering and manifesting himself to sinners. And here I would confine myself to the circumstances

cumstances of the discovery that he makes of himself to this woman, which wrought this effect in her, and which in most particulars will be found to agree with all the saving manifestations that our Lord makes of himself to his people, either at first conversion, or any renewed visit he makes to them. And here we may notice- 1. Some things relating to the means of the discovery that Christ makes of himself to this woman. 2. Some things relating to the manner of it.

1st, There are some things in the context relating to the means of this discovery. 1. One of the more remote means was his taking occasion to come to a place where she was also to come, and so casting himself in her way as it were. This is noticed very remarkably, *ψ. 4.* of this *chapter*, where it is said, *He must needs go through Samaria.* Whatever other reasons there were for his going this way, here was a special one; he must needs meet this woman, and with those *Samaritans* (whom on this occasion) he converted to the faith. If there be but one soul that Christ hath an errand to, the world will not keep him away from the place where that soul is. He must needs go through that place; there is a sweet necessity he lies under; he must needs bring a gospel ministry there, he must needs bring gospel ordinances where he has any souls to meet with, and discover himself savingly unto. They to whom Christ hath discover'd himself, will find a merciful providence exercised about them, in his ordering their lot so, that either they are brought to the place where Christ and his ordinances are, or Christ and his ordinances come to the place where they are. A second more remote means of this discovery is our Lord's ordering matters so as her secular errand is made the occasion of her spiritual good and advantage, *ψ. 7.* *There comes this woman of Samaria to draw water.* Providence may be intending much mercy to those who are both very unworthy of it, and very unconcerned about it. Little was this sinful woman minding any other thing but to draw water, yet a happy providence made her to meet with the Saviour of sinners. Some have come to ordinances, as this woman did to *Jacob's well*, with no other view, save upon some secular and carnal errand; may be to draw the water of damnation to themselves, or to draw in some applause to themselves amongst their neighbours, or merely from custom and curiosity, little minding any saving good, which yet the Lord hath prevented them with. A third mean of this discovery is, Christ falls a discoursing with her, and upon occasion of his seeking and her refusing him a drink of water, he shews his pity and compassion her, as an ignorant and unsensible sinner, having no knowledge

or sense of her real want and necessity with respect to that *better water which he had to give*; and particularly he lets her know, that *the well of living water was in his hand*, to dispense as he pleased; and that as he offers his grace before we ask it, so he will not refuse it to them who ask it upon his offer and promise. *If thou hadst known, thou wouldst have asked, and I would have given thee living water*; and besides, in his discourse, he commends his water to her, *ψ. 14.* his gifts, his graces, his Spirit, as a well above all wells, *a well of water springing up to everlasting life*, and all to be freely dispensed by way of gift and donation; and this is the way he deals still with sinners in the free dispensation of the gospel. A fourth mean of this discovery, is his working a work of conviction upon her conscience, by shewing her transgressions to her, and setting her sin in order before her, *ψ. 18.* and thereby discovering his prophetic office to her, and raising some esteem of him as a prophet, *ψ. 19.* *The freest offers* do not prevail with *sinners*, till they be convinced of their sinfulness and misery. Indeed it is not every sight of sin that will *convince* the sinner; but Christ must set it home upon the *conscience*, and discover sin to them marked by his *all-seeing eye*, his *all-searching eye*; for the woman knew pretty well how matters were with her, and yet without any due sense; till he ript up her *bosom*, and made her *see* and *understand* that all her sins were *naked and open unto the eye of him with whom she had now to do*; and tho' she did not yet know him to be the Christ, yet she begins to have some high tho't of him as a prophet that had the *mind of God*, and by whom God was discovering her sinfulness to her. But it does not appear as yet that she perceived any thing in him above ordinary prophets; so gradually, by little and little, did he manifest himself to her. Only it is evident here, that in God's order & method of working effectually on the hearts of sinners, as there is a discovery of sin that goes before a discovery of Christ, without which persons do not see their need of Christ; so the more that Christ discovers sin, and touches the sinner's heart therewith, it breeds the more respect and estimation of him, tho' it may be very weak and low at first. A fifth mean of this discovery is his opening up to her the nature of true spiritual and acceptable worship, *ψ. 21, 22, 23, 24.* Here he gives her such instruction, as might tend to let her see that he was a prophet above all prophets, that knew what changes were quickly to fall out with reference to the place of religious worship, and what sort of worship God would have, what a spirit he is, and what spiritual service he requires. As faith comes by hearing, so discoveries of Christ, the glorious object of faith, come by the means of instruction and di-

vine teaching, such as the Lord Jesus here gives this woman. And this paves a way to a sixth mean of this discovery, namely, his working in her heart a kindly remembrance of an high esteem of the *Messias*, ver. 25. The longer she conversed with Christ she is the more enamoured with him. Tho' he disclaimed the *Samaritan* worship, and declared they had no warrant for their religion; yet having at the same time shewed that the *Jewish* worship was warrantable by the word of God, though yet their temporary *way of worship* was what his coming to the world was to give a burial to, and to abolish, upon which a more excellent way of worshipping God was to succeed; I say, the more she hears him speak, the more she is enamoured with his discourse, and filled with great respect and regard to the *Messias*, from whom she expected such instructions as that; *I know that Messias comes, which is called Christ; when he is come, he will tell us all things*; not knowing as yet that she was speaking to him. She is speaking with a very high estimation of him, as the great teacher of his church, that would fully reveal the counsel of God concerning his service and means of salvation. And now the woman by these means being brought to have precious thoughts of Christ, and to give such a notable evidence of her faith concerning him, then he discovered himself, saying, *I that speak unto thee am he*: When people are brought to sublime thoughts of Christ, then it is certain Christ is not far off from them: Thus ye have the means. We shall,

2dly, Notice the manner of the discovery that Christ makes of himself; *I that speak unto thee am he*. Here is a clear manifestation and revelation that Christ himself gives of himself, *I that speak unto thee am he*. It is not ordinary for Christ to give such testimony of himself, there must be some rare thing here; for when *John's* disciples came to ask him, *Art thou he that shall come, or may we look for another?* he does not say, *I that speak unto thee, am he*; nay, but *go tell John what ye hear and see; the blind receive their sight, the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed, the deaf hear, the dead are raised up, and the poor have the gospel preached to them*; let him draw the conclusion from these premises whether I am he or not; but here *Matth. 11. 5.* he gives us as clear a discovery of himself as in all the book of God, out of his own mouth. We know *Peter* gave a clear testimony, *Thou art Christ, the Son of the living God*; the Father gave a great testimony to him, *This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased*. But that Christ gave as clear a testimony of himself is rarely to be found in all the New Testament: Yea, this discovery of himself is the more remarkable, because he forbade his disciples at that time to tell expressly who he was; and when

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Pilate, and *Herod*, and others ask him *who art thou*? he either gave them a very dark answer, or none at all. Christ is not lavish of his commendations in this manner; therefore there is some speciality here, and yet there is something in the manner of Christ's manifesting himself to her that is common to all the children of God, to whom he savingly manifests himself.

1. It was in a word, a home word spoken to her heart, that he discovered himself, *I that speak unto thee am he*. It was by speaking to her that he manifested himself; so it is in the word that he discovers himself to his own, that *word* that comes into the ear of others, comes into their heart; the joyful sound goes thro' the very soul of the man, in a secret indiscernible manner. This is plain in the case of this woman, both with respect to the *word* that he spake for her conviction to discover her sin, and in the *word* that he spake for her consolation discovering himself as the Saviour. In the former he had said, *I know this is not thy husband that thou hast*; the *word* went to her heart, that is a true *word*, says she, spoken by a true prophet, for I am living in *whoredom*. Thus God, in dealing with sinners by his *word* externally, makes it have an internal sound in the heart; he whispers in the ear of a sinner, and makes him think, O that is very true, I am just guilty of yon sin, I cannot reclaim against what the minister says, all is true, I must take with the charge of God's *word*: So with respect to the latter, when he discovers himself savingly, it is in the *word* of grace, it comes into the ear, but the finger of God sets it down to the heart, the *God that commanded light to shine out of darkness shines into the heart*; and it is in the glass of the *word* that this light shines, *beholding, as in a glass, the glory of the Lord*.

2. It was a particular discovery, *I that speak unto thee am he*; to thee; so when God in Christ discovers himself, it is a particular discovery, *he calls his own sheep by name*, John 10. 3. As the *word* of conviction is particular, so the *word* of grace is particular, as if God were dealing with none other but that person. O has he spoken to thee, man, to thee, woman, in particular, by his *word*, and set it home upon thy heart?

3. It was an immediate discovery he himself made of himself. This indeed is not to be expected in the manner that the woman here was privileged with: But tho' it is not now in an immediate, but in a mediate way; yet where he savingly manifests himself, he takes the means in his own hand, and makes the soul find that it is none other but himself that is dealing with it; it is not the voice of men or ministers, but the voice of God that it hears, *1 Thess. ii. 13*. The *word* comes with such life, light and majesty, that

that the soul finds it is indeed the word of God, it has a heavenly relish with it. And hence,

4. It was a clear and demonstrative discovery; *I am he*, says Christ to the woman. Saving discoveries are by way of demonstration, as the word imports, *John 16. 9*. Thus he manifests himself to his people, as he does not manifest himself to the world, who remain encompass'd and envelop'd with the clouds and mists of gross darkness and ignorance amidst all the literal knowledge they enjoyed.

5. It was a gradual discovery, by little and little, from one step to another, till he made all his glory pass before this woman; even so where he manifests himself savingly, he does it gradually; *his goings forth are prepared as the morning*. The work that is very sudden, seldom proves very sound. It is observed of the bad ground, that the seed sown did suddenly spring up. God's ordinary way of manifesting himself is gradual; the *path of the just shines more and more unto the perfect day*. Then,

6. It was a sensible discovery that he gave of himself to this woman; her *time was a time of love*. After he had let her see that she was lying in her blood, and in the puddle of pollution, and after he had filled her heart with precious thoughts of the *Messias*, the Deliverer, he would no longer hide himself from her; O how sweetly and sensibly does he manifest himself to his people, when they are apt to think he is far from them! As this woman was speaking of the *Messias* as the glorious person whom she wist not if ever she would have the happiness to see, *Behold*, says Christ, *I that speak unto thee am he*. O says the soul, will ever I get a sight of Christ, I know not if ever I'll be so happy; why then usually he lets them know he is not far off.

7. It was a wonderful discovery he made of himself to this woman, there were many wonders in it: And indeed whenever Christ manifests himself to any soul, it will see some such like wonders as she saw. O wonderful, might she say, is he speaking to me, such a poor woman as I am, and such a base woman as I have been! Why, as there was no likeness or relation betwixt him and her, but on the contrary a stated enmity and alienation, for the *Jews* had no dealing with the *Samaritans*, yea but he must deal with her, though she was no good woman; nay, a common whore, lying in whoredom. O wonderful, though ye were never such a great sinner, yet Christ is content to speak to you, and to speak with you, for your everlasting good; and it is an ill tale that may not be heard; will ye allow Christ to speak to you? Was it not wonderful that Christ should speak to this woman, in such a manner

ner as he did? How kindly does he speak to her, that he might win her heart with his love, and kill her with kindness; One might have thought he would call her a base filthy devil, as it was said to himself most blasphemously, *Say we not well, thou art a Samaritan, and hast a devil*; it was true of this woman of Samaria, she was a Samaritan that had a filthy devil; yea the Jews took all the Samaritans for incarnate devils, but does Christ call her so? Nay, and it adds to the wonder of his discovering himself to her, that she was a slihter of Christ, he was undervalued by her, *Art thou greater than our father Jacob*, says she, *v. 12.* yea, she refused him a drink of cold water; yet he bears with all these affronts, and manifests himself to her, even to her. O wonderful! do not several such wonders take place, when the Lord comes to speak and manifest himself to you, O believers, O sinners, are there not wonders enough to be observed about this glorious person's shewing himself? He might dwell in heaven to all eternity, as he dwelt in heaven from all eternity, and be for ever happy; the Father was good company to him, and he needed none of your company, he had infinite delight in himself, more than in all his creatures; yet for all this, that he should speak and shew himself to you, how wonderful is it? His discoveries are wonderful, in that he seeks nothing of us: 'Tis true he made the fashion of seeking a drink of water from this woman, but that was only by the by, he got meat and drink enough when he got the woman to himself, the great thing he was seeking was to get the woman divorced from all her base husbands, and married to himself, yea betrothed to him for ever; yea, Christ's visits to some may be wonderful, not only to the sinner that gets them, but to the saints and disciples that see or hear tell of them. We are told *v. 27.* here, that *the disciples, when they came, marvelled that he talked with that woman*; tho' they durst not challenge him, yet it was matter of offence to them that he so freely conversed with her. Christ can demean himself, and stoop so low to a poor sinner as is marvellous to flesh and blood; there is more kindness and humility in him alone, than in all his friends. They being advanced by grace, are apt to forget themselves, and to become so proud as to despise others, tho' they themselves were once lifted out of the dungeon, and chosen out of the dust. But then,

Sabbly, It was a powerful discovery that he made of himself to this woman, as appears by the gracious effects thereof. Now her heart goes off all things else, she forgets her *water-pot*, her mind is set upon some greater things, she ran away to the city, that the might invite others to follow him, who had so wonderfully mani-

manifested himself to her ; and indeed all saving manifestations have a power attending them. The Gospel comes not in *word only, but in power* ; Christ's word has a drawing power. He draws with loving-kindness, while grace and love is poured from his lips. This word, wherein he visits the soul, has a winning power that wins the heart from all things, and makes Christ all in all. And his manifestations have a sanctifying, transforming power ; *Beholding his glory, we are changed into the same image* ; and especially they lead to self-debasing and Christ-exalting exercise. Which brings me to the

1st Head proposed, namely, What are these sin-discovering and soul-debasing effects of Christ's manifesting himself ? or when may one be in case to say, *He told me all things that ever I did* ? 'Tis true, this is a part of what the woman spoke to Christ's commendation, as an all-knowing God, as well as to her own condemnation, as a vile sinner, brought under a kindly self-debasement, by the discovery she had of Christ, both as a kindly Reprover, and a merciful Redeemer, a Christ, a Saviour. To give light to this particular, I shall only touch at this, How all things are told, when only some things seem to be told ? How can this woman say, *he told me all things that ever I did*, when yet it was only her whoredom and adultery that he discovered ? or when may the discovery that Christ makes of himself be so humbling and abasing, that when but a small part is mentioned, yet *all that ever we did* is discovered ? I answer, 1st, It may be said consequentially, *he told me all things that ever I did*, that is, by plain consequence, as we may see what the conclusion is when the premises are related, what the root is when the fruit is discovered, and what the fountain is when the streams are discovered. Even so when Christ tells a person what evil fruit he hath brought forth, that person may easily infer that he hath told him that he is an evil tree, and by the streams of wickedness in the life he leads people thus to the fountain of wickedness in the heart & nature. When he tells one of the black smoke that comes out of the chimney of his heart, he tells also by plain consequence that there is a fire of corruption within, and then is one abased to self-abhorence, when by the discovery of one sin, in the light of a gracious manifestation, he is led in a spiritually argumentative way to infer his total deprivation both in nature and practice ; he may say consequentially at least, *he told me all things that ever I did*. 2^{dly}, It may be said inclusively and virtually, *he told me all things that ever I did* ; as *he that offends in one point of the law, is guilty of all*, Jam. 2. 10. in regard of his counteracting the authority that enjoins all ; so he that is humbled

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deeply for any one sin, may see therein that he hath broken all the commands of God, and may be said in a part to have seen the whole. In transgressing of one command, he may see his being a transgressor of all the commands of God, and a continual transgressor thereof in thought, word, and deed, because, as *every imagination of the heart is evil, and evil continually, so out of the heart, as out of a bitter fountain, proceed evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, fornications, thefts, false-witnessing, blasphemy, and all other pollutions beside.* All the sins of people are included, inclosed, connected together as links in a chain, so that when one link is seen, the whole chain may be said to be seen. Suppose a chain whereof some links are above the ground, and all the rest of it hanging down into a dark and deep pit, when the upper links are seen in their connection with the whole, then one may be said to have seen all, because all are included and inclosed in what he saw. 3dly, It may be said potentially, *he told me all things that ever I did,* because by that one instance he gave a proof of his ability so to do. He that could tell me this, could tell me all; he that could observe this, hath observed all that ever I did, and can as easily tell me all as tell me a part; for none but the searcher of hearts, that sees all my goings, could have told me this. He that can save to the utmost, can see to the outermost. 4thly, It may be said representatively *he told me all things that ever I did;* for this discovery represented all other things, all my other sins. This representation is like that which is made in a mirror; if one set a looking-glass before you to see a Spot in your face, when you see that, at the same time you see all the spots there; so when Christ sets the glass of his word before you, to see such a particular spot and blot, in the same glass you have a view and representation of all the spots and all the blemishes of your heart and way: For we may conceive this representation like that which is made in a map; if one shew you, for example, a particular city in the map of the world, why at the same time he presents you to all the terraqueous globe, the whole world at one glance; so here, when in the light of the Spirit, Christ discovers to you one sin, in the same map you see the whole world of wickedness a world of atheism, enmity, unbelief, pride, self, and other plagues innumerable. Thus in the day of gracious manifestation, wherein Christ the Sun of righteousness discovers himself, the sinner that is privileged with it, cannot but see a black sight of himself, which makes him say in effect, *He told me all the ill's that ever I did,* he told me what I have been, and what I have done, that I have been a sinner in *Adam*, and a trans-

transgressor from the womb, that I have done evil as I could, and given innumerable instances of a carnal mind, which is enmity against God, and of an unbelieving heart, which is enmity against Christ, and of resistance to the motions of heaven, which is enmity against the Holy Ghost. When the sun shines into a dark house by a small window, the beams discover innumerable motes & hovering particles of dust in that part of the house where the light is shining, by which we are made to *see & understand*, that the whole house is full of motes and dust; even so here, when Christ the sun of righteousness appears, and shines in upon the dark dungeon of a sinner's heart, and discovers any motes and blots that are there, then it appears that the whole house, the whole heart and nature, is full of the dust and smoke of hell, which makes the soul cry out with *Job, Behold I am vile*; and hence the more precious that Christ appears in any man's eye, the more vile does he appear in his own eye, and debase himself to the lowest; he thinks himself the most loathsome sinner that ever was seen, when Christ tells him all that ever he did. So much shall suffice as to the soul-debasing effects of Christ manifesting himself, imported in that expression, *He told me all things that ever I did*; at one glance he gave me a view of all the sins that ever I was guilty of.

The III^d Head proposed was to shew, What are these Christ-exalting commendations wherein such discoveries of Christ vent themselves, and which are imported in the words of the *woman* here, *Come see a man that told me all things that ever I did, is not this the Christ?* Here, confining myself to the matter and the manner of the commendation in the text, notice

Ist, The matter of the commendation, or in what respects she commends Christ to her neighbours; and it is particularly in two respects which are very comprehensive. (1.) She commends him in his natures. (2.) In his offices.

(1.) In his natures, as the man-god, or the god-man, that told me all things that ever I did. Here is his human nature; but O she saw his divinity through the vail of his humanity; *He told me all things that ever I did*, and gave me thus an infallible proof of his being the supreme God. She was neither an *Arian* nor a *Socinian*, neither will any be so that gets such a discovery of Christ as she got. And surely the blasphemous *Arians* of our day bewray their ignorance and want of true learning and spiritual knowledge, such as this poor woman had. O but a little glance of Christ's glory can make a poor illiterate woman wiser than the learned *Rabbies* that were never taught of God, and yet think themselves the only wits of the world. Those to whom Christ discovers himself, as

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they will see, so they will commend him to others as God in *our nature*, God manifested in the flesh. Whoever questioned but the Searcher of hearts, that knows all things, is the true and supreme God, that can give laws to bind the heart and consciences of men, and then rip up their hearts to them and tell them all these things wherein they have violated and broken that law in heart or way? Yet Christ is here declared to be such an one, *He told me all things that ever I did*. Why, this can be no more denied, than it can be questioned whether it was the great God, the true and supreme God, that gave out the law upon mount *Sinai*? No body doubts that, say you. Why then it is declared in Scripture that it was this same Jesus that did so, *Psal.* 68. 17, 18. The Lord is among them, as in *Sinai*, in the holy place, *thou hast ascended on high, thou hast led captivity captive, thou hast received gifts for men, even for the rebellious, that the Lord God might dwell amongst them*: And of whom all this is spoken, the Apostle shews, *Eph.* 4. 8. And every believer knows, he told all things that ever I did; he told me all my sins and transgressions of his law, which he gave forth at *Sinai*. By a sanctified sight of some sins, he opened my eyes to see more and more, yea to see all my sins, and that I was nothing but a mass of sin, enmity, and pollution; and thus I saw the revealer to be the true and supreme God, even the eternal Son of God, clothed with human nature, *a man that told me all things that ever I did*, a man that told me what none but God can do, a man that proved himself to be God by an argument of power upon my heart and conscience, an argument drawn from his omniscient eye and driven in upon my heart by his omnipotent hand.

(2.) In his offices he is here commended and exalted, *Is not this the Christ?* that is, is not this the true *Messias* promised, prophesied of in the Old Testament? This is her *Eureka*, like that, *John* 1. 45. *We have found him, of whom Moses in the law and the prophets did write*; even so I have found him, might she say, he hath been with me, and I have been with him. He hath spoken to me, and I have spoken to him. He hath not only told me what I am, and what I have been, and what I have done, but told me what he is, and I have found him to be God as well as man. And who is he then, but the promised *Emanuel*, *God with us, is not this Christ?* that is, the anointed of God, to the saving offices of prophet, priest, and king; this word *Christ* especially imports, and has a particular reference to. He is anointed as a prophet, to declare the mind of God; anointed as a priest, to make reconciliation with God; and anointed as a king, to subdue sinners to God, and make them friends that are enemies to God. *He is anointed with the*

the spirit above measure, Joh. 3. 34. To render him a fit prophet, he hath the *spirit of wisdom and understanding* above measure ; to make him a fit priest, he hath the spirit of love and compassion above measure ; and that he may be a fit king, he hath the spirit of power and government : *Is not this the Christ ?* that is, *the sealed and sent of God*, clothed with a commission from God to seek and save lost sinners, *Joh. 6. 27. Him hath God the father sealed*, that is, authorized, unto this work, according as himself declares, *Isa. 61. 1.* compared with *Luke. 4. 18. Is not this the Christ ?* namely, he that is anointed that he may anoint, *anointed with the oil of gladness above his fellows.* Believers are said to receive the anointing ; but there is a vast odds betwixt the anointing of Christ, and the anointing of believers, for Christ is the fountain from whom all the streams flow, the sun from whom all the beams of grace shine. Grace in believers is like water in a brook ; but grace in Christ, is like water in the ocean. Grace in the believer is like broken beams, but in Christ it is like the bright center of all light. He received the Spirit of all grace for this very end, to be bestowed upon others. The first *Adam* brought an emptiness on the whole creation, but the second *Adam* came to fill all things and persons, to fill *Jew and Gentile*, that *of his fulness we might receive grace for grace.* The oil of grace and gladness was poured out upon our *Emanuel*, on purpose that he might pour it down upon the barren mountains. Thus we see in what respects he is here commended, or the matter of the commendation. Let us view,

2dly, The manner of the commendation, or in what way she does. We may read, in the bosom of the text, several properties of this exercise of commending and exalting Christ, which saving discoveries of him lead unto. And, (1.) It is an open and publick commendation of Christ, for she went away to the *city*, and says, *O people, come see a man that told me all things that ever I did ; is not this the Christ ?* She being formerly a lewd woman, had given open offence, and open scandal to the citizens, and now, upon the discovery of her sin, and the discovery of the Saviour, she gave as open and ready evidence of her *repentance* and *conversion*, by inviting them all to *come and see* him that had given her a *conviction* of her sin and vileness, and a manifestation of his glory and grace. Saving discoveries of Christ will lead people as openly to glorify and honour him, as they have before openly dishonoured him. (2.) It is an experimental commendation of him ; she commends him from her own experience and feeling, *Come see a man that told me all things that ever I did ;* I have seen his face, and heard his

voice, and felt his power, he has convinced and converted me, therefore from my own feeling and experience, I commend his grace unto you. It is like that, 1 *John* 1. 3. *That which we have seen and heard, declare we unto you, that ye may have fellowship with us.* It was something like that of *David*, *Psal.* 66. 16. *Come and hear, all ye that fear God, and I will tell what he has done for my soul.* Yea, he commends Christ not only to believers, but to others, as you see his resolution is, *Psal.* 51. 13. Upon his getting a new visit, and the Lord's restoring to him *the joy of his salvation*, and upholding him with his free spirit, *Then*, says he, *will I teach transgressors thy ways, and sinners shall be converted unto thee.* Thus *Paul* set forth the abundant grace of God from his own experience, *I was a blasphemer, a persecutor, and injurious; but I obtained mercy, and the grace of our Lord was exceeding abundant, &c.* 1 *Tim.* 1. 13, 14. They that have experience of the things of Christ themselves, will be most zealous in manifesting the things of Christ to others, and in pressing them to come to Christ, as having proof and experience of his grace! and indeed they can best speak of Christ, to whom Christ hath spoken, and *who believe, and therefore speak.* (3.) It is a charitative commendation of Christ. She is now filled with such christian love to others, and particularly to those she was most concerned with, & interested in, that she would have them all drawn to Christ. She said to the men, *Come see a man that told me all things that ever I did.* Perhaps there were some of them she had tempted to sin & wickedness before, now she would have them turned to Christ; a great change. They that have seen Christ cannot but desire that others may see him too, they would have all to come and see. O if all the world would come and see, come and wonder, come and admire him, as *Abraham* commanded his children and servants *to seek and serve the Lord*; so if one that hath got the Discovery of Christ could do it, he would command thousands to come and see him, and serve him. When Christ discovers himself, and speaks into the heart of a man, it makes the man speak good of Christ. Again, a sight of Christ's face smites the soul with a likeness to him in love; and hence the sinner, immediately upon the revelation of Christ, is filled with a *strange love*, a love of complaisance to the saints, and a love of benevolence to the souls of others. (4.) It is a judicious commendation of Christ, that issues from the discovery of Christ. And here several things point out the judgment and wisdom by which she commends Christ unto them. It is evident, from the method she takes, or would have them to take, she is not content that they rest upon her report only, but would have them *taste and*

see themselves : She knew that their love could not terminate satisfyingly upon her testimony ; and therefore would have them come to Christ himself. Again, it is evident, how judicious it was, from her endeavour to *draw them to Christ*, with the very same hook that caught herself. Christ spake many good words to her ; but the first thing that griped her heart, and caught her was this, *He told me all things that ever I did*. His heart-searching and discovering word was the means of her conversion, and she would have them drawn to Christ by the same means, *Come see a man that told me all things that ever I did ; is not this the Christ ?* It is evident also, how judicious it was, from the gradation of her words, or the gradually rising steps of her commendation : She begins somewhat low, *Come see a man* ; she goes on to a higher note, *He told me all things that ever I did* ; and she concludes with the highest commendation of him, *Is not this the Christ ?* Not only God, but God appearing in all his glorious robes of grace, even *Emanuel*, God with us. In a word, it is evident how judicious it is, from the manner of her arguing ; she argues from his telling part of her secret wickedness, *that he told her all, q. d.* he could as easily have told me all things that ever I said, and all things that ever I designed, and all things that ever I thought, as he told me what I did : Yea, I got such a broad look of all my sins in that one glass of a discovery that he gave me, that I can't but own he *told me all things that ever I did*. Again, she argues from the divinity that she saw was joined with his humanity, that he was the true *Messias* ; and hence judiciously infers, *Is not this the Christ ?* She never was at a college to learn how to frame an argument, but having been at Christ's school for a little pleasant while, she there learned some heavenly logick ; can such a man as this be any other but the Christ ? The more clear discovery that any gets of Christ, the more skilful and expert they will be in commending him to others ; as we see in our Apostle *Paul*, after Christ was revealed in him, what clear discoveries did he make of Christ to others, as appears in the *Acts of the Apostles*, and in all his epistles. (5.) It is a pathetick commendation of Christ that issues from the discoveries of him. Her heart is full of Christ, and full of desire to praise, and exalt, and commend him to others, and her heart vents itself in several pathetical expressions. Hence she spake first in a hortatory manner, *Come and see*, says she ; O slip not this opportunity, when such a great sight is to be seen. Next she spake in an assertory manner, she asserts some strange things concerning him, he is a man *that told me all things that ever I did* ; he is a seer and revealer of the secrets of

men, and therefore must be a prophet, and more than a prophet, a revealer of the counsel of God. And, finally, she spake in a questionary and expostulatory manner, *Is not this the Christ?* he can be none else but the true Messias, the Christ of God. She is not content to commend him in one particular, but she must go on and insist in his praise and commendation, and can't think she can commend him enough, *Is not this the Christ?* She makes no question of it herself; and the design of her question is to put it out of question with them. Who can this be but the Christ? How can it be any other but the Christ? They that have met with Christ, and got the heart touched by his grace, it is in a hearty cordial way they speak of him, and commend him to others. The sinner that hath met with a Saviour, O how fain would he trumpet forth his praise if he could. There is something further here that points out the pathetick manner of the commendation, and that is an appeal to them as it were in the bosom of this question, *Is not this the Christ?* I appeal to you, might she say, if it be not so, that he is the Christ, the anointed of God. I can't think but ye must judge of him as I do, and who will not think highly of him as I do? Indeed the enlightned soul is ready to think all the world should be of his mind, the light and evidence is so clear to him. And hence they that have got a discovery of Christ, wonder that any would esteem otherwise of Christ than they. O wonder that all the world is not wondring at his glory. O what can blind them, what can bewitch them at this rate, that they are not of the same mind with me concerning Christ, and that they are not admirers of him as well as I am. Surely there is nothing appears with such evidence and demonstration as this glory and excellency of a God-man. Who can be so stupid and senseless as to reckon otherwise, *Is not this the Christ?* The proof is so plain to me, says the soul, and the light and power so great by which Christ is discovered to me, that it is truly irresistible, and who in all the world can possibly resist the evidence of it, *Is not this the Christ?* O how pathetick is the commendation. (6.) It is a practical commendation that issues from a saving discovery of Christ, and such is that of the woman of *Samaria* here; and hence she says not, *go see* him, but *come see* him. They that truly invite others to Christ, will not be content only to send them to him, but they would share themselves of more and more of Christ. Their language is not *go see*, but *come see*. It would have argued no great esteem of Christ, nor high commendation of him, should the woman have said, I have seen him already, go ye and see him next, they might have thought she had enough of him; but *come see* him,

him, says she, *q. d.* come along with me, and I'll go at your head like a captain, and lead the van myself. I have seen him to my heart's content, and am fond to get another sight, a new sight of him, and I would have all the people in *Samaria*, the whole town, to go along with me. I have been an ill woman, a base woman, that have led some of you to sin, and may I now be the happy instrument of leading you to a Saviour. I have led some of you to the gates of hell, O let me now lead you to the gate of heaven; if I have tempted any of you to wickedness, O let me now be instrumental in turning you to righteousness, yea to the Lord my righteousness, whom I have got a saving sight of, and therefore let me give you a good example, for all the ill examples I have given. Here was a change indeed, and a practical commendation. Surely they commend Christ most effectually, who do it not only by their profession, but by their practice, not merely by their counsel, but by their example, and who can say not only *go see*, but *come see a man that told me all things that ever I did*. It is a *come see* that makes others to go also, *Zech. 8. 21. Let us go speedily to pray before the Lord, and to seek the Lord of hosts, I will go also*; there is one; *v. 23.* you find more following, *We will go with you, for we have heard that God is with you*. Thus it was not only the church's commending of Christ, but diligent seeking after him whom she so commended, that made the daughters of *Jerusalem* say, *Song 6. 1. Whether is thy beloved gone, that we may seek him with thee?* And we see how effectual this practical commendation of Christ was, that the woman gave to the *Samaritans*, as you may read, *v. 30, 39-----42*. She was the blest'd instrument of drawing many there to the Lord Jesus.

IVth Head proposed, was to give the reasons of the doctrine, whence it is that *saving discoveries* of Christ make persons to condemn and debase themselves to the lowest, and to commend and exalt Christ to the highest; or what influence a saving discovery of Christ hath upon this self-debasing and Christ-exalting exercise? I shall consider the reasons of this twofold effect jointly, because they necessarily go together, and are influenced by the same means. They are like the two scales of a balance, that which makes the one scale fall and go down, makes the other rise and go up; so that discovery of Christ which brings down self to the dust, does at the same time set up Christ upon the throne. When the haughtiness of man is brought down, then the Lord alone is exalted, *Isa. 2. 11. First* reason then, why the saving discoveries of Christ do humble self to the lowest, and exalt Christ to the highest, is from the special light wherein Christ is seen. They

that see the glory of Christ with the one eye, they see their own unworthiness with the other at the same time. The same *light* that discovers the *holiness of God*, discovers the *vileness of the man*. The same *light* that discovers the *fulness of Christ*, discovers the *emptiness of the creature*. That *light* that discovers his *infinite merit*, discovers the *infinite guilt & demerit of sin*. When the righteousness of Christ is seen, the unrighteousness of the sinner is seen at the same time, and in the same light; and hence no wonder while the poor soul is astonished with the view of God's glory in the face of Christ, he is also astonished with the view & apprehension of his own baseness and brutishness, and has the meanest thoughts of himself when he has the highest thoughts of Christ. The more a man converses with Christ, the more he converses with himself, and the light that discovers Christ, discovers the soul to itself; and therefore the discoveries of Christ cannot but tend to debase self and exalt Christ at the same time. *Secondly*, When Christ is discovered, then the love of God to the soul is discovered, & this fills it with humble wonder. O that God's love is manifested to one so full of sin & wickedness! This debases the soul in its own sight, because it knows itself to be so unworthy of his love, this works humility; but yet unworthy as it is, the love of God is manifested to it; this quickens love in the soul, & love excites praise, O how shall I manifest *love to him* that hath manifested love to such a one as me! Thus *the love of Christ constrains* both to the debasing of self, and exalting of Christ. *Third* reason is, from the special work of the Spirit; there is a speciality in the work of the Spirit upon the soul to whom Christ is savingly discovered, *Job. 14. 22.* *Lord, says Judas, not Iscariot, How is it that thou wilt manifest thyself to us, and not to the world?* God manifests his love to the world in outward respects, but to his own in his privy-chamber. It is the work and office of the Spirit to set home the love of God upon the hearts of his people, and to every one of them alone as it were, he takes them aside that they may have some private conversation with Christ, such as this woman had, when Christ was the only preacher, and she was the only hearer. O but the view of this distinguishing grace raises in the soul, both *David's* note, *What am I, and what is my Father's house, that thou hast brought me hitherto?* and *Mary's* note at the same time, *My soul doth magnify the Lord.* *Fourthly*, The influence that the discovery of Christ hath upon this self-debasing and Christ-exalting exercise, flows from the spiritual end and design of these saving discoveries and manifestations of Christ; this is God's great end in discovering of Christ, *1 Cor. 1. 29, 30, 31.* *Of God, he is made unto us wisdom, righteousness, sanctification and redemption,*

redemption. For what end? *that no flesh should glory in his sight, but that he that glorieth, might glory in the Lord*; that is, that self may be condemned and debased, and Christ alone may be commended and exalted. And this is the great end of the Spirit's work, when he comes to testify of Christ, what is his design? Why, says Christ, *Joh. 16. 9, 14. He will convince the world of sin, and he shall glorify me*; that is, he will humble the sinner on the one hand, and exalt the Saviour on the other, and so lead the sinner to condemn himself, and to commend Christ. *Fifthly*, It arises from the special power and efficacy that is in saving discoveries of Christ, for working all saving effects; why, *Beholding his glory, we are changed into the same image*, 2 Cor. 3. last ver. and changed as in other respects, so in this particularly, that self is pulled down and Christ set up; we are changed from pride to humility, from self-love to self-loathing, from self-indulgence to self-abhorrence, and from self-seeking and self-exalting, to a Christ-exalting disposition and exercise. All the graces of the Spirit issue from a saving discovery of Christ, and come in that way to a lively exercise, *John 1. 14, 16. We, beholding his glory, as the glory of the only-begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth, of his fulness have we all received, and grace for grace.* We cannot see his fulness without sharing of his fulness; yea, to see his fulness is to share of it, this is the strength of that *for* which you have in *1 Job. 3. 2. We shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is*; so here beholding his glory, his fulness of grace and truth, we receive out of this fulness; now the more of Christ's fulness and Spirit that one hath, the more will he have of Christ's ends before him, which is a debasing of the creature, and a glorifying of God, that he may be all in all. *Sixthly*, This exercise does arise from the divine splendor of the discovery; for when Christ discovers his face, then the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ is discovered, 2 Cor. 4. 6. When Christ is seen then the glory of God's perfections and the splendor of his attributes is seen. Now every thing in God dashes the sinful man that sees it, and makes him nothing in his own eyes, and at the same time makes Christ, in whom that divine glory shines, to be all in all to the man, so that he cannot but see him above all, and give him in all things the preheminance. Thus you see the reason whence it is, that the discoveries of Christ make the subjects thereof to condemn and debase themselves to the lowest, and to commend and exalt Christ to the highest, as the woman of Samaria here does, *Come, see a man that told me all things that ever I did, is not this the Christ?*

The Vth thing proposed, was to draw some inferences by way

of application. Is it so, that saving discoveries of Christ have this effect, to make one at the same time to condemn and debase himself, and to commend and exalt Christ, saying, *Come see a man that told me all things that ever I did, is not this the Christ?* From this text and doctrine we may see and learn these following lessons.

(1.) Hence see why pride and self conceit, self-righteousness and self-justification prevail so much in the world and in the visible church, and what makes people, notwithstanding all that ever they did, yet to be vainly puffed up, instead of condemning and debasing themselves; why, because they have never got a saving discovery of Christ; Christ hath never touched their heart, and told them all that ever they did, they are strangers to the power of the word. It is strange how wicked men will justify themselves and their wickedness, as those *Job. 8. 48.* *Say we not well, that thou art a Samaritan, and hast a devil?* Here was the greatest blasphemy imaginable to say this of Christ, yet they justify it, *say we not well in this?* Christless men will justify their ill words, and ill works, and ill actions. What say you, sabbath breaker? why, was it not well done, say you, it was but a work of necessity, a needful business. What say you, drunkard? why, it was but a hearty bottle with my friends, and was it not well done? What say you, whoremonger? Why, it was but a trick of youth, and what is the matter of that? What say you, swearer? why, it was neither cursing nor swearing that I meant, it was but a word and a word in passion. What say you, scold and railer? why, say you, I think they deserved all that I said to them; its true I loosed my tongue upon such a man, and gave him his holy-day's name; and was it not well done and well said? Indeed you'll hardly get a sinner at all, if you'll take every bodies excuse and every bodies Judgment of themselves, they will justify all that ever they did, or at least make it but a matter of indifference. A common strumpet, such as this *woman* was formerly, may think nothing of all her base and lewd behaviour. The most notorious sinner goes lightly under the burden of his sin, without any *self-condemnation* or *self-debasement*, till Christ and they meet together, and till by one glance he shews them all things that ever they did.

(2.) Hence see, that the greatest of sinners may conceive hope of mercy at the hand of our merciful Lord Jesus, from such instances as this; yet let not wicked sinners indulge themselves in sin, and presume that God will not notice their *lewdness*, and secret as well as open *wickedness*; for the time is coming, wherein Christ will either in a way of mercy or judgment *tell you all things that ever you did*, *Psal 50. 21.* *These things thou hast done, and I kept silence:*

Thou thoughtest that I was altogether such an one as thyself ; but I will reprove thee, and set them in order before thine eyes. Consider this, ye that forget God, lest he tear you in pieces, when there is none to deliver. If this remarkable instance of grace to such a base woman be abused by you to licentiousness, and your opening a door of presumption to yourself, expecting mercy in a continued course of wickedness, you're under a terrible delusion ; for God will wound the head of his enemies, and the hairy scalp of him that goes on in his trespasses : But if you would creep in at the door of hope that is opened to you in such examples as this, O seek that in a merciful way he may discover your sins to you, so as to make you know at the same time that he is the Christ, the anointed of God to save you from your sin.

(3.) Hence see that the word preached does then do saving good, when it comes close home to the heart, and when Christ is seen there ; for here, see how the word of Christ came home with power upon this woman's heart, *he told me, he told me all things that ever I did.* The word was the searcher and discernor of the thoughts and intent of her heart, and the searching word was the strong hook that caught her ; and she saw Christ therein, *Is not this the Christ ?* Then the word is effectual, and prevails, when Christ himself is seen ; Christ is the best preacher himself, the only powerful preacher, who, by his word, can open the eyes, and by a sanctified sight of one sin, discovers all to the man, and in that discovery shews himself to be the Christ.

(4.) Hence see that saving illumination is the best antidote against Arianism. Here the enlightened woman professes her faith of Christ's Deity, and thereupon of his being the Christ : She sees him to be the true God that told her all things that ever she did ; and thence declares him to be the true Messiah ; *Is not this the Christ ?* If Christ were not the true God, he could not be the true Messiah ; and consequently they that deny his supreme Deity, deny that he is the Christ ; and thus blasphemous Arians are guilty of denying thee Lord that bought them, and they that thus deny him, were never enlightened by him. A saving discovery of Christ will afford a poor illiterate body an argument from experience and spiritual feeling, more strong and powerful (for proving the Supreme Deity of Christ) than all the learned and logical argumentations in the world, which a man may be fraughted with, and yet remain an Atheist. And indeed Arians are Atheists, whatever they profess ; for he that denies the Son, denies the Father also ; for to deny the necessary existence of the Son, is to deny the necessary paternity of the Father, who yet is as necessarily Father as he is God ; and to deny both the Father and the Son, is to deny the necessary procession of the Holy

Ghost from both ; so that the *Father, Son and Holy Ghost* is denied, when the *Supreme Deity* of Christ is denied. O but this atheistical world *needs such a cast of enlightening grace*; as this poor woman got.

(5.) Hence see that persuasion, with application is, in the nature of *saving faith*, both objective and subjective. Persuasion objective, assuring the man that this is the Christ; and subjective also, assuring the man that as he is the Christ, the anointed, so he is anointed for my behalf, anointed, as the woman here suggests, as a prophet for me, to tell *me all things that ever I did*; and at the same time that he told me all my sins, he told me *that he was the Christ anointed to save me*; and hence she glories in him as the Christ. Whenever he manifests himself, faith brings in *holy triumph* in the Lord, even under a sight of the *greatest sinfulness*. Indeed such a sight as this woman got, namely, of the guilt of all the evils that ever she did, would have caused *trembling* instead of *triumphing*. If faith's view of Christ discovered to her, had not carried in the bosom of it a fiducial persuasion of his being a Christ for her, a Saviour for her, which, whenever she saw, then she was kindly humbled; which leads to another inference.

(6.) Hence see that true *Gospel humiliation* and evangelical repentance *goes not before*, but is the *fruit of faith*, and of Christ manifesting himself to the soul; for then, and not till then, does she cry out, O he hath *told me all things that ever I did*. Now she sees all her sins in the brightest light. By the light of the stars we may see some things, by the light of the moon we see more, but by the light of the sun we see most of all. By the light of nature people may see some sins, by the light of the law they will see more, much more, for by the law is the knowledge of sin; but by the light of the *sun of righteousness* most of all is discovered: but with this difference, that the moon-light of the law shews the disease, and no more, leaving the sinner to die of that disease and perish; but the sun light of the Gospel discovers the remedy, *the sun of righteousness arising with healing under his wings*. And when no less than the blood and righteousness of God is seen to be the healing medicine, then the disease appears to have been infinitely great, and yet the sight is infinitely sweet, because it is a sight of that wonderful *healing* under these wings and rays of the *sun of righteousness*; this makes kindly pleasant humiliation.

(7.) Hence see that saving discoveries of Christ are very rare in our day; for very few are thus exercised, either in condemning and debasing themselves under a sense of all that ever they did, or in commending and exalting Christ, and dealing with others *to come and see him*. O how few *humble walkers* and *heartly commendors* of Christ

Christ are to be observed! Few taking kindly with their sins, and few breaking forth into the *praising commendation* of Christ! When this woman got a discovery of Christ, she kindly takes with her *whoredoms* and *all her sins* that ever she did, and zealously breaks forth into the *praises* and *commendation* of Christ. But whence is it that the land we live in, the church of *Scotland*, is not taking with, and kindly acknowledging *all that ever she did*, and taking with her all her *whoredoms* and *adulteries*, and *treacherous breaking covenant* with her God, to whom she solemnly gave her hand? Whence is it that there is so little zeal in commending and exalting Christ in his *Supreme Deity*, in a day wherein *Arian blasphemers* open their mouth against him? Whence is there so little zeal for the *reviving of our broken covenants, national and solemn league*, even in a day wherein the obligation thereof is denied? Why are we neither humbly condemning ourselves, and taking with our *national sins*, nor highly commending Christ, and exalting him in his *injured honours, truth and prerogatives*, but rather winking at all the dishonours done to him? Why, what is the matter? *Saving discoveries of Christ*, which should work the contrary effect, are very rare. When the Lord hath a mind to build up *Zion*, he appears in his *glory*, as he did in the days of our *reformation*; but now he hath justly hid himself from the present God-provoking, Christ-despising, Gospel-slighting generation. But O if he would yet appear and discover his glory in the sanctuary, then we might expect reformation times: But as matters stand, we look as if a *stroke and judgment* that hath been so long threatened were suddenly to light upon us with a *terrible vengeance*. There were little hazard of the present rumour of war, if the Lord, who is a *man of war*, were not against us; and if the Lord carry on his controversy, it will be little wonder, tho' we should see the land turned into a *field of blood and desolation*, before we see another *communion solemnity* here. God hath *born long* with us, but how much longer *he* will do so, who can tell? Forty years peace in the church is a wonder, &c. But

(8.) Hence see that a meeting with Christ makes a marvellous change upon a person or people that are so privileged. Before this woman met with Christ, or rather before he met with her, she was nothing but a common strumpet; but now she is humbled to the dust for the sins she had formerly indulged herself in, and commends and exalts that Lord whom she had dishonoured. She is bro't *from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God*; from being exercised in corrupting and debauching her neighbours, to a kindly concern for their souls everlasting *welfare* to get them bro't to Christ. *Saving illumination and acquaintance with Christ* creates in a heart the sympathy with the case of poor Christless

Christless sinners. *Come see a man that told me all things that ever I did; Is not this the Christ?* This leads me to

An use of trial and examination whether you have met with Christ, and got a *saving discovery* of him at this occasion or formerly. O how shall I know, say you, if I have met with Christ, and if he hath discovered himself to me? Why? if you have, then this discovery has led you to these two things. *1st*, A humiliation of self to the lowest. *2dly*, An exalting of Christ to the highest.

1st, What self-humbling disposition and abasement hath been wrought in you? Are you laid low in the dust, and made vile in your own eyes, by Christ discovering you to yourself? Have you got a discovery of your own sinfulness, ugliness and unworthiness? Hath Christ fallen a discoursing with you, and *told you all things that ever you did*? Hath he told you of your ill life, your ill heart, your ill nature? Hath he told you of your unbelief? For when the Spirit comes, he *reproves the world of sin, because they believe not in him*. Hath he told you of your secret sins, and discovered to you what none but himself could tell you? And have you taken it from himself, without saying, who has gone and told the ministers this and that of me? Hath he told you of your wicked thoughts and intentions, and made the word the discernor of the thoughts and intents of your heart? Hath he told you your spiritual wickedness, your atheism, ignorance, enmity, carnality, pride, self, and hypocrisy, and made you to know the plagues of your own heart? Hath he told you of the figleaves you have been covering your self with, and the false refuges you have been running to, and chased you out of your refuges of lies? Hath he told you your secret as well as open sins, and so told you some things, as that thereby he hath discovered the rest to you, and have you been led by the streams to the fountain of sin within you? And has he given you, by one glance upon the map of your corrupt nature, a view of your total depravation? Hath he told you your proper name, by calling you a dog, and by making you take with your name, saying, *Truth, Lord, I am a dog, a devil, a monster? Behold I am vile?* Why it is a glorious internal light that discovers this internal vileness. What makes you with *Job* to abhor yourself? why, it says, *Now your eyes see him*, Job 42. 5, 6. What makes you with *Paul* look upon yourself as *less than the least of all saints*; yea, as the *chief of all sinners*, the worst of all sinners, the vilest of all sinners? why, it says, *He hath revealed his Son in you*. It is not natural for proud man to think so basely of himself; it is the Spirit of Christ that hath told you what you are.

But

But here to prevent any mistake, it may be asked, *Quest.* May not one that hath not the Spirit of God, nor a renewed conscience, be able to discern his own vileness? *Ans.* There is a double knowledge or understanding that men may have of themselves, speculative and practical. As to the general speculative knowledge, a wicked man may have this common sense and reason may tell him his sin, and he may know himself to be a sinner, as being guilty of gross sins, drunkenness, whoredom, swearing, and the like. But there is a particular practical knowledge and understanding, which is two-fold, either from the Spirit of God without us, or from the Spirit of God within us. That practical understanding, which is from the Spirit of God without us, is what also the unregenerate may have. The Spirit of God not yet received, but without a man, may come and make such discoveries of his sin, and guilt, and wickedness, as may make him cry out, That he is undone, undone. Such a knowledge had *Nebuchadnezzar* of the God of *Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego*. Such a knowledge also it seems *Cain* and *Judas* had. But the Spirit of God within us gives us spiritual light and sense upon the conscience, and rectifies the judgment; and whereas the Spirit of God without a man discovers sin mainly in order to hell and wrath making him say, undone, undone; the Spirit of God within a man makes him see the vileness of sin, and lament and mourn for that, saying, *Unclean, unclean. O wretched man that I am, &c. Behold I am vile, &c.* This affects him more than the wrath of God, yea, even when he sees the wrath of God is turned away, and that the shower is over his head, and it lighted on the head of his cautioner, even then he abhors himself for his own wickedness more than ever. This is from the Spirit of God within, and a Gospel-spirit. The Spirit of God without a man, and the Spirit of God within him differ as much as day-light differs from lightning. A flash of lightning from *Sinai*, or the fiery law, terrifies and astonishes the man, and makes him tremble and quake under a sense of sin; but the day-light of a saving discovery of Christ makes one see himself the chief of sinners, and yet fills him with holy triumph in the Lord the Saviour. A lightning confounds and surprizes; but the day-light gives a clear, distinct and sedate view of things as they are, with quiet and composure. Now try if you have got a humbling view and discovery of Christ or a word from him that hath filled you with self-abasement, so as you reckon you can't have vile enough thoughts of yourself, because he hath in effect told you all things that ever you did.

2dly, Try what Christ-exalting and commending exercise you
have

have been brought under, or what disposition is wrought in you to commend and exalt Christ to the highest. If Christ and you have met together, as he did with this woman of *Samaria*, then the meeting wrought in you the same effect, the same disposition to commend and exalt Christ, which you may try by these particulars. (1.) If you have met with Christ in this manner, then you have seen him to be the Christ indeed, the God-man, the anointed of the Father, the true *Messias*. Hath he told you in effect, *I that speak unto you am he*? I that speak unto you by this Gospel am he. Hath he born home this upon your heart with convincing light and evidence, so as you have been brought to the Apostle's faith, *John 6. 69. We believe, and are sure, that thou art Christ, the Son of the living God*? The faith of this is of such great importance, that Christ hath said, *If ye believe not that I am he, ye shall die in your sins*. Now hath he so spoken to you, as you were made in effect to think and say, *I believe and am sure, that he that spoke unto me was he*. It was not the minister only that I heard, but the word came with such *light, life, and power*, that I think no minister on earth, nor angel in heaven could make the word to go through my heart as it did. It was like the sound of the voice of the Son of God. 2. If you have met with Christ in this manner, then he hath made such a gradual approach and discovery of himself to you, as to raise in you gradually more and more of a high esteem of him as a prophet sent of God to teach you, and to *tell you all things*, as it was with this woman. And tho' he himself and all his words are precious to you, yet there are some particular words, among many, that have taken more impression, and stick more fast than others. Tho' Christ spake many good words to this woman for her instruction, yet the word that made the first and deepest impression, is what she especially kept in heart, *he told me all things that ever I did*; and what she saw in this more clearly at first, she saw more clearly after Christ gave her a clearer manifestation of himself. If the saving discovery of Christ commenced and began when he gave her the *first discovery* of her *lewdness* and *whoredom*, and conveyed *light* at the same time into her mind to perceive that he was a prophet; yet she was much in the mist, and took not up all that was intended by this discovery, till after he clearly discovered himself, and then the former lesson is clearly taken up in all the parts of it. Therefore now, says she, *he told me all things that ever I did*. Some may have such dark and cloudy discoveries of Christ at first, that tho' they raise a high esteem of Christ, yet the soul may be at a loss to know what the full meaning of such a word is that Christ spake to their soul, till after they get

a brighter discovery of him, and then they may come to be more perfectly instructed in the same lesson, which at first they did not so well apprehend, and in this his dealing with them may be like that, *Joh. 13. 7. What I do, thou knowest not now, but thou shalt know hereafter.* (3.) If you have met with Christ in this manner, then your mind is set above the world, and you have left it behind you, as the woman here left her water-pot, and ran to the city. O when Christ appears to a man, he thinks no more of the world than of a potsherd; he counts all *but loss and dung for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ*; yea the most valuable things in the world are undervalued when Christ is discovered. As naturalists tell us, the loadstone will not draw in the presence of the diamond, neither does the world in all its glory and gallantry draw the heart of any to it in the presence of Christ. The reason of this is, the sun of righteousness darkens all the stars of creature-enjoyments, and makes them disappear and vanish. A drink out of the fountain of living waters makes all worldly comforts to be nothing but broken cisterns that can hold no water. They whose hearts were never weaned from the world, never met with Christ. Again, 4. If you have met with Christ, then your hearts will be set upon the work of *commending* him to others, and particularly to your neighbours and friends, that they may come to be acquainted with him also. Thus the discovery of Christ vents itself in the woman here, *Come see a man that told me all things that ever I did, is not this the Christ?* A manifestation of Christ gives men such a fill of the fulness of God, that they must have a vent: And as in every saving manifestation, there is something of the nature of Christ communicate, who loves to communicate of his fulness, so they to whom Christ dispenses of his grace and fulness, love to communicate also of what they have; not that the saints are to make a blaze of their religion to every one they meet with, or to cast pearls before swine; but the love of Christ discovered to them, fills them with such ardent love to him, as obliges them in all proper ways to trumpet forth his glory and honour. They see such a glory in him, that they think all should wonder at him, and own him, *Is not this the Christ?* They reckon none so much obliged to free grace as they, and therefore they think it well becomes them to spread the favour of his name. They know also, by remembering what they themselves were before they met with Christ, they know what a sad state they are in who want acquaintance with Christ, therefore both out of love and regard to the glory and honour of Christ, and out of love, pity and compassion to the perishing Souls of others, they desire and endeavour

deavour to commend Christ to them, both by their *words* and *actions*, both by their talk and walk, as this woman of *Samaria* did. What heart then and disposition have you got to commend Christ to your neighbours and friends, to your children and servants? If you have no heart nor disposition to such exercise as this, surely you can't make it out that you have met with Christ. 5. If you have met with Christ, then it will be your hearty desire not only to commend Christ, and speak of him to others, making him the great subject of your conversation; but also to have them taste what you have tasted, and see what you have seen, without resting merely on your report, *Come see a man that told me all things that ever I did, is not this the Christ?* Rest not on my report, might she say, but O come and see him. My friends, spiritual converse about Christ is much out of fashion in our degenerate age; yea, to enter on spiritual discourse in some companies, would be to expose a man to scorn and ridicule, a sad instance of estrangement from Christ and religion. But are there not some professors whose speech of Christ, and of the things of God, betrays and bewrays them, for either it is but the scroof of religion they talk of; for example, how well such a man preached, and how long such a man preached, and how many tables, or how many strangers were at such a communion, and all such little-worth questions, no better than idleness, treating of the shell, and not the kernel of ordinances. Or if they enter upon any substantial conversation, either they soon grow weary of that, or give evidence of such a selfish spirit, as bespeaks an inclination to commend themselves rather than to commend Christ. The import of their language is rather, come and hear me, than come and see Christ. But O, Sirs, a meeting with Christ will fill the soul with a desire that others may share of what they share, and see what they have seen, with a desire to take the most effectual method that may be for drawing them to Christ. Hence, as this woman speaks out of her very heart, so she attempts to draw them to Christ with the very same hook with which she was drawn ashore herself. *He told me all things that ever I did, is not this the Christ?* therefore come see him. 6. If you have met with Christ, and conversed with him, you'll think long for another meeting with him, another sight of him, for this was the woman's disposition here, *Come see the man*; she spake as if she desired to be the foremost in returning again to see him. If you think you have got nothing of him savingly; if you have got enough of Christ, it is a sign you have got a saving sight of him, then you'll desire more, and more, and more, till you see him face to face in *Immanuel's* land. The
: disposition

disposition of those that have attained to a sight of Christ, and apprehended him by faith, is exemplified by the Apostle Paul, *Phil. 3. 12, 13, 14.* It is strange, as if they had attained nothing, apprehended nothing, in comparison of what they aspired after and would be at. *Not as tho' I had already attained, but I follow after, if that I may apprehend that for which I am apprehended of Christ.* And again, *I count not myself to have apprehended, but this one thing I do, forgetting those things that are behind, and reaching forth to those things that are before, I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus.* It is possible that unsound professors, may fancy they have attained much, and yet have attained nothing, and resting on their attainments, they rest upon nothing but a shadow. It is possible that sound believers may judge they have attained nothing, tho' yet they have attained much, and hence neglecting their attainments, they press after more and more of Christ. As Paul here, *I count not myself to have attained, I count not myself to have apprehended.* What count you of your attainments, man, when the great apostle Paul counts nothing of his, tho' he was one of the most clearly enlightened and highly privileged men in the world? Happy is that soul who has attained the knowledge of Christ, and yet is as far from thinking that he knows or has attained as much as may suffice him, that he rather counts as if he knew nothing, or had attained nothing, and therefore presses after more of Christ. O for the other sight of him. O for the other meeting with him. O for another communion, another blink of his beauty, and glance of his glory. Thus the happy woman counts not herself to have seen or attained enough of Christ, but longs for another sight. It is an excellent mark of a meeting with Christ, to be longing for more and more of Christ here, and for full vision of him in the higher house, and to be in case practica'ly to discover this in an exemplary commendation of Christ to others; while it is not only the matter of your religious talk, signifying only *to see him*, but the import of your exemplary walk, *Come see a man that told me, &c.*

Another use should be by way of exhortation. In a word, (1.) To you that have got a saving discovery of Christ working these effects upon you, leading you to condemn and debase yourself to the lowest, and to commend and exalt Christ to the highest. O let me exhort you to a walk suitable to such a meeting with Christ, that is, (1.) To a humble walk, like one to whom Christ hath told all things that ever you did. (2.) To a holy walk, like one that would commend and exalt a holy Jesus, saying, *Come see a man that hath so and so spoken unto me, is not this the Christ?* (1.)

I would exhort you to a humble walk. O hath he given you a sight of yourself, and of you own vileness and baseness, walk humbly with thy God, and in order to this, still keep the glass before your eye, wherein he hath discovered you to yourself. There are several glasses wherein the Saints behold themselves, which makes them have low thoughts of themselves. 1. The looking glass of the law of God, which discovers to them the vileness of their nature, thoughts, desires and affections, *when the law comes, sin revives*. The law is a light by which all things are reprov'd and made manifest, *Eph. 5. 13.* Keep this glass before your eye, even you that are wholly delivered from the law as a covenant of works, yet make a constant use of it as a light, both a light to your head to inform and convince you of your sin and wickedness, and a light to your feet to direct you in the paths of righteousness. 2. There is the glass of a renewed understanding, and rectified judgment, that the saints see their vileness in, when they have an impartial rule and eye-salve with it, then they see themselves as they are. If a man be blind, he can't see himself, tho' he have never so clear a glass before him, *Luke 11. 35.* *Take heed that the light that is in you be not darkness.* Wherever spiritual light and wisdom is, there is a clear sight people have of themselves. 3. There is the glass of conscience sprinkled with the blood of Christ; this every true believer carries about with him. Whatever the understanding sees, the conscience comes and lays it at his door, and the conscience being renewed and reconciled to God, it is then God's messenger to inform, to rouse, to arraign, and to condemn. Conscience brings in all our unworthiness and charges us with it, and then what base and low thoughts have we of ourselves. O I deserve to be in hell, says the soul, I deserve no mercy at the hand of God. 4. There is the glass of experience, in which every saint looks on himself, and beholds he is vile. Why, the sad experience he hath of a treacherous backsliding heart, notwithstanding of all the love of God and Christ manifested to him; the sad experience of the *law of the members warring against the law of the mind, and bringing him into captivity to the law of sin and death*, and making him cry many times, *O wretched man that I am, &c.* the sad experience of many inward lustings, fightings, and reigning corruptions and desperate departings from the Lord; O how vile does the saint see himself in this glass? 5. There is the glass of the holiness of God, the glass of his infinitely pure glory, *Rev. 4. 8, 10.* *When they cried, holy, holy, holy, Lord God almighty, which was, and is, and is to come, then the twenty four elders fell down before the throne.* What made *Isaiah* cry out

out of his uncleanness, but a view of this holy and infinitely pure glory of God. It was a view of the glorious holiness of Christ that made *John* the Baptist say, *O I am not worthy to stoop down and unloose the latchets of his shoes*, and yet he hath Christ's testimony, that there was not a greater prophet than he. O how vile is a man in his own eyes when he looks to himself in this glass? 6. There is the glass of the love of God, and of his grace and mercy in Christ. We may appeal to you that have experience of it, if any thing in the world hath a greater power to humble the soul, and to lay it in the dust, than this, even the consideration of the infinite love of God. *I was a blasphemer, and a persecutor, yet I obtained mercy*. O such a monster of sin and wickedness as I am, and yet I obtained mercy? O such a dog, such a devil, and yet I obtained mercy? O when a child of God sees the grace of God in the glass of manifestation, O how low does he sink in his own esteem! All the storms and blustering winds will not melt a rock of ice; but when the sun-beams arise upon it, how is it then melted and thawed? Thus nothing in the world melts and thaws the hard heart so much, as the hope and sense of divine love. When a child of God sees the grace of God in the glass of a commendation, as when Christ says to the soul a word like that, *Song* 4. 7. *Thou art all fair, my love, there is no spot in thee*. What! O what is this that a God is saying to the like of me, the blackest, the basest of all sinners: O! how low does self sink before the love and grace of God. 7. There is the glass of the spirit of God shining upon the word of God into the understanding and the conscience, and giving light to see into these other glasses. As he is the Spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of Christ, and giving the knowledge of the law of God, the holiness of God, the love and grace of God in Christ, for the clearest eye and the clearest glass both will shew nothing without light; it is the Spirit of light that sets all these things home upon the soul, and makes it apply all to itself, and so it becomes *yet more vile* in its own eyes. I shall add, 8. There is the glass of the example of God, of God's humility, his stupendous humility and condescension; God, Father, Son, and Holy Ghost humbling themselves for our good. See how God the Father humbles himself, *Psal.* 113. 5, 6. *Who is like unto the Lord our God, who dwells on high, who humbles himself to behold the things that are in heaven, and in the earth?* 'Tis a step of great condescension, that he should apply himself in his providence to our wants and necessities; and especially, that he should concern himself so far with sinners, as to send the Son of his love out of his bosom to redeem them. See how God the Son humbled

bled himself when he stept out of his Father's bosom, out of the ivory palaces, where he was made glad from eternity ; yea, tho' *he was in the form of God, and thought it no robbery to be equal with God ; yet he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross.* The glass of his sufferings and humiliation, wherein he stept as far down as hell, to quench the flames of infinite wrath, is a glass indeed wherein we may see sin to be infinitely evil, and our selves to be ineffably vile. See also how the Holy Ghost humbles himself. What a vast condescension is it for God the Holy Ghost to undertake to teach such dullards as we, to wash such lepers as we, to purge such polluted souls, and to dwell in our hearts and bosoms so full of unfavoury steams of hell ? Hath a God, Father, Son and Holy Ghost, given us such examples of humility, and shall not this move us to step a little down the hill ? O proud sinner, does God humble himself in your sight, and will you not humble yourself before him ? Can a man look into the glass of God's humility, and yet be proud ? O keep these glasses in your eye, and walk humbly before him, who hath set the glass before you, wherein you have seen your vileness, and hath *told you all that ever you did.* O maintain a deep and humble sense of your own vileness and baseness ; and the rather, that such a fountain of sin and wickedness remains yet within you, as endangers you of doing all the same evils again that ever you did, even after he hath *told you of all that ever you did.* The body of sin and death that remains in you, will incline you to sins of all sorts and sizes : Surely then you can't walk too humbly and circumspectly. I know no extreme of self-abasement you can run into, but what will deserve the name of pride, rather than humility. It will be pride and not humility in you to deny any thing that God hath done for you in a way of grace, because you are so vile in yourself, that seems as if you were not pleased that God should get all the glory, but incline that you should have had some of it. O proud blasphemer, come down from your altitude, and be content to own and acknowledge that grace hath done much even for you. Again, it will be pride, and not humility for you to deny and refuse to take Christ by the hand, when you are down in the dust, or to take what help he offers you, even when you are lying in the dirt. It was *Peter's* pride to say, *Lord, thou shalt never wash my feet ;* and yet no doubt he took it for humility. Again, It is pride, and not humility, to deny and refuse the consolations of the Spirit, because you are conscious of your own vileness and abomination ; do not lay upon yourself a load of self-censuring more than God himself does :

I said in my haste, says David, I am cast off from before thine eyes, Psal. 31. 22. David was in haste when he said it, and so may you say, will God allow any favour of comfort to such as I am. It is pride and arrogancy to measure God by your thoughts, and to limit his mercy. Again, it is pride, and not humility, for you to deny him the praise and commendation due to him from you, lest you be not a fit hand for doing it. Why, says one, I think I would desire to commend Christ to others, and speak to his praise, but am fearful I prove a hypocrite, and prove a scandal to religion. Why, man, woman, whatever come of you, let not Christ want his due from you, and it shall not fare the worse with you; therefore *walk humbly with thy God*; or, as that word may be read, humble thy self to walk with thy God. It is best humility to be found in the way of duty; and it is pride to withdraw from it, upon any consideration of self-unworthiness. (2.) I would exhort you to a holy walk, and thereby to commend and exalt Christ as the *woman of Samaria* here did saying both with your lip and life, *Come see a man that told me all things that ever I did*; *is not this the Christ?* Where she both takes shame to herself, and gives glory to God in Christ; and as our chief happiness lies in the enjoyment of God, and our holiness lies in glorifying him, which is our chief end, so the way to glorify him, is to commend and exalt Christ with our heart, and lips, and lives. The text leads me to direct you particularly to this part of holiness, namely, to commend him to all that you have access to converse with, and to exalt him before the world. Hath he met with you, as he did with this *woman*? O then commend him, and preach forth his excellency. Here is a way how every private Christian may be a preacher of Christ. This belongs not to ministers only, but even you who are followers of Christ among the female sex, that cannot regularly be preachers of Christ in a ministerial way; yet, O poor *woman*, it is comfortable that you may be a successful teacher and preacher of *Christ* in a christian charitable way, by your spiritual communication and conversation. O *woman*, commend Christ to your husband. O man, commend Christ to your wife. O parents and masters, commend him to your children and servants. O believer, commend Christ to your neighbours and friends, and all that you have regular access to. 1. Commend him humbly as this *woman* did; *he told me all that ever I did*. She kept her eye upon her own baseness, and vileness, and unworthiness, which he had discovered to her. Saints have a double eye, a carnal eye and a spiritual eye, or the eye of sense and the eye of faith. When they look upon themselves with the carnal eye of sense, then they forget all that ever they did, and

what Christ told them, and convinced them of, and are apt to gaze upon their own parts and gifts, and then self creeps in and spoils their pleasant exercise. But when they look upon themselves with the spiritual eye of faith, then they loath themselves, and commend Christ to purpose, and set him up to the highest, when self is sinking to the lowest in the remembrance of all that ever they did, as he told them. 2. Commend him highly also, as this woman did; commend him as the great God, the searcher of hearts, the glorious *Jehovah*; when *Arians* and *Atheists* at this day are pulling him down from his throne, if it were possible, O set you him up, & commend him from your own experience, as the God-man that told you all things that ever you did. Commend him in his office, saying, *Is not this the Christ*, the sealed & consecrated of the Father to be the prophet, priest, and king of *Zion*? Is it not this *Jehovah Tsidkenu*, the Lord our righteousness? Is not this *Jehovah Raphi*, the Lord our physician? Is not this *Jehovah Shamma*, the *Immanuel*, God with us? Is not this the promised *Messiah*, in whom all the promises of God are yea and amen? Is not this the only Saviour, in whom all our salvation lies, being made of God to us wisdom, righteousness, sanctification and redemption? O there is more to say to his commendation, than the tongues of angels can trumpet forth to eternity. Again, 3. Commend him zealously as this woman did. Come and see him; it is not come and hear what I have to say of him, but come see himself. Let those whom you commend him to, understand that what you would be at, is, That they should never rest till they see and taste, and handle this word of life, and know to their experience what you know. And thus also, 4. Commend him feelingly, as this woman did. Come see a man that told me all things that ever I did. You should let strangers to Christ know that what you speak of Christ, you have felt and experienced. If you know the terrors of the Lord, you will persuade men, with an aking heart, and with holy fear and trembling, and if you know the consolations of God, you will speak of them with holy triumph, and as if your heart were leaping within you. Experience is the mother of affection, commend him feelingly and affectionately. And yet, 5. Commend him cautiously, as you also find this woman did. I think it is also remarkable in this short account that she gives of her converse with Christ, that she hid in her own bosom that special part of Christ's discourse to her that made most for her own consolation, particularly that glorious word, wherein he clearly manifested himself to her, saying, *I that speak unto thee am he*. No, she relates nothing of this, but tells them of that part of the conference which made most to her shame, as well

well as to his honour; *he told me all things that ever I did.* As if she was content that Christ should be exalted on the ruins of her reputation; to let her name be debased, that his name might be exalted. Indeed it tends most to her praise, that she commends Christ to them in that particular that made most to her shame; and she tells them no more of what he said. Here is wisdom and caution. And indeed there are some precious things that Christ speaks to his people when they are alone, that is not fit to be blazed abroad to every one, especially to those that are yet strangers to Christ. But in commending Christ to them, it is safest to treat of these particulars that make most for the debasing of ourselves, and for the exalting of Christ. 6. and *lastly*, O commend him practically, as you see this woman did, while she says not go see, but come see *a man that told me all things that ever I did.* O believer, after a communion, if you have met with Christ either now or formerly, commend him, not only *verbally* with your mouth, but *practically* with your life, saying in effect, *Come see him.* The life of commendation, is the commendation of the life, not of the lip, that says, *Go see*, but of the life that says, *Come see*: Your *Go see* will not convince any that you are in earnest; but a *Come see* may make them follow your example. When you say, go and pray, go and praise, go and worship, go & do this and that excellent service, they only hear you: But when you go before them, and say, come and praise, come and worship, come and let us seek after Christ, then they both hear and see you, and are the more apt to come and see with you. O believer, give evidence, that you have met with Christ, by living to him as your end, and on him as your all; he *died that you should not live to yourself, but to him*; and he now lives, that you may live upon him. *Because I live*, says he, *ye shall live also.* O let it be seen that you are three story high, and that there is a new addition made to your spiritual stature by the light of a new discovery of Christ. The light of reason may make people good moral men, the light of gifts good scholars, but the light of grace and experience good and holy Christians. O beware of such a practice and conversation, as will give occasion to the world to say, Take up your *communicants*, they can tittle and drink, and swear and debauch as well as their neighbours. O will you give occasion to Christ to say, *He that sat at table with me, and eat of my bread, hath lift up his heel against me.* These are the wounds I have got in the house of my friends. O see that your conversation be a practical saying, *Come and see the man that hath told me all things that ever I did; is not this the Christ?* And let the leading part of your practice lie in this, a going again to see Christ, and attending and depending

upon him in all the duties of religion, in order to your getting more and more acquaintance with him. For as it is a saving discovery of Christ that works this self-debasing, Christ-exalting effect; so the more of this you get, it will fit you still the more for commending of him humbly and practically. Let your walk then appear to be a Gospel-walk, a walking in Christ, and a going still again and again to seek him and see him, that you may be the more like unto him, and that *beholding as in a glass his glory*, you may be *changed into the same image from glory to glory*. It is but a dung-hill on which the sun shines, and yet reflects no beams; but the sun shining on a ball of silver, or upon a bright glass, or a still water, it will make another sun by reflecting the beams of it. Thus the broken beams of the glory of God shining on *Moses* in the mount, made him come down full of glory. And O the more of the glory of Christ you see, the more of the glory of God's holiness will appear about you, and the more of heaven; of which it is said they shall *be like him, for they shall see him as he is*. The more frequently you return to see Christ, the more fit will you be for resisting the snares and temptations you meet with; for your heart is a magazine of hell, where corruption lies, like a barrel of gunpowder, ready to take fire with the least spark of a temptation, and to blow you up in the flames; but the more you come to see and converse with Christ, the more you'll get of the *living water* which Christ gave to this *woman*, the Spirit as a well of water springing up to everlasting life; and if you can get that barrel of powder sunk into the bottom of this well, or the flood of the Spirit to drown and overflow it, will you not then be more proof against all the sparks of hell, and fiery darts of the devil? O is not the Spirit promised as *floods upon the dry ground*, to drench the dry powder? And does not your profession oblige you to this attendance and dependance upon Christ for more and more of the Spirit? For what mean you when you say, *Is not this the Christ?* Do you not mean, is not this the anointed of God, anointed with the Spirit to give the Spirit? Therefore let your constant recourse be to him on this errand, taking as many along with you as you can, by the influence of your advice and example, saying, *Come see a man that told me all things that ever I did. Is not this the Christ?*

2dly, I would close with a word to those that are yet strangers to Christ, that never met with him, nor got such a discovery of him as leads to this self-abasing and Christ-exalting exercise. And may I be allowed by you, O you that are believers in Christ in this house, to personate you in a few words, and speak to these that are strangers to Christ in your name. O Christless sinner, *Come see a*
man

man that hath told us all things that ever we did; is not this the Christ? The hearts of all that are acquainted with Christ, join with me in saying to you, Come see him, come see him; *that which we have heard and seen, declare we unto you, that you may have fellowship with us, in our fellowship with the Father and the Son by the Spirit.* There are some here that can say *we have heard his voice telling us all things that ever we did,* and we have seen his glory as the glory of the only-begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth; and is not this Christ? Come see a man that hath opened our Eyes, and sometimes dispelled all our clouds and darknes; *is not this the Christ?* anointed to be a prophet to teach and instruct the like of you. Come see a man that hath pardoned all our sins, and washed us in his blood; *is not this the Christ?* anointed to be a priest to justify guilty sinners like you. Come see a man that hath subdued all our iniquities, and sometimes given a dash to the power of sin and Satan in us; *is not this the Christ?* anointed to be a King to ransom slaves of the devil, like you. O come see a man, of whom we can sometimes say, he hath healed all our diseases; *is not this the Christ?* anointed to be a physician for healing such desperate diseases as yours are. Come see a man that hath convinced us of all our sins and vileness of heart and way, and drawn out our hearts to him as the God-man, the only Saviour, O come see the man, the God-man; *Is not this the Christ, Emanuel, God with us?* You need not say, where shall we see him? You have neither a journey to go down to hell, nor up to heaven, the word is nigh, and in the glass of this word he is to be seen. All the *believers* here can say, we never saw him any where but in this word of the Gospel, and in these public and private *ordinances*, and there he lies as open to your view as to ours. The word is the immediate object of our faith wherein we see him, and when we hear him speaking to us in his word, and hear with spiritual understanding, then we see him. To hear and know his voice, is all one with seeing him. It is in his word that we hear him telling how foul and filthy we are, and thus *all that ever we did*; and hear him telling how fair and lovely he is, and thus shewing us that he is *the Christ*, so that we see him in what he tells us in his word; and as we have seen him there, so you may see him there; you have the same glass, the same Bible, the same word, the same promise, the same Gospel-mirror, to see him in that ever any saint on earth saw him in since he ascended to heaven. *The word is nigh, even in thy heart, and in thy mouth*; O then rest not on our report of him only, for what he hath told us concerning ourselves and concerning himself, will not profit you, if you do not come and see that our report is true. Come and see him yourself, by believing and tak-

ing it on his own word, that he is the Christ, anointed for your behoof. But what is this I am doing, speaking to you only in the name of believers? Here (however base a worm I am) my office warrants me to speak to you in a greater name than theirs or ours, yea in his name, the latchet of whose shoes we are not worthy to unloose; in his name then who is the glorious *Jehovah*, the God-man that can tell you all things that ever you did, & thereby give you convincing evidence that he is the Christ; I call you to come and see him. He can tell you some things about you, O sinner, that the world does not know, and can't tell you. And may I presume in his name to tell you something, perhaps yet a secret, which if he would bless, you might therein hear him telling you all things that ever you did. Let me allude to what past between Christ and this *woman* in the context, upon their first meeting, and perhaps there is more than an allusion in it. Christ hath been at this occasion offering you the living water, and if you be saying with this *woman*, whether in jest or earnest, *Sir, give me this water, that I thirst not*; Christ is in effect saying, *Go call your husband and come hither*; bring whatever husband you are in league with, that so your league and covenant with death, and your marriage with hell, may be disannulled. If you be saying with this *woman*, *I have no husband*; why, then ye may hear Christ saying in effect to you, *Thou hast well said, I have no husband*; for as long as you are not married to Christ, you have no head, no husband, that can do you any service. But *behold you have had five husbands*, you have had many husbands, and *whom you are now married to is not your husband*, your true and lawful husband. O harlot sinner, you have been married unto many a black husband all your days, you have been married to the law the first husband, married to your own righteousness and self-conceit, you have been married to the world, married to your lusts, yea and married to the devil, your heart hath been joined to idols; and now by this he is telling you *all that ever you did*. He is telling you what you have been, and what you have done. Have you been a *common strumpet, a common whoremonger, a common drunkard, a common swearer, a common sabbath-breaker, a neglecter of prayer* in secret and in your family? Yea, you have been a *hypocrite, an atheist, a blasphemer, a persecutor, a murderer, an injurious person, unjust, unfaithful to God and man, unmerciful, unbelieving, impenitent*. He is telling you your secret faults, not only what you did in such a company, but what you did in such a private place. *When thou wast under the fig-tree, I saw thee*, said Christ to Nathanael in another case; so says Christ to you, when thou was under the dark shade, hiding thyself from the

the eyes of men, my eye was upon thee, under the cloud of night I saw thee, and can any hide himself in secret places that I cannot see, *do not I fill heaven and earth, saith the Lord?* yea, I say, all that ever you thought, or did, or designed to do, and I saw into thy heart and wicked nature, from whence thy atheistical practices did spring. And now if by his *word* he be telling you all things that ever you did, then what do you say to this question; *Is not this the Christ?* Is he at one glance giving you a view of all your lewdness, all your baseness, all your vileness? Then do not you perceive that he is a prophet, when he tells you how many false husbands you have had; O, *Is not this the Christ?* is not this the only true husband with whom your soul should match? Is he the man that hath told you all things that ever you did? O then, *will you go with this man?* Will you marry the man, the God-man, the Christ of God? He is content, even after all your whoredoms, to receive you for a bride, even after you have been adulterously matched with the devil and your lusts; will you match with this man, and quit with all your base husbands, that have been haling you to hell and say, *What have I to do any more with idols?* O my five husbands have ruined me, my false unhappy matches can give me no comfort, either in death or thro' eternity, but rather contribute to my eternal condemnation; but here is a glorious wonderful *match* in my offer, *a man that hath told me all things that ever I did; is not this the Christ,* that is anointed to save me from the guilt of all that ever I did, and to save me from sin and wrath? O then, is this a match? Is it a bargain? Why, say you, who is he that I may match with him? where is this Christ? Behold, man, woman, he is saying to you in this *word*, *I that speak unto thee am he;* though it be by a poor sinful messenger that I am speaking to you, says Christ, yet *I that speak unto you am he.* And now O, hath he discovered himself to you in this *word*, and drawn out your heart to the match, then think not strange that you meet with some interruption in his converse with you, but go your way and leave your *water-pot* behind you, and give up not only with your unlawful husbands, but even with your lawful *works* and endeavours in point of trust and confidence; for your own black righteousness and doings of yours, will never draw a drop of living *water* to you; but let your heart say, *In the Lord only have I righteousness and strength. I'll go in the strength of the Lord God, and make mention of thy righteousness, even of thine only.* O may it be heard tell of you in the city of *Dunfermline*, as it was heard of this woman in the city of *Samaria*, that you have met with Christ, that by your *words* and *walk* henceforth you are determined to say, *Come see a man that told me all things that ever I did; is not this the Christ?*



COURAGIOUS FAITH.

A SERMON preached at *Carnock*, July 3, 1727.

By the Rev. Mr. EBENEZER ERSKINE.

PSALM xxiii. 4.

Yea, though I walk thro' the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil: For thou art with me, thy rod and staff they comfort me.

THE words which I have read are large and copious; and therefore, to gain time, I shall entirely waive any preamble, drawn either from the connection, or from the penman, occasion, or principal parts of the Psalm, and come close to the words themselves.

In general, we may take them up as the language of a victorious and triumphant faith, viewing the countenance of a reconciled God in Christ, trampling upon all the imaginary evils of a present world; yea, death itself, as things not worthy to be compared with the glory to be revealed. *Yea, tho' I walk, &c.* where we may notice the particulars following; (1.) The present condition of the believer while in this world; he is considered under the notion of a traveller, for he is walking towards his journey's end. (2.) We have the supposed danger that may cast up in his way or walk; he may come to *the valley of the shadow of death*, that is, he may meet with troubles in his way, that carry the shew or appearance of the greatest dangers; yea, even of death in them. (3.) We have the courage wherewith faith inspires the believer, upon this supposed event of being obliged to *walk thro' the valley of the shadow of death; I will fear no evil*, says faith. (4.) We have the ground of this courage and confidence, which is expressed two ways; 1. More generally, *thou art with me.* 2. More particularly, *thy rod and staff they comfort me.* And thus we have the words resolved into their several parts. I shall not stay at present upon any critical explication; what is needful will occur.

From them I notice the following doctrines. *Observe*, 1. That believers are not residents in this world, but travelling thro' it to their own home. Hence *David* here speaks of his present condition under the notion of a traveller walking thro' a valley. *Obs.* 2. That believers in their journey must lay their account with melancholy,

choly, yea, death-like dispensations, trials that portend death and ruin. Hence *David* supposes that he may walk through the valley of the shadow of death. *Obf.* 3. That true faith inspires the soul with an undaunted courage to encounter all imaginable dangers in the way. See with what an heroick spirit *David* here expresses himself, under the influence of the Spirit of faith, I will fear no evil. *Obf.* 4. That which gives so much courage to the believer is, that by faith he takes up a reconciled God as present with him in the midst of his greatest troubles. I will fear no evil, for thou art with me. *Obf.* 5. The consideration of God's paternal care and providence toward his people is very comfortable in the midst of trouble. For in this sense some understand the words, being, they think, an allusion unto a shepherd, who with his rod and staff protects and defends his flock against wolves and such ravenous beasts. *Obf.* 6. The faithfulness of a promising God is a comfortable rod or staff in the hand of faith, to bear up the believer in his travels through the wilderness. In this sense others take the words; for by the rod and staff they understand the divine promise, and the faithfulness of the Promiser, to which faith leans with confidence, in opposition to all staggerings thro' unbelief. Thus, you see, the words cast up a large field of matter, which it is not possible for me to undertake at present.

The doctrine I shall insist upon at present, is the third in order, *viz.*

That true faith is a courageous grace; it inspires the soul with a holy and undaunted boldness amidst the greatest dangers. Or, you may take it thus; That true faith is a noble antidote against intimidating fears in a time of trouble. This you see plain in the words. *David* here, being under the influence of the Spirit of faith, cries out with a holy fortitude of spirit; yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil, &c.

The method I propose is, 1. To notice some of those evils that are ready to intimidate the spirits of the Lord's people, when they look on them with the eye of sense and reason. 2. Give some account of faith, and prove that it inspires the soul with courage and boldness amidst all these evils. 3. Give some account of that Christian fortitude and boldness that is the fruit of faith. 4. Enquire into the influence of faith upon this boldness and fortitude of spirit, and how it prevents intimidating fears amidst these evils. 5. Make some *improvement* of the whole by way of application.

First thing in the method is, To notice some of those evils that are ready to intimidate and discourage the hearts of the Lord's people in a time of danger.

1st Then, sometimes their spirits are ready to be stricken with fear of their own weakness and insufficiency for the work that the Lord is calling them to engage with, whether it be salvation, or station and generation-work. *Jer.* 1. 5, 6. there the Lord tells the prophet, *ψ. 5. Before I formed thee in the womb, I knew thee ; Before thou camest forth out of the belly, I sanctified thee, and ordained thee a prophet unto the nations.* By this hint *Jeremiah* is made to understand that the Lord was about to send him on a very dangerous errand : Well, the prophet, through a sense of his inability in himself to manage such a hard work, cries out, *ψ. 6. Ah ! Lord God, behold, I am a child and cannot speak.* His heart fails him in such an undertaking, and he is afraid to meddle with it. The same we see in *Moses*, when the Lord call'd him to go unto *Pharaoh* king of *Egypt*, and require him to let the Children of *Israel* go out of his dominion, *Exod.* 4. 10. What an impertinent apology makes he for himself, through the prevalency of unbelief ? Oh ! my Lord, I am not eloquent, neither heretofore, nor since thou hast spoken unto thy servant ; but I am of a slow speech, and of a slow tongue. Yea, after the Lord had chastised him for his unbelief, & given him a special promise of assistance ; yet he adds, *ψ. 13. O my Lord, send, I pray thee, by the hand of him whom thou wilt send.* From all which it is plain, that sense & reason foster unbelieving discouragements in the work of the Lord ; & no wonder, for they look only to the fund of created grace within, but not to the strength and grace that is in *Jesus Christ*, secured by a well-ordered covenant.

2^{dly}, The spirits of the Lord's people are ready to be frightened with the might and multitude of their enemies they have to grapple with in their way through the wilderness. This world is a den of lions, & mountains of leopards, where the believer must engage with principalities and powers, &c. He is many times like a besieged city, surrounded with dangers on every side ; and in this case he is ready to cry with *Jehoshaphat*, *2 Chron.* 20. 12. *We have no might against this great company that cometh up against us ; or, like the house of David, moved like the trees of the wood, because of great and dangerous enemies that pursued them.* Sense and reason looks only to the power of the enemy, but overlooks the power of God ; and therefore cries, one day or other I shall fall by the hand of my enemies.

3^{dly}, The spirits of believers are sometime intimidated with a sense of guilt, and the awful terrors of vindictive anger and wrath pursuing them on the account of sin. Hence *David* cries out, *Psal.* 40. 12. Innumerable evils compass me about, &c. So, *Psal.* 38. 5. *Job.* 6. 4. *The arrows of the Almighty are within me, &c.* likewise, *Psal.*

Pfal. 88. 15. *While I suffer thy terrors, I am distracted, When sin presents itself to the soul's view, and the Saviour is out of sight, it remembers God and is troubled ; and no wonder tho' in that case he cry out, If thou, Lord, mark iniquity, O Lord, who shall stand ?*

4thly, Sometimes they are struck with fear through the prevalency of indwelling sin, enmity unbelief, ignorance, carnality and the like ; swarms of heart-lusts, like an impetuous torrent, break in upon them ; in which case they fear lest they be carried away to the dishonour of God, the ruin of the soul, and the wounding of religion. This made *David* to cry, *Pfal. 19. Who can understand his errors ?* *Pfal. 65. Iniquities prevail against me, &c. Paul, Rom. 7. I am led captive unto the law of sin. Wretched man that I am, who will deliver me from this body of sin and death ?*

5thly, Sometimes their hearts are intimidate with the black clouds of desertion, that overcast the sky, and interrupt the sweet manifestations of the love of God. In that case, they are like the disciples on mount *Tabor* ; when, after a sight of the glory of Christ, the cloud overshadowed them, then they were afraid : Or like *David*, *Pfal. 30. Thou didst hide thy face, and I was troubled ; immediately after he had been saying, Lord, by thy favour my mountain stands strong, I shall never be moved.*

6thly, Sometimes their hearts are intimidate with the noise of great waters, I mean, the shaking and reelings of this lower world. Sometimes providence has such an awful aspect, as if it were going about to shake heaven and earth ; the mountains are removed and cast into the midst of the sea, and the waters thereof roar and swell ; the mountains melt, and the perpetual hills bow at the presence of the Lord, when he appears in his terrible majesty : In such a case as this, the prophet *Habakkuk*, chap. 3. 16. cries out, *When I heard, my belly trembled : My lips quivered at the voice : Rotteness entered into my bones. And David, Psal. 119. says, My flesh trembleth because of thee, and I'm afraid at thy judgments.*

7thly, Sometimes they are afraid at the wrath of man, and the fury of the persecutor : Sometimes the Lord, for holy and wise ends, lets loose the seed of the serpent, the rage and fury of man, under the influence of natural enmity : And, in this case, they are ready to be stricken with a sinful and slavish fear, *Isa. 51. 13. Thou hast feared every day, because of the fury of the oppressor, as if he were ready to destroy.*

8thly, The dangerous situation of the church and cause of Christ is sometimes matter of fear unto the saints of God. When the ark of God was in the open field, *Eli's* heart fell a trembling. When men are allowed to lift up their axes upon the carved wor

of the temple, when the boar out of the wood, and the wild beast of the forest is devouring the Lord's vineyard, and the foxes spoiling the tender vines; then, and in that case, the true children of Zion are ready to say with the church, *Lam. 1. 10. The adversary hath spread out his hand upon all her pleasant things; for the heathen hath entered into the sanctuary, and her stones are poured out upon the top of every street.*

9thly, Sometimes we find them stricken with fear at the thoughts of the awful approach of death, the king of terrors; as we see in the case of *Hezekiah*, when the sentence of death was past upon him, *Isa. 38. 10. I said in the cutting off of my days, I shall go to the gates of the grave, I am deprived of the residue of my years. I said, I shall not see the Lord, in the land of the living: I shall behold man no more, with the inhabitants of the world. Like a crane or swallow, so did I chatter: I did mourn as a dove: Mine eye fails with looking upward: O Lord, I am oppressed, undertake for me.* Some are said to be held in bondage all their days thro' fear of death. Thus I have told you of some of those evils that are ready to intimidate the hearts of the Lord's people.

Second thing is, To give some account of that faith which fortifies the soul against the fear of these evils. I don't design at present to insist upon the nature of faith, having not long ago insisted on this subject: Only I offer you, 1. Some of its names. 2. Its ingredients. 3. Some of its concomitants.

1st, I offer a view of it in its scriptural names. Sometimes it is called a trusting in the Lord: *What time I am afraid, I will trust in thee; though he should kill me, yet will I trust in him.* Sometimes 'tis called a looking to the Lord: *They looked unto him, and were lightened. Look unto me, and be ye saved, all ye ends of the earth. Let us run our race, looking unto Jesus.* Sometimes a staying ourselves on the Lord, *Isa. 26. 4. Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace whose mind is stayed on thee, &c.* Sometimes a casting of our burden on him, *Psal. 55. 22. Cast thy burden on the Lord, and he will sustain thee, &c.* Sometimes 'tis called a fleeing to him as a refuge, as the man-slayer fled to the city of refuge, when pursued for his life, *Psal. 143. 9. Deliver me, O Lord, from mine enemies; I fly unto thee for help.* Faith is a flying in under the wings of Christ's mediation and intercession; as the birds under the wings of the dam.

2dly, I would give you some of the ingredients of that faith which fortifies the soul against the fear of evil. (1.) Then, it has in it a knowledge and uptaking of a *God in Christ*, revealing himself as reconciled, and making over himself to us in a well-ordered covenant: For 'tis only a God in Christ that can be the ob-

ject of our faith and love ; and *they that thus know his name, will put their trust in him.* (2.) It has in it a firm and fixed persuasion of the *truth and certainty* of the whole *revelation* of his mind and will in the word, and particularly of his promises as *yea and amen* in Christ. Hence *Abraham's faith* (*Rom. 4.*) is described by a persuasion ; *he was fully persuaded that what he had promised, he was able also to perform,* And 'tis said, *Heb. 7. 13.* of the Old Testament worthies, who died in faith, *They saw the promises afar off, and were persuaded of them.* (3.) It has in it an application of the promises to the soul itself in particular ; so that it not only looks on it as true in general, but true to me. The man finds the promise indefinitely indorsed to every man to whom it is intimate, *Acts 2. 38.* *The promise is to you, and to your seed, and to all that are afar off, &c.* attended with this declaration & promise, that whoever believes, *sets to the seal, that God is true ;* and that *whosoever believeth, shall not perish :* Therefore the man takes it home to himself in particular, as a security for all the grace that is contained in it, saying, *I believe that through the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ I shall be saved. God hath spoken in his holiness, I will rejoice ;* and, *in this will I be confident.* (4.) It has in it a persuasion of the *power, love and faithfulness* of the Promiser : A persuasion of his power to do as he has said ; as *Abraham, Rom. 4.* *he was persuaded, that what he had promised, he was able also to perform.* A persuasion of his love ; *How excellent is thy loving-kindness, O God ! &c.* A persuasion of his veracity and faithfulness, that *he is not man, that he should lie ; or the son of man, that he should repent.* (5.) It has in it a renouncing of all other refuges, as intirely insufficient to shelter the soul against those evils wherewith 'tis surrounded, *Hos. 14. 3.* *Asphur shall not save us, &c. Jer. 2. 23.* *In vain is salvation expected from the hills or multitude of mountains.* (6.) An expectation of help and safety from a God in Christ, against all those evils that the man is pursued with, *Psal. 62. 5, 6.* *My soul, wait thou only on God ; for my expectation is from him. He only is my rock and my salvation ; he is my defence : I shall not be moved. Psal. 142. 4, 5.* *I looked on my right-hand, and behold, but there was no man that would know me ; refuge failed me, no man cared for my soul. I cried unto thee, O Lord, and said, Thou art my refuge and portion in the land of the living.* (7.) This faith has a leaving of ourselves and all our cares and concerns upon him, to be disposed of according to his will and pleasure. The man is content to take what lot God in his providence shall see fit to carve out for him, *2 Sam. 15. 25, 26.* *The king said unto Zadok, Carry back the ark of God into the city : If I find favour in the sight of the Lord, he will bring me again, and shew me both it and*

his habitation. But if he thus say, I have no pleasure in thee ; behold, here am I, let him do to me as seemeth good unto him.

3dly, I will give you a few of the concomitants of this faith, which guards the soul against intimidating fears in a time of danger. (1.) then, It is accompanied with a blest quietness and tranquility of soul, amidst all the dangers of a present life. Hence, says the Lord to his people, *Isa. 30. In quietness and confidence shall be your strength.* The man having run in under the wings of *Shiloh*, the perfections of a God in Christ, he cries with *David, I will both lay me down in peace, and sleep : For thou, Lord, makest me to dwell in safety,* *Pf. 4. last.* (2.) It is accompanied with a waiting upon the Lord, in a way of duty, for his gracious presence either in grace or providence. *He that believes, does not make haste. The vision is for an appointed time ; tho' it tarry, wait for it, &c.* *Micah 7. 7. I will look to the Lord, I will wait for the God of my salvation, &c. Psal. 130. My soul waiteth for the Lord, like them that wait for the morning, &c.* (3.) 'Tis always accompanied with prayer, earnest prayer, at a throne of grace. Faith having got the promise in its arms, it runs strait to a throne of grace with it, to sue for the promised blessing, *Psal. 62. 8. Trust in him at all times, ye people, pour out your hearts before him.* Prayer is just the breath of faith ; and to pray, and not to believe, is to beat the air ; and to believe, and not to pray, is nothing but a presumptuous confidence, that will never bear a man through in the evil day. (4.) It is accompanied with a holy obedience or regard unto all God's commandments, *Psal. 119. 166. I have hoped for thy salvation, and I have done thy commandments. Shew me thy faith by thy works,* *Jam. 2. 18.* Let us never pretend to believe the promise, if we don't keep his commandments, *Psal. 50. 16. Unto the wicked God saith, What hast thou to do to take my covenant in thy mouth, seeing thou hatest instruction ? &c.* (5.) 'Tis frequently accompanied with a soul-ravishing joy in the Lord, *Isa. 12. 2. Behold, God is my salvation, I will trust, and not be afraid :* And then it follows, *With joy shall ye draw water out of the wells of salvation.* *Psal. 64. 10. The righteous shall be glad in the Lord, and trust in him ; and all the upright in heart shall glory.* *1 Pet. 1. 8. Whom having not seen, we love : In whom tho' now we see him not, yet believing, we rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory.* *1 Heb. 3. 17, 18, 19, &c.* Thus I have given you some account of that faith that fortifies the heart against the fear of evil.

I shall now endeavour to prove and make it evident, that faith doth indeed inspire the soul with a holy boldness and courage, or that it is a noble antidote against the intimidating evils that threaten danger ; and this will appear from the following particulars. The courage of Faith appears, 1st,

1st, From that serenity wherewith it possesseth the soul, amidst those evils and dangers that threaten it with utter ruin ; *Psal.* 32. 6, 7. *Surely in the floods of great waters, they shall not come nigh unto him. Thou art my hiding place, thou shalt preserve me from trouble : Thou shalt compass me about with songs of deliverance.* *Psal.* 27. 3, 5. *Though an host should encamp against me, yet I will not fear ; though war should arise against me, in this will I be confident. For in the time of trouble, he shall hide me in his pavilion ; in the secret of his tabernacle shall he hide me, he shall set me upon a rock.* The man through faith, like *Noah*, sings in the very midst of the waves, without fear of being swallowed up.

2^{dly}, The courage of faith appears in the hard work and service that it will adventure on when the Lord calls. O, says faith, when it hears God saying, Whom shall I send ? and who will go for us ? Here am I, send me ; I can do all things through Christ strengthening me ; He has promised to bear my charges, and therefore I will go in his strength, &c.

3^{dly}, From the enemies and dangers that it will look in the face, without being daunted. The three children, when the wrath of the King was like the roaring of a lion against them, threatening them with a burning fiery furnace seven times heated, their faith enabled them to a holy and indifferent boldness ; *We are not careful to answer thee, O King, in this matter ; the God whom we serve will deliver us.*

4^{thly}, The courage of faith appears in the bold and daring challenges that it can give to all enemies and accusers. O, says *Paul*, *Rom.* 8. 32, 33. *Who can lay any thing unto the charge of God's elect ?* The challenge is universal, in respect of all accusers, in respect of all accusations, and in respect of all the accused ; *Who can lay any thing, &c.* And then you have another challenge of faith in the close of that chapter, *Who shall separate us from the love of God ? Shall tribulation, or distress, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, &c.*

5^{thly}, From the weapons which it weilds which no other hand but the hand of faith can manage. The sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God, that is the weapon which faith deals with. With this weapon, Christ the captain of salvation teaches us to fight by his own example ; *Matt.* 4. *Thus and thus 'tis written.* And 'tis the truth and faithfulness of God in his word, that is the shield and buckler whereby faith encounters its enemies.

6^{thly}, From the battles it has fought, and the victories it has gained over the stoutest and strongest enemies. This is the victory whereby we overcome the world, even our faith. It resists the devil, and makes him to flee like a coward ; it presents the

blood of the lamb, and bears witness to the truth of the word, and so it defeats the old serpent, *Rev. 12. 7. They overcame him by the blood of the lamb, and the word of their testimony.* It treads upon death as a vanquished enemy ; O death, where is thy sting ? O grave, where is thy Victory ? &c. Thus faith puts to flight the armies of the aliens.

7thly, From the heavy burdens it will venture to bear upon its back, without fear of sinking under the load. The cross of Christ is a burden that frightens the world to look to him, or own him ; but faith takes it up, and takes it on, and cries, O the world is mistaken ; for his yoke is easy, and his burden is light ; and his commandments are not grievous. Our light afflictions, which are but for a moment, they work for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory.

8thly, From the hard and difficult passes that faith will open. When the way seems impassable, it sees the *breaker going up before it* ; and therefore, though heaven, earth, and hell stood in the way, it will clear the road of all difficulties. *Pihabiroth* and *Baal-zephon*, impassable mountains on every hand, the *Red-sea* before, and an enraged powerful enemy behind ; can there be any door of help ? Yes, says faith only stand still, and see the salvation of God ; and thereupon the waters divide, and a lane is made through the depths of of the sea for *Israel*. If we have faith as a grain of mustard-seed, we may say to this, and that, and the other mountain, Be thou removed, and it shall be done.

9thly, The courage of faith appears from the great exploits that it hath performed ; for which I refer you to *Heb. 11. per totum*, particularly *v. 33. 34. 35.* and does not this say, that 'tis a bold and courageous grace ?

10thly, From the trophies of victory and triumph that it wears. It takes up the trophies of Christ's victory over sin, satan, hell and death ; and cries, I will be joyful in thy salvation, and in the name of our God we will set up our banner. O will faith say, There lies the head of the old serpent bruised by the seed of the woman. There lies the curse of the law, that hand-writing that was against us, torn by the nails of his cross ; He hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us. There stands the world, and its good and bad things as a mass of mere vanity, overcome by Christ ; and therefore I'll tread upon them as dung and lofs, that I may win Christ, who is all in all. There lies death and the grave, slain by the death of Jesus ; and therefore I'll play at the den of this lion and cockatrice, for it cannot hurt me. Thus it appears that faith is a courageous grace, which fears no evil.

Third thing in the general method was, To speak a little of that Christian fortitude and boldness which makes a believer to fear no evil. All that I shall say upon this subject shall be, to offer the few following views for clearing it.

1st, The seat and subject of this Christian fortitude is the heart of a believer, renewed by sovereign grace ; and therefore it can never be found in the heart of a natural man. Indeed we find something that goes under that name, but is falsely so called, amongst natural men ; a natural boldness and hardiness of spirit to encounter dangers, yea, even death itself, in the pursuance of their designs. The soldier, at the command of his general, will go forward in battle, though he should die upon the spot ; the mariner and merchant will risque his life through storms and waves, without any great concern : But, alas ! while a man is destitute of the grace of God, all these flow only from pride, covetousness, revenge, or some such reigning lust that must be maintained and supported, or at best from the natural temper of the mind, or some carnal ends and motives. *That which is born of the flesh, is still flesh,* The fortitude or boldness that I now speak of, is only to be found in a heart or soul changed and renewed by the power of divine grace, the faith of God's operation (as I said) being the very spring and root of it : And hence it is, that we shall find this true Christian fortitude sometimes manifesting itself in these who, as to their natural temper, are the most timorous and faint-hearted ; for it makes the feeble as *David*, and as the angel of God before him. God says to them that are of a fearful spirit, *be strong, fear not* ; and then the man that quaked at the shaking of a leaf, becomes bold as a lion.

2dly, Let us view the object of this Christian fortitude, or that about which 'tis exerted, *viz.* truth and error, sin and duty. As to the concern of a present life, worldly interest and claims, or yet matters of indifferency, which a man may do or forbear without sin on either side, the spirit of *christianity* is the most yielding thing in the world ; our holy religion teaches us, as to the affairs of this life, rather than enter into litigious pleas, to quit our worldly claims ; which I take to be the meaning of Christ, when he says, *Mat. 5. 40. If any man will sue thee at the law, and take away thy coat, let him have thy cloke also* : And, as to matters of indifferency we are to become all things to all men, that we may gain some. If the eating of flesh will offend my brother, says *Paul*, *I will eat no flesh while the world stands*. So that, I say, this Christian fortitude is not expressed about these things, but about truth or error, sin or duty : Here it is that the Christian is to make his stand ; he

is to be valiant for the truth, to contend earnestly for the faith delivered to the saints, to *buy the truth* at any rate, and to sell it at no rate ; no, not the least hair or hoof of truth is to be parted with, though heaven and earth should mingle for his adhering to it in opposition unto these errors that have a tendency to obscure or destroy it. And the same thing takes place as to the matters of sin or duty, in which we are to *resist even unto blood, striving against sin*, in regard the greatest of sufferings are to be chosen rather than the least of sins : The reason of which is obvious, because by the one we are only exposed to the displeasure of men, but by sin we expose our selves to the displeasure of God, and dishonour him.

3dly, View this christian courage and fortitude as to the nature of it. It takes in, I think, these things following. (1.) A clear and distinct knowledge and uptaking of the truth as it is in Jesus, accompanied with a firm persuasion and assent of the soul unto it, and experience of the power of it upon ones own soul. Without this, a man, instead of being valiant for the truth, will, like the weather-cock, be turned aside with every wind of error or temptation. (2.) It has in it a making the truth of God in his Word the proper boundary both of his faith and practice. He will not embrace for doctrines the commandments of men ; no, but he will bring matters to the law and testimony, to be tried at that bar ; for, if they speak not according to these things, it is because there is no truth in them : And whatever will not abide the trial there, he throws it away as the spawn of hell, whatever human authority it may be supported with. God only is Lord of the conscience, and that he will subject to no authority but God only. (3.) It has in it a tenacious adherence unto truth and duty revealed or enjoined in the Word of God, and a refusing to quit it upon any consideration whatever, or whatever be the event. This is called a *keeping the Word of God's patience*, Rev. 3. 10. and a *holding of the testimony*, Rev. 6. 9. *I saw under the altar the souls of them that were slain for the Word of God, and the testimony which they held. A holding fast the profession of our faith without wavering*, Heb. 10. 23. This I take to be imported in that advice *Barnabas* gave unto the disciples at *Antioch*, that *with purpose of heart they would cleave unto the Lord*, Acts 11. 23. (4.) This Christian fortitude has in it a holy contempt of all that the man can suffer in a present world, in adhering to truth and duty. The man is easy about all the world, and its frowns or flatteries, if he can have God's testimony, and the testimony of a good conscience. If God be for us, says the man, who can be against us ? Let devils and men rage and roar, their wrath is bounded, it shall praise the

Lord, and the remainder of their wrath will he restrain. He 'endures, as seeing him that is invisible. He has his eye fixed upon another world than this ; and therefore he is ready to say, The sufferings of this present life are not worthy to be compared with the exceeding glory that is to be revealed ; our light afflictions which are but for a moment, they work for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory ; while we look not at things that are seen, but things that are not seen : For things seen, are temporal ; but things not seen, are eternal. (5.) It has in it also a cheerfulness, alacrity, and equality of spirit, under all the turns of a man's lot in the world, in following the Lord, and adhering to his cause and interest, *Phil. 4. 11, 12. I have learned in whatever state I am, therewith to be content : I know how both to be abased, and how to abound : Every where, and in all things I'm instructed, both how to be full, and to be hungry ; both how to abound, and to suffer want.*

4thly, This Christian fortitude or courage hath the following properties. (1.) It is distinct as to the ground it goes upon ; and so 'tis quite different from a blind zeal, which does more harm than good to religion. *I bear you witness (says Paul of his countrymen the Jews) ye have a zeal of God, but not according to knowledge.* (2.) It is a holy boldness ; for it stands in opposition to sin or error. The wicked world are bold to sin, but the Christian is bold to withstand it, and bold to lift up a banner for truth, when others are so bold as to pull it down. (3.) 'Tis a humble and self-denied boldness. The man is not bold or confident in himself, or created grace, as *Peter*, when he said, *Though all men should forsake thee, yet will not I*: No, but he is *strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might* ; and, when he has been helped to make a stand for the Lord, or for his cause, he will not be ready to sacrifice to his own net, like *Jehu*, *Come and see my zeal for the Lord of hosts*: No, but, with *Paul*, he will be ready to say, *Not I, but the grace of God in me : Not unto us, not unto us, but unto thy name be the glory.* And therefore, (4.) 'Tis a very meek boldness. *Moses* was the meekest man upon earth, and yet his meekness was consistent with such boldness of spirit, as to go at God's command to *Pharaoh*, and require him to let *Israel* go, under very awful certifications: And when *Pharaoh* was brought so far down from his former altitudes as to allow them to go, only to leave some little thing behind ; he boldly tells him, *not a hoof was to be left behind. Exod. 10. 26.* And yet in all this *Moses* retained his meekness of spirit ; for the *wrath of man worketh not the righteousness of God.*

5thly, This Christian courage and boldness, its proper season for exerting itself is when duty is attended with danger, or when

the profession of our faith is fair to expose us unto the rage and persecution of men. A coward will appear courageous when there is no enemy to withstand him; but true courage discovers itself in standing the shock & attack of the enemy: So true Christian courage discovers itself in a time of danger, when truth is falling in the street, to take it up then; or, when the following of the Lord in the way of duty exposes a man to hazard and danger, for a man to set his face to the storm like a flint, that is, I say, the proper time for Christian courage to exert itself. This you see in the case of the three children, when threatened with a burning fiery furnace if they would not worship the golden image; *We are not careful to answer thee in this matter, O king, we will not worship the image thou hast set up; the God whom we serve is able to deliver us.* And we see the same in *Daniel*, when a proclamation was issued out, forbidding any petition to be asked either of God or man, but only of the king for thirty days, he goes into his house, and casts open his windows, so as all might take knowledge of him, and praises and give thanks unto his God three times a day, tho' he knew the upshot of it would be his being cast into the lions den. The proper season of this Christian courage is a time of hazard attending duty. Alas! 'tis to be feared, that among the many crowds that seem to follow Christ, and profess his name in a day of prosperity, he would have but a thin backing of them, if providence were calling them to follow him to a *Calvary* or a gibbet. The seed that fell upon the stony ground had goodly braird for a while; but, wanting root and deepness of earth, it withered when the scorching sun of persecution and trouble did arise upon it.

Obly, The fruits and effects of this Christian courage and boldness in cleaving to the Lord and his way in a time of danger, and in holding his testimony, are very sweet and glorious, For, (1.) 'Tis a seal added unto the truth of God in the view of the world, and lets the blind world know that there is more value in the truth of God, and a matter of greater importance, than they imagine; and, by this means, truth is brought forth unto victory, notwithstanding of all the attempts of hell to obscure and bury it. (2.) Christian courage and boldness in owning the truth, especially in the face of danger, strikes a damp upon the very hearts of persecutors and oppressors of it, and puts them to a stand; as we see in the instance of the Apostles, *Acts* 4. 13. when the *Jewish Sanhedrin* perceived the boldness of *Peter* and *John*, and took knowledge of them that they had been with Jesus, they were brought to their wits-end, and say one to another, *What shall we do with these men?* (3.) It serves to hearten the spirits of those who love the truth,

and

and affords matter of praise when they see these that are in the high places appearing valiant for the truth; as we see in the same *Acts* 4. 23, 24. when *Peter* and *John* are let go, and when they come to their own company, making a report of all that had happened, they lift up their voice with one accord, and praise the Lord. (4.) A bold appearance for the truth and cause of Christ is a sweet evidence to a man of his own salvation, and that he shall be owned of the Lord another day; for, says Christ, *he that confesses me before men, him will I confess before my Father, and before his angels.* To the same purpose is that of the Apostle, *Rom.* 10. *With the heart man believes unto righteousness, but with the mouth confession is made unto salvation.* Thus I have given you a six-fold view of that Christian fortitude and courage which is the fruit of faith.

The *fourth* thing in the method was, To enquire into the influence that faith has upon this boldness. Unto which I answer in the particulars following;

1st, Faith serves to inspire the soul with Christian fortitude and boldness, by presenting God to the soul's view in his glorious Majesty; at the sight of whom, the fear of man, and all the dangers of time, do intirely evanish and disappear. Hence is that of *Moses*, *Heb.* 11. 27. *By faith he forsook Egypt, not fearing the wrath of the king.* Why, what was it that cured him of the fear of *Pharaoh's* wrath? We are told in the close of the verse, *That he endured, as seeing him that is invisible.* O Sirs, when the eye is opened, to see the infinite majesty, greatness, excellency and power of the great *JEHOVAH*, it would chuse rather to venture upon the fury of all the devils in hell, and men upon earth, than adventure to displease him, by parting with the least truth he has revealed, or by breaking one of the least of his commandments. It renders the soul unshaken under all trials; hence is that of *David*, *I have set the Lord always before me; because that thou art my right-hand, I shall not be moved.*

2^{dly}, Faith inspires the soul with Christian boldness and fortitude, by enabling the soul to make a right estimate of the truth, which is the great matter of strife and contention in the world. The devil deserted or abode not in the truth of God; and the way he ruined mankind at first, was by mincing away the truth of God's threatening, *In the day thou eatest thereof, thou shalt surely die:* Hath God said so and so? And such is his enmity at the truth of God, that his main efforts are to bring it into discredit, and to bring those that profess Christ either to disbelieve it, or deny it, or desert it. Now faith gives the soul a just view and uptaking of the value of every truth of God; yea, of these that would ap-

pear less fundamental, that it will not quit with the least hoof, tho' heaven and earth should mingle. O, says faith, I see that God has such a value and esteem for his truth, that he will rather throw heaven and earth back unto their original nothing, than let one jot of it fall to the ground; how then shall I give it up! In a word, truth, particularly revealed truth, is just the food on which faith lives; and faith is nothing else but a setting to the seal that God is true. Take away the truth, and faith is not: And therefore it is that faith and truth do sometimes exchange names; Jud. 3. *Contend earnestly for the faith once delivered unto the saints*; the meaning is, contend earnestly for the truth delivered to the saints. Faith & truth are exceedingly related, the one cannot subsist without the other; and hence it is that faith inspires the soul with courage in owning it, and cleaving to it, and fears no evil in so doing.

3dly, Faith inspires the soul with courage, by curing it of the fear of man, which causes a snare. What was it but the fear of man that made *Abraham*, and *Isaac* also, to tell a lie? What but the fear of man made *David* to feign himself mad, and *Peter* to deny his Master? Now, faith, when in a lively exercise, sets man in his proper light, and discovers him to be what he really is. For, 1. True faith tells the soul, That man is an inconsiderable creature before God, *Isa. 40. 15, 16, 17. Behold, the nations are before him but as the drop of a bucket, and are accounted as the small dust of the ballance: Behold, he taketh up the isles as a very little thing. All nations are before him as nothing, and they are accounted to him less than nothing and vanity.* Faith sees the great armies of enemies to be no more than a swarm of impotent flies before God: Hence is that challenge unto *Israel*, trembling at the fury of the enemy, *Isa. 51. 11, 12, 13. Who art thou, that thou shouldst be afraid of man that shall die, and the son of man that shall be as grass? and forgettest the Lord thy Maker, that hath stretched forth the heavens, and laid the foundations of the earth, and hast feared continually every day, because of the fury of the oppressor, as if he were ready to destroy? and where is the fury of the oppressor!* O Sirs, if the majesty of such a challenge were but laid home upon our spirits, we would make little account of poor man, and his displeasure, in cleaving to the Lord, and his truths and way. 2. Faith tells the soul, that as man is an inconsiderable creature, so he is a mortal dying creature; and that very day he dies, all his thoughts and designs perish, *Isa. 40. 6, 7, 8. The voice said, cry. And he said, What shall I cry? All flesh is grass, and the goodliness thereof is as the flower of the field. The grass withereth the flower fadeth; because the Spirit of the Lord bloweth upon it: Surely the people is grass. The grass withereth, the flower fadeth:*

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But the word of our God shall stand forever. Now, faith sees that to be true, and so it cures the soul of the fear of man. 3. Faith tells the soul, that any little power that man hath, is bounded by an over-ruling hand; and that he can go no further, in pushing his resentments, than God allows him, Psal. 76. 10. *The wrath of man shall praise thee, and the remainder of his wrath shalt thou restrain.* Hence is that of Christ unto Pilate, who was making his boast, that he had power to take away his life, or to save it; *Thou hast no power against me, but what is given thee from above.* As he sets bounds unto the raging sea, saying, *Hitherto shalt thou come, and no further;* so he sets bounds unto the rage of man. 4. Faith views man as a guilty criminal before God, the righteous judge of all the earth; and the conscience of guilt strikes them with fear and terror; especially when there is valiant contending for the truth, which they are endeavouring to stifle and suppress. Hence it was that *Felix*, when sitting upon the judgment-seat, fell a trembling before *Paul* at the bar, I mean, *Paul* when he spake of righteousness, temperance, and a judgment to come. They may well touch the body, the estate, the name, and such external things; but they cannot harm the soul, which is the more noble part of the man. Hence is that needful caution of Christ to his followers, *Fear not him that can kill the body, and when he hath done, cannot reach the soul: But fear him that is able to cast both soul and body into hell,* Luke 12. 4, 5. They cannot thunder with a voice like God; they cannot blot your names out of the book of life, or shut the gates of heaven, or open and shut up your souls in the prison of hell. Faith sees that the man's enemies in owning the cause of truth, are God's enemies; and all the enemies of God shall perish. Thus you see what a view faith gives of all the children of men, and their wrath; and this it is that inspires the soul with a holy boldness, and undaunted courage, in the face of the greatest dangers.

4thly, Faith inspires with christian courage in time of danger and trouble from the world, by viewing the inside of troubles for Christ, as well as the outside of them. When we walk by sense and not by faith, we will soon be despirited in a day of trouble and danger, and be ready to cry, *There is a lion in the way, there is a lion in the streets, the way is impassable.* Banishments, prisons and death, have something in them that are horrible to nature and sense. But now, faith looks to the inside of troubles, and considers what God has made, and can still make these unto his people. It considers how joyful the Lord's people have been in tribulation; what honey they have found even in the carcase of a lion; what songs he has given them in the night in stocks and dungeons, and
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what glorying in tribulation ; how has he brought into their bosom an hundred-fold of a reward even in this life ; how many of the Lord's people have found themselves quite mistaken concerning a suffering lot, when once they have fairly ventured upon it in following the Lord ; that which at a distance looked like a serpent, has been found to be a rod in the hand ; a prison has been turned into a palace to them, so that they have been more loth to come out of prison, than they were to enter into it. O Sirs, the consolations of God, which are not small, they infinitely counter-balance all the gall that is in the cup of suffering for Christ.

5thly, Faith inspires the soul with courage, by laying the glory that is to be revealed in balance against all the sufferings of this present life, and then it cries, They are not worthy to be compared together ; *Heb. 10. 34.* the saints there, they took joyfully the spoiling of their goods, knowing in themselves that they had in heaven a better and a more enduring substance. *2 Cor. 4. 16, 17.* Faith views the certainty of the reward of glory; for 'tis the evidence of things not seen ; and thereupon it cries, Verily there is a reward for the righteous. Faith views the greatness of the reward, saying, Our light afflictions, they work for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory. Faith views heaven and glory to be near at hand, that there is nothing but a partition-wall of clay, nothing but the breath of the nostrils between the soul and the immediate enjoyment of God ; and thereupon it cries, with *Paul, I desire to be dissolved, and to be with Christ, which is best of all.*

6thly, Faith inspires the soul with Christian courage, by clearing the heart and soul of the guilt and filth of sin. A man can never be a true sufferer for Christ, while conscience is roaring, and telling him that he has an angry God to meet with on the back of death : Hence we find that the spirit of a sound mind and a spirit of slavish fear are opposite, *2 Tim. 1. 7.* A spirit of a sound mind ; some understand it a mind purified from the guilt of sin : Now, faith is a grace that has a mighty influence this way, *Acts 15. 9. Purifying their hearts by faith.* It brings the soul to the Jordan of a Redeemer's blood, and washes it from sin, and from uncleanness ; it wraps up the soul in the white robe and mantle of the everlasting righteousness of Christ, and then it can with a holy boldness cry, And who is he that will contend with me ? He is near that justifieth. Hence is that, *Rom. 5. 1, 2, 3. Being justified by faith, we have peace with God, &c.*

7thly, Faith inspires the soul with courage and constancy in an evil day, by keeping the eye fixed upon Jesus, according to that advice of the Apostle, *Heb. 12. 2. Let us run our race with patience,*
looking

looking unto Jesus. And here I'll tell you of a few things in *JESUS* that serve to inspire the soul with holy courage and magnanimity. (1.) Faith sees *CHRIST* upon its head, as the great captain of salvation, giving out the word of command, Fight the good fight of faith, stand fast in the faith, quit your selves like men, be strong. And having him as a leader and commander, the man *waxes valiant in fight*, knowing that nothing but weakness is in the way. (2.) Faith views the example of *CHRIST*, how he encountered the wrath of God, the curse of the law, the fury of devils, and rage of men, with undaunted resolution, in order to our redemption: And the valour of the general inspires the soldier with courage to follow him through all imaginable danger. (3.) Faith sees all fulness of grace treasured up in *CHRIST*, the head of the mystical body, for the supply of every particular member according to his need; and then the man cries out with courage, as *Paul* did, I can do all things through *CHRIST* strengthening me. He becomes strong in the grace that is in *JESUS CHRIST*. (4.) Faith sees a reconciled God in *CHRIST* smiling on the soul, & standing on its side; and this gives courage. The Lord of hosts is with us, and the God of *Jacob* is our refuge. O Sirs, a God in *CHRIST* is not a God against us, but *Immanuel*, God with us; and this makes the soul to cry, I will fear no evil, for thou art with me. (5.) Faith, keeping its eye on *CHRIST*, sees victory secured in the end of the day; yea, it sees the victory already obtained in him, it sees the spoils of the enemy in his hand, and him triumphing over, and treading upon his enemies and his footstool: And this, O this, fills the soul with holy courage, saying, We are more than conquerors thro' him that loved us; thanks be unto God that giveth us the victory through our Lord *JESUS CHRIST*. Thus you see whence it is that faith inspires the soul with courage and boldness. Many other things to this purpose might be insisted upon, but I pass them, and go on to the

Fifth thing, which was the application.

Use 1. May be of information, only in two words. (1.) See hence the excellency of the grace of faith. Why, 'tis a bold, a daring and courageous grace; hence commonly opposed unto fear. *Why art thou fearful, O thou of little faith?* Faith pulls up the heart and spirit in a time of danger, and cries, Courage, for the day is mine own; I see the captain of salvation, who was made perfect through suffering, with the spoils of hell and earth in his hand. (2.) See hence the evil and danger of the sin of unbelief: Why, it intimidates the soul, and gives birth and being unto a dastardly and cowardly spirit, and either makes a man to stagger, or else turn back and cry, The way is impassable. Hence the fear-
ful

ful and unbelieving are linked together, *Rev.* 21. 8. O Sirs, except we believe, we shall never be established in an evil day. *Moses*, you heard, endured, as seeing him that is invisible.

Use 2. shall be of trial, Whether you have a faith that will carry you through, and inspire you with courage in an evil day? I'll give you the few following marks whereby you may try it. (1.) 'Tis a faith that springs out of the ruin of self. Whenever faith springs up, self goes down; self-wisdom, self-righteousness, self-sufficiency. You have seen your own wisdom to be but folly; *I am more brutish than any man*, &c. self-righteousness, you have seen it to be nothing but filthy rags, saying with the Apostle, *Ye doubtless, and I count all things but loss for the excellency of Christ*. Self-sufficiency and strength, you have seen it to be emptiness, saying, *In me dwelleth no good thing*. (2.) 'Tis a Christ-exalting faith, it sets him on high: *To you that believe, he is precious. Whom have I in heaven but thee?* (3.) 'Tis a feeding and soul-nourishing faith; *it eats the flesh, and drinks the blood of the Son of Man*. Christ in the word of grace is like its necessary food; hence it is that the Christian is a growing creature, he increases with the increase of God; like a *new-born babe, he drinks in the sincere milk of the word, and so grows thereby*. (4.) 'Tis a faith that works by love. It views the glory of Christ, and the heart follows the eye, and causes it to burn with love to him, and desire after him; and this love to Christ makes the man to love every thing that pertains to him: *He loves his word, and esteems it above gold*, &c. he loves his ordinances, where he gets fellowship with him; *I love the habitation of thy house*, &c. *How amiable are thy Tabernacles, Lord God of hosts?* &c. He loves his ways; *wisdom's ways are pleasantness*, &c. He loves his people, and all that have the Spirit of Jesus; *By this we know that we are passed from death to life, because we love the brethren*. He loves the very cross of Christ above the pleasures of the world, like *Moses*, who *esteemed the reproach of Christ greater riches than all the treasures of Egypt*. (5.) 'Tis a fertile or a fruitful faith, that is always exciting the man to the study of holiness in all manner of conversation. 'Tis an obedient and a working faith; *for faith without works is dead*. As works without faith are but dead works, which cannot be accepted by a living God; so faith without works is but a dead faith which will soon wither, and come to nought, particularly in a day of trial, like the faith of the stony-ground hearers.

Use 3. is of exhortation. And my only exhortation is, that you would not only believe, but study to have a faith that will inspire you with that courage which acted *David* in the text, when he

he said, *Though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil.* And, to excite your Christian fortitude and courage, consider by way of motive, 1. That the day we live in requires it; the winds and tide of error and defection are blowing and running hard; the judicatories of the church are stricken with such a spiritual frenzy and madness, that instead of acting in an agreeableness to the trust committed to them by the Lord in opposing error and corruption, they are patronising and setting up the right-hands of the wicked, and opposing and oppressing all that have any shew of serious godliness, or that open a mouth against the courses of defection they are engaged in: And who knows but a storm may be at the door, which will make us all to stagger? And therefore, I say, 'tis needful. 2. Consider, That Christ was bold and couragious in our cause; and shall not we be bold and couragious in his cause? See with what courage he takes the field, *Isa. 50. &c.* 3. Christ the captain of our salvation commands and requires his followers to take courage, and to be bold in him; he would have us to be *strong and of good courage*, as he said to *Joshua: Stand fast in the faith, quit yourselves like men, and be strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might.* When their spirits are beginning to droop, he says, *Fear not them that kill the body, &c.* 4. The eye of our great captain and general is upon us, and let that inspire us with courage. If a soldier knows that his captain is looking on, it will make him venture upon death and danger. Sirs, he that is invisible, our glorious leader and commander, is standing by, noticing how every one of us acquit ourselves in our warfare with sin, Satan and the world: His eyes are as a flame of fire, searching *Jerusalem* as with lighted candles; and should not this inspire us with courage? As it is a pleasure to him to see his soldiers brisk in the day of battle, so it sensibly touches and wounds him when they faint and go back, as though his cause were not worth the contending for. 5. Take courage, believer, for the cause is good; you fight for the honour of your God, for his precious truths, and for the liberty wherewith Christ hath made his people free; yea, for the defence of every thing that is valuable to ourselves and our posterity. The liberties and privileges of the church and kingdom of Christ in this land have been handed down to us at the expence of the blood of Christ, and the blood of many of his martyrs; and shall we not take courage to maintain and defend what has been transmitted to us at such a dear rate? 6. The enemy is but weak, and a couragious stand will make him to give way. *Resist the devil and he will flee from you:* So resist his emissaries, that are carrying on a course of defection

defection, and they will give back; or put them to such a stand, that they will be at their wits-end, as we see it was with the *Jewish court*, &c. Acts 4. &c. You know, when *Goliath* was slain by *David*, the heart of the *Philistines* failed them, and they fled. Sirs, *Goliath* is slain by Christ; he through death hath destroyed him that had the power of death, and therefore a noble stand against his armies will soon despirit them. 7. Take courage, believer, for *Jehovah*, God, Father, Son and Holy Ghost, is on your head, *Mic.* 2. close. And, if everlasting strength be on your side, what have you to fear? *Psal.* 46. &c. 8. The victory is sure, the spoils are already in the hand of our glorious general, and he has promised to give the victory to all that are faithful unto the death in cleaving to him and his way; and therefore up the heart. You see what a train of promises are made to the overcomers, *Rev.* 2. 3. chapters.

I conclude with a few advices, in order to your being fortified with Christian courage against the shadows of death that may cast up in your way through the wilderness.

(1.) Take care that your covenant with hell, and your agreement with death, be broken, and that you be really settled by faith upon the foundation that God has lain in *Zion*. O see that you be not building upon any foundation of sand with respect to your eternal concerns, but that you be really built upon the rock *Jesus Christ*; for another foundation can no man lay than that which is laid, which is *Jesus Christ*. You may read, to this purpose, *Mat.* 7. 24, 25, 26, 27. where you see that there are but two foundations that all men are building their hope of salvation upon, either upon the rock, or upon the sand. Christ himself is the rock, and all other things else, whether general mercy, self-righteousness, common graces or attainments, they are but foundations of sand: And you see also, that, when storms of trouble blow, the house built upon the rock stands the shock, but the house built upon the sand falls, and great is the fall of it. And therefore my advice unto you, in order to your standing when storms blow that have the shadows of death in them, is, for the Lord's sake take care that the foundation be well laid upon Christ, so that ye be joined to him by the bond of faith of God's operation; receive him, and rest upon him, as made of God unto you (sinners) wisdom, righteousness, sanctification and redemption.

(2.) Study not only to have faith in the habit, but to have faith in a continual exercise; for faith, like the spring of a watch, sets all the other wheels, I mean, the other graces of the spirit, a going; such as love, repentance, fear, hope, patience, and joy in the

the Lord: And, while these are kept in exercise, there is no fear tho' the shadows of death should stretch themselves over us. Hence the Apostle exhorts Christians *above all to take the shield of faith*, Eph. 4. 16. because all depends upon the grace of faith, which itself depends upon Christ; *I can do all things* (says Paul) *through Christ's strengthening me.* Faith speaks like a little omnipotent; faith is a victorious grace, that overcomes the world and all difficulties in its way. By faith it was that these worthies, Heb. 11. did wonders; by faith they quenched *the violence of fire, turned to flight the armies of the aliens, and raised the dead out of the grave*; by faith *they endured cruel mockings and scourgings, &c.* When created comforts vanish, riches, relations, pleasures; well, in that case, faith will look to the Lord, and have a respect to the Holy One of *Israel*; when sense can find nothing to stay upon, all props are withdrawn, faith will stay itself upon the Lord; when the promise seems to fail, faith will wait, and not make haste; when the strength of created grace begins to fail, faith will stay and sit down upon everlasting strength, *Isa. 26. 3.* So then, study to have faith in exercise.

(3.) Study to get your hearts steeled with Christian fortitude and courage, which is the natural fruit of that *faith which worketh by love.* We have a noble pattern of this, in the glorious Captain of salvation, whose followers we are called to be, particularly in a suffering lot: He set his face like a flint, and challenges all his enemies to encounter him, *Isa. 50. He is near that helpeth, who will contend with me? &c.* Paul followed his Master's example; when he was told that bonds and afflictions did abide him, *Acts 20. 24.* he answers, *none of these things move me; I am ready not to be bound only, but to die, &c.* And when he was to appear before that cruel monster, Nero, and no man to own him or stand by him, yet he stands his ground, resolving rather to die on the spot, than dishonourably to recede from his principles and profession. What holy courage breathes here in the words of David? *Yea, tho' I walk thro' the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil, &c.*

(4.) Another advice I give you is this, study to get rid of the idol of self, self-righteousness, self-wisdom, self-sufficiency. *If any man will be my disciple, let him deny himself, and take up his cross and follow me.* The prevalency of self was the forerunner of Peter's fall; *though all men should deny thee, yet so will not I.* He was too confident of his created grace and strength; and the Lord, in order to humble him, and unbottom him from this kind of confidence, will let him fall into a mire of sin, and deny him in the hour of temptation, at the voice of a silly maid. There are

two things wherein the strength of the Christian lies ; 1. Self-diffidence. 2. Confidence in the Lord. If these two be maintained, they will make the believer stand when the darkeſt ſhadows of death are round about him. *We are not ſufficient of ourſelves to think any thing as of ourſelves, but our ſufficiency is of the Lord.* This is juſt the way and work of faith ; it travels between ſelf-emptineſs and all fulneſs, between ſelf-guiltineſs and everlaſting righteouſneſs, between ſelf-weakneſs & everlaſting ſtrength: Hence *David, I will go in the ſtrength of the Lord, making mention of thy righteouſneſs, even of thine only.*


(5.) Study to get your hearts weaned from, and mortified to the world, and all the fading intereſts and enjoyments thereof. The world is a dead weight upon the ſoul, eſpecially in a day of trial, where the love of it has the aſcendant and prevalency in the heart: Hence we are told, that *Demas* forſook *Paul* and the profeſſion of Chriſtianity, by having loved this preſent world ; *If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him.* And, if the love of the Father be not in us, 'tis impoſſible we can ſtand in a ſhaking day. There are theſe things in the world that we would ſtudy to be mortified unto, in order to our ſtanding in a time of trial. 1. Our worldly eſtates and riches. *The love of money is the root of all evil, which while ſome have coveted, they have erred from the faith, &c.* O what a ſcandal is it to Chriſtianity, to ſee men profeſſing Chriſt and Chriſtianity ſo wedded to the world, and the periſhing riches of it ! In order to our getting it under our feet, let us view it in the light wherein God has ſet it to us in his word: His verdict of things is the trueſt ; and, if we believe him, all that is in it, is *meer vanity, vanity of vanities, &c.* Let us contemplate things above, and look at things not ſeen, &c. What will it appear when we are a little beyond death ? 2. Let us ſtudy to be mortified to our worldly credit, our name and reputation in the world. It commonly goes very near us, and it was among the ſharpeſt of trials that the worthies met with, *Heb. 11.* when they endured the trial of cruel mocking. 'Tis no eaſy thing to proud nature to have our name and reputation torn by reproach and caſt out as evil: Yet, I ſay, if we would ſtand in a day of trial, we muſt lay our worldly name and credit at the feet of Chriſt. He was content to have his name, which is above every name, blackned with reproach for us ; he was called *a blaſphemer, a wine-biber, a friend of publicans and finners*, an affecter of popularity ; yea, a devil: But *he endured the croſs, and deſpiſed the ſhame of it.* Sirs, let us remember that we are neither to ſtand or fall according to the world's verdict of us : *'Tis a ſmall thing for me to be judged of men ;*

he that judgeth me is the Lord. Let us remember, that there is a real glory in bearing reproach for Christ and his cause: *Moses esteemed the reproach of Christ greater riches than all the treasures of Egypt.* 3. Let us study to be mortified to worldly ease, quiet and liberty. *Paul* lays his account with bonds for the name of Christ. Sirs, what signifies the being, like *Paul* and *Silas*, shut up in a dungeon for Christ, and under chains, if his presence be with us, as it was with them? &c. A prison has been handled by the most eminent of the saints now in glory, *Jer.* 30. 2. *Matt.* 4. 12. *Acts* 5. 18. But God loosed his prisoners, and set them free at length. Commonly, when men are cruel, the Lord is kind: He looks down from heaven, to hear the sighing and groanings of his prisoners, &c. A prison or confinement by men, is not hell; men have their prisons, and God has his. We read of these who *sinned in the days of Noah*, that are now in the prison of hell, *1 Pet.* 3. 19. that is a terrible prison indeed, no relief there: Little hazard of mens prisons, if that be all the hell we are to endure. 4. Let us study to get our affections mortified even to the inordinate love of life. This indeed is a hard lecture, yet it is a lecture that we must learn, if we be the followers of Christ, when a day of trial comes. Sirs, if ever you took on with Christ the Captain of salvation, you have laid your lives at his feet, and all the comforts of life, to be disposed of by him, &c. Die we must one time or other, and we can never part with it more honourably than in the cause of Christ, &c. Christ parted with his valuable life for us, and shall we spare our poor miserable life for him? Again, think what a life of glory you enter into, when you lay down your life for his cause, &c.

(6.) In order to our being prepared for encountering the shadows of death, secure these three good things, and there is no fear; *a good God, a good cause, and a good conscience.* 1. Secure the presence of a reconciled God in Christ. It was the faith of this, that made *David* so bold here in the text; *Tho' I walk through the valley, &c.* His promise is sure, *I will never leave thee nor forsake thee, &c.* *When thou passest through the waters, I will be with thee, &c.* Let faith fasten on his word, and say, *This God is my God for ever and ever, and he shall be my guide even unto death.* 2. Secure a good cause. 'Tis a miserable heartless thing for a man to suffer as an evil-doer, to suffer as a busy-body in other mens matters; but to suffer for Christ, for the doctrine, discipline, worship and government of his house, to suffer for his members, or cleaving unto the least of his truths, is comfortable and creditable: And we are to account it all joy, when we fall into divers temptations and trials on this

account, even tho' but the least hoof of divine truth be concerned; for better heaven and earth were unhinged, than one jot or tittle of the truth of God be suffered to fall to the ground. 3. Secure a good conscience to bear you company; for this is like a bird in the bosom, that makes the countenance glad, even when storms blow hard from without. *This is our rejoicing, the testimony of our conscience, &c.* And, in order to your having a good conscience, get it sprinkled with the blood of the Lamb, and keep at the greatest distance from every thing that may defile it, even tho' it should offend the whole world in so doing.

(7.) Keep your eyes fixed upon Jesus as our glorious pattern, and see him within the vail with the spoils of hell in his hand, *Heb. 12. 2. Let us run with patience the race, &c.* View him as the renowned Captain of salvation, coming from *Edom*. Eye him, 1. As our Redeemer that has satisfied justice for us: So did *Job*; *I know that my Redeemer liveth, &c.* This put him in case to look death and the grave in the face. 2. Eye him as your Leader, and the *Captain of salvation made perfect through sufferings*. He did wade a sea of blood and wrath, and he is now on the other side, crying, *Fear not, for I was dead, and am alive.* 3. Eye him as your head of influence, and wait for supplies of grace from him; for he will not be wanting to give out life and strength to his members, as he has service for them, &c. 4. Eye him as a head of government, having all power in heaven and in earth in his hand, for the benefit of his mystical body: For this will make you sing in the midst of tribulation, saying, *The Lord lives, blessed be my rock, and let the God of my salvation be exalted. The Lord shall reign for ever, even thy God, O Zion, unto all generations. Selah.*



† The BELIEVER'S JOURNEY from the Wilderness of this World to the heavenly *Canaan*.

Being SERMONS preached after the Administration of the Sacrament of the LORD'S-SUPPER in *Edinburgh, March 6 and 7, 1732.* and afterwards enlarged upon in several SERMONS at *Sterling.*

By the Rev. Mr. EBENEZER ERSKINE.

CANT. viii. 5.

Who is this that cometh up from the wilderness, leaning upon her beloved.

IN the beginning of this chapter we find the church under the notion of the spouse or bride, breathing after further degrees of familiarity and fellowship with Christ, the glorious bridegroom of souls, than she had ever yet attained to ; *Oh that thou wert as my brother, that sucked the breasts of my mother !* Observe, they that know the Lord, *will follow on to know him ; they'll forget things that are behind, and reach unto those things that are before.* The spouse, altho' she had been brought into the *banqueting-house,* and allowed to *sit under his shadow with great delight,* yet here we find her pleading for further intimacy, renewed manifestations and discoveries of him : A believer can never be satisfied with any degree of nearness, 'till he come to be swallowed up in the immediate vision and fruition of him in glory. This request of the spouse she enforces with several arguments : She tells him, *ver. 2.* in the close, *that she would cause him to drink of her spiced wine, and the juice of her pomegranates ;* that is, she would entertain him with the fruits of his own spirit, the graces of his own operation, which are the only entertainment he is delighted with, and the best that her mother's house could afford. Observe, that a *believer* thinks nothing too good

† The occasion of this publication is, about a twelvemonth ago there were printed in one sheet of paper, and published without the author's knowledge or allowance, some uncorrect and spurious notes of these sermons, under the title of, *The character of a soul espoused to Christ :* With the publication and dispersing of which, the reverend Mr. *Erskine* was so much offended, that he caused apprehend some who were selling them ; and the spurious papers being at the same time seized, were burnt publickly, by order of the magistrates of *Sterling.*

And the *true notes* being much desired by many who heard them delivered, the reverend author has, for the satisfaction of such, and for the vindication of truth and himself, allowed them to be published.

for the entertainment of his blessed Lord; if he had ten thousand heavens of glory at his disposal, they should be all at his service: They cast their crowns down at his feet. Our blessed Lord's tender heart will not allow him to restrain or keep up himself long from the soul that is panting after nearness to him; for we find, *ψ. 3.* he grants her suit, and allows her a renewed discovery of his tender love, inasmuch that she is made to own, *his left-hand is under my head, and his right-hand doth embrace me.* Upon which, *ψ. 4.* she expresses her care and concern to prevent any further interruption of her fellowship & communion with her Lord, either by herself or others; *I charge you, O ye daughters of Jerusalem, that ye stir not up, nor awake my love till he please.* The daughters of Jerusalem, particular believers, being supposed to be witnesses of this blessed intimacy between Christ and the spouse, and unto the actings of her faith and love upon him, they are introduced in the words of the text, expressing their wonder and satisfaction at the blessed interview between Christ and his beloved spouse, even here in a militant state; *Who is this that cometh up from the wilderness, leaning upon her beloved?*

In the words we may notice, 1.) The designation given to this world, with reference to the church and people of God; 'tis but a wilderness, or a weary land, through which they are travelling toward their own home. (2.) We have the course they are steering while in the wilderness: They are not sitting still in it, or going further into it, as if it were their home; no, they are *coming up from the wilderness*: Their *affections are set upon things that are above, & not upon things that are below*; they have got a tasting of the grapes of *Eshcol*, they have got a view of the land afar off, & of the King in his beauty, which makes them disrelish this present world and look and long, *not for the things that are seen, but the things that are not seen, and which are eternal.* (3.) We have the spouse's posture as she comes up from the wilderness; she is *leaning*. *Hebreans* observe, that this is a word not elsewhere used in scripture; the seventy interpreters translate it, *confirming*, or *strengthening* herself: It plainly supposes the spouse's weakness and impotency in herself to grapple with difficulties in her way through the wilderness, together with her dependance on the grace and furniture that was laid up for her in Christ; and that she must needs sag and fail in her journey, without new supplies and communications of light, life, and strength from him, in whom all fulness dwells. (4) We have the blessed stay and prop on which she leans and rests her weary soul, in coming up from the wilderness; 'tis upon her *beloved*, that is, upon Christ, whose love and loveliness had ravished

ed her heart, and drawn out her cordial assent and consent to him as the bridegroom of souls, who had betrothed her to himself in mercy, faithfulness and loving-kindness. 'Tis pleasant here to observe how the heart of God the Father, and the heart of the believer jump and centre upon Christ? *This is my beloved Son* (says God the Father) *in whom I am well pleased; He is my servant whom I uphold, mine elect in whom my soul delighteth.* And O! says the believer, as he is the Father's beloved, so he is my beloved too; he is just the darling and delight of my soul; *Whom have I in heaven but thee? and there is none in all the earth I desire besides thee.* (5.) We have the influence or impression that this pleasant sight has upon the daughters of *Jerusalem* expressed in a way of question, *Who is this?* This is not a question of ignorance, as tho' they wanted to be informed whom the spouse was; but, 1. 'Tis a question of wonder: They are struck with a holy amazement at such intimacy and familiarity between parties that are at such infinite distance; that the *high and lofty one who inhabits eternity*, should admit dust and ashes, defiled with sin, the abominable thing that his soul hates, into such friendship and fellowship. 2. 'Tis not a question of contempt, but of esteem. Although believers, who are the spouse of Christ, be in themselves despicable and polluted; yet, by vertue of their relation to Christ, they are worthy of the highest esteem, being made beautiful thro' the comeliness that he puts upon her. 3. 'Tis a question of *approbation* and *commendation*: They hereby express their satisfaction with her practice, and the exercise of her faith in *coming up from the wilderness leaning on her beloved*, as the safest course she could take for accomplishing her journey to the *Canaan* that is above, thro' the dens of lions, and mountains of leopards. Observe, That it is, and will be the pleasure and satisfaction of a gracious soul, to see others thriving and prospering in the Lord's way, and in acquaintance with Christ, even tho' they themselves be outstript and darkned thereby in the world's view. The words would afford a great variety of doctrines, but I confine myself unto this one,

OBSERV. That it is the undoubted duty and the laudable practice of believers, truly betrothed to Christ, to come up from the wilderness of the world toward the land of rest and glory that is above, staying and leaning their souls upon him as their beloved. *Who is this that cometh up from the wilderness leaning on her beloved?*

The doctrine being clearly founded on the words, I shall not stand on the confirmation of it, but shall, thro' divine assistance, endeavour to speak to it in the following method and order;

(1.) Give you the *characters* of the soul espoused or betrothed

to Christ. (2.) Speak a little of the *world*, the place of the believer's residence, under the notion of a *wilderness*. (3.) What may be the import of the *spouse's coming up from the wilderness*. (4.) Speak a little of her posture; for she comes up, *leaning upon her beloved*. (5.) Enquire into the *grounds and reasons* of this doctrine, why the spouse of Christ *cometh up from the wilderness*, and why she comes *leaning on her beloved*. And then, (6.) Apply the whole.

First thing is, To give you the *character* of a soul truly espoused to Christ; and I shall endeavour to draw the character from the text and context.

1st then, He is one that is always breathing to more and more nearness to the Lord, and a more intimate fellowship and acquaintance with him. Hence the spouse here, *ver. 1.* notwithstanding all she had found, cries out, *O that thou wert as my brother, that sucked the breasts of my mother!* Some make this to be a wish or a prayer of the Old Testament church, for the actual incarnation of the son of God; as if she had said, *O that that happy day were come, when thou shalt actually become the seed of the woman, a child born to us!* I think, if thou wert actually incarnate and clothed with my nature, I would not keep at such a distance, but would enter *with boldness into the holiest through the veil* of thy human nature. Whether that be in it or not, yet 'tis plain that the words express a desire after more intimacy and nearness than she had yet enjoyed. Sirs, if you be espoused unto Christ, whatever nearness or access you have had, you will desire more, and be ready to cry with *David*, *Psal. 42. 1. As the hart panteth after the water-brooks, so panteth my soul after thee, O God.* Whenever any cloud overcasts your sky you will be ready to say, *O that I knew where I might find him.*

2dly, The soul espoused to Christ will not be ashamed to own him before the world, as you see in the close of *ver. 1.* When I should find thee without, I would kiss thee, and should not be ashamed. We are commanded to *kiss the Son, lest he be angry*, *Psal. 2.* And they that are espoused to him, they kiss him with a kiss of affection and love, and with a kiss of subjection and reverence, and are not ashamed to do it before the profane carnal world, who perhaps may be ready to laugh at them for their religion; no they'll confess him and his cause and interest, whatever be the hazard, knowing that they who confess Christ before men, he will not be behind hand with them, but will confess them before his father and before his holy angels. Sirs, beware of suffering yourselves to be banter'd or laughed out of your religion in this degenerate

degenerate day: for *he that is ashamed of me before men, of him will I be ashamed before my Father, and before his Angels.* Christ despised the shame and ignominy of the cross for us, and therefore let us despise the reproaches or the revilings of the world in owning him.

3dly, The soul that is really espoused to Christ, is heartily concerned for the good of his mother-church, and to have the Lord's gracious and sensible presence in his ordinances; that he may be a publick good to others, as well as to itself. This disposition you see in the spouse here, *ver. 2.* in the beginning, *I will bring thee to my mother's house*; as if she had said, I would make it my business to have the Lord bro't back into the assemblies & dwelling-places of Zion, that he might be the glory in the midst of her. Sirs, the Lord is angry with our mother at this day, he is threatning to break up house with her; there is little of God to be seen or felt in our *judicatories*, in *ordinances*, in *preaching*, in *hearing*, in *communicating*; an *Ichabod* may read in every corner: Little of the life and power of religion is to be seen among magistrates, ministers or people. Well, if you be espoused to Christ, you will study to wrestle, and bring him back again to your mother's house, especially when you find him in a sensible way present with your own soul; according to the practice of the spouse, *Cant. iii. 4. I found him whom my soul loveth; I held him, and would not let him go till I brought him to my mother's house, and to the chambers of her that conceived me.*

4thly, The soul espoused to Christ is one that is fond of the instructions of his word and Spirit; as you see in the spouse, in the middle of *ψ. 2.* This is one of her great designs in bringing Christ unto her mother's house, that so she and others might have the mysteries of the kingdom, and secrets of the covenant, and the wonders of his law more clearly opened and unfolded. Christ is the sun of righteousness, the light of the world; he is made of God unto us *wisdom*, the great *prophet* of the Church, the *interpreter among a thousand*: And when he comes unto a land or place in the power of his Spirit accompanying his word, the oracles of heaven are then opened, and the mysteries of the kingdom are unveiled, *the people that sat in darkness are made to see great light*; and, O this is the delight and desire of every soul truly espoused to the Lord.

5thly, The soul espoused to Christ is one that is desirous to give him the best entertainment that it is capable to afford; as the spouse in the close of *ψ. 2.* *I would cause thee to drink of my spiced wine, & of the juice of my pomegranates.* Christ entertains his spouse with fat things full of marrow, wines on the lees well refined; and

and they that taste of this food, they are so ravished with it, that they know not what requital to make him ; but they would give him the best entertainment that they can imagine, if they had it.

6thly, The soul espoused to Christ is one that would just lie and lodge in the arms of a redeemer, *ψ. 3. His left-hand shall be under my head, and his right-hand shall embrace me.* To the same purpose is what we have, *ψ. 6. Set me as a seal upon thine arm ;* as if she had said, let my life, my soul be hid with Christ in God ; let me be incircled in his everlasting arms, and the eternal God my refuge. As it is the desire of a gracious soul to have Christ lying as a bundle of myrrh between its breasts, so it cannot rest till it be in the arms and bosom of him who is in the bosom of the Father ; and Oh, when it comes there, the soul cries, *This is my rest,* here will I dwell, for I like it well.

7thly, When the soul wins to any nearness to the Lord, 'tis afraid of every thing that may stir up his displeasure, or provoke him to withdraw ; as you see it was with the spouse, *ψ. 4. I charge you, O ye daughters of Jerusalem, that ye stir not up nor awake my love till he please.* The poor soul that is admitted to nearness to the Lord, is afraid of the least squint look to the world, self, or any of Christ's rivals ; afraid of the workings of a remaining body of sin and death, pride, vanity, or any thing else that may provoke him to cover himself with a cloud in his anger. The man knows, to his sad experience, that his iniquities separate between him and his God ; and therefore he watches against the least appearance of evil. Oh there are but few tender Christians in our day, and hence it comes that there is so little of sensible communion with the Lord ; for communion with God can only be maintained in a way of holiness, and habitual tenderness of walk, *Psal. 24. 3. Who shall ascend unto the hill of the Lord ? and who shall stand in his holy place ? ψ. 4. He that hath clean hands, and a pure heart, &c.*

8thly, The soul espoused to Christ is one who is bending his course heavenwards, and has his back turned upon this world as a howling wilderness. They desire a better country, that is, an heavenly ; they are looking for a city that hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God ; and therefore they look upon this world, and the things of it, with a holy contempt and disdain ; as you see in the spouse here, she is coming up from the wilderness toward the promised land of glory.

9thly, He is one whose life in this world is a life of faith and dependence on Christ, as you see in the spouse here ; as she travels thro' the wilderness, she leans on her Beloved. Here we walk by faith, not by sight : The life I live is by faith on the son of God.

But

But of this more afterwards. Thus I have glanced at the character of the soul espoused to Christ, as it lies in the preceding context.

The *second* thing was to take a view of the place of the present residence of the spouse of Christ; 'tis a *wilderness*, a very unheartsome lodging: For,

1st, You know a wilderness is a *solitary* place, *Psal.* 107. 4. 'tis said there of exiles or travellers, That they wandred in a wilderness, in a solitary way. O what a weary solitary place is this world unto God's people! especially when, to their own sense and feeling, the Lord is withdrawn from them: The whole world looks void and empty; all the riches, pleasures, relations and comforts of time cannot fill his room; so that they are in a manner wild, and know not what to do, or whither to turn them, when Christ is away. Hence is that of *Job*, 23. 8, 9. *Behold 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, but I cannot see him. O that I knew where I might find him!*

2^{dly}, A wilderness is a *misty* and *foggy* place, where noisom steams and vapours, arising out of the earth, darken the sky; which are both prejudicial to health, and ready to lead the traveller out of his way: Such a part is this world to the Lord's people. What hellish steams and vapours are cast up by Satan, the god of this world, to bemist the traveller to glory, whereby he is in danger of losing his *way* and *spiritual health* at once? Never was there an age wherein such *pestilential vapours* of *error, blasphemy, carnal policy and profanity*, did more abound, than in this day wherein we live; the *mouth of the bottomless pit* is as it were opened, and *blasphemy* and *errors* cast up, to darken and obscure the *sun of righteousness*, &c.

3^{dly}, A wilderness is a *barren* place; it affords little or nothing for the support of human life: Hence it is said of the travellers in a wilderness, *Psal.* 107. 5. *They were hungry and thirsty, and their soul fainted in them.* Such a place is this world to God's people; 'tis a barren land, which yields nothing but swines husks, *vanity and vexation of spirit*, which the men of this world make their food, and their all: Hence *David* complains that he was in a dry and thirsty land, where there was no water. It is true indeed, the travellers to glory have their wilderness-meals to keep in their life, in their journey: but no thanks to the world for that; for the food they live upon does not come out of the earth, the wilderness of this world cannot afford it; no, but, like the manna that fed *Israel* in the wilderness, it comes from above.

4^{thly}. A wilderness is a place of *danger*; thieves, and robbers,
and

and beasts of prey frequent the wilderness, whereby travellers are in danger of being spoiled of their life and substance. Such a place is this world to God's people; 'tis called a *den of lions*, and a *mountain of leopards*, Cant. 4. 8. Here it is that the great *Abaddon* and *Apollyon*, the destroyer of mankind, with all his hellish legions form their camp, watching all opportunities to devour and swallow up the traveller to glory. Hence the devil is called *the ruler of the darkness of this world*, and he goes about like a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour. And tho' hell and its armies shall never so far prevail, as to keep the believer out of heaven; yet they will study to wound him, and make him go halting thither. And, Sirs, you who have been at a communion-table, had need to také heed to yourselves when you go out into the wide wilderness; for, I assure you, Satan will be seeking to *winnow and sift you as wheat*: If you be only professors, and no more, he will study to rip up your heels, and make you a scandal to religion; but if you be real believers, and have met with the Lord, the pirate will be upon you to spoil you of your loading: And therefore *be sober, be vigilant*; for you are yet within the devil's territories.

5thly, A wilderness is an unsettled place; many heights and hollows, turnings and windings in a wilderness: Sometimes a traveller in a wilderness will be on the top of mountains, sometimes down in the valley; sometimes his sky will be clear, and sometimes cloudy; sometimes a storm, and sometimes a calm. Just so is it in the case of the believer while hereaway: Sometimes he is on the mount of *communion*; at other times down in the valley of desertion: Sometimes he is on mount *Zion*, where he enjoys a pleasant calm; at another time he is brought to mount *Sinai*, where a storm of the thunder of the law startles him: Sometimes the candle of the Lord shines on his head, and through the light of the Lord he walketh through darkness; at other times he walks in darkness, and can see no light, so that he is made to cry, *Oh that it were with me as in months past!* &c.

6thly, Many pricking briars grow in the wilderness, many rough ways, which are uneasy to travellers. Just so here, the believer passing through the world, has the rough and thorny paths of affliction to travel: *Through many tribulations we must enter into the kingdom of heaven*, John 16. and last verse, *In the world ye shall have tribulation*. The cloud of witnesses, who are now surrounding the throne, they come out of much tribulation. See what troubles they endured, Heb. 11. 36, 37, 38. Thus you see in what respect this world, the present abode of the believer, is called a *wilderness*.

Third thing in the method was, To speak a little of the course that the spouse is taking, or the airth toward which she is bending while in the wilderness: She is not going down, *but coming up from the wilderness*. And this, I conceive, may imply these things following;

1st, That believers, or those who have really taken Christ by the hand, they have turned their back on the ways of sin, which lead down to the chambers of death. The way of the men of this world, 'tis a down-the-hill way, which is indeed easy and natural; but, like a rolling stone upon the precipice, they roll on till they land in the bottomless gulph of eternal misery: But now the soul espoused to Christ has forsaken the down-hill way of this world, and steers a quite opposite course; they will not be conformed unto the world, or the course of the world, even tho' the world should account them for signs and wonders because they will not run with them unto the same excess of riot.

2^{dly}, This *coming up from the wilderness* implies, that believers are pilgrims on the earth, and that this world is not their home. This is what *David*, a great king, frankly owned in the midst of his worldly wealth and grandeur, *Psa*'. 119. 19. *I am a stranger in the earth, hide not thy commandments from me*. And this was the confession of that cloud of worthies, *Heb*. 11. 13. of whom the world was not worthy; they confessed that they were *strangers and pilgrims on the earth*.

3^{dly}, It implies a dissatisfaction with, and a disesteem of, this world, and all things in it; and therefore she has her back turned upon it, and her face toward a better airth: Like the *poor prodigal*, he can find nothing in the far country but husks, that are only fit for the swine; or, like *Solomon*, they see all here-away to be but *vanity of vanities, all vanity and vexation of spirit*; and therefore they look not at the things that are seen, which are temporal and fading. Like the *woman clothed with the sun*, she tramples upon the moon; or with *Paul*, accounts them no better than *dung and lofs*. O, Sirs, whatever bulk this world, and the glaring beauty of it, may have in your eyes now, yet it will appear but a very little thing, yea, worse than nothing, when you are but one moment on the other side of death: And therefore, O set not your hearts or eyes on that which is not; put up *David's* prayer, *Turn away mine eyes from beholding vanity*.

4^{thly}, This *coming up from the wilderness* implies, that tho' she could find no rest nor quiet hereaway, yet she expected a quiet rest on the other side, or beyond the wilderness. If she had no view of a better country, she would pitch her tent, and with *Peter*, build tabernacles

tabernacles in the wilderness, and not come up from it. *There remaineth a rest for the people of God, Heb. 4. Blessed are the dead that die in the Lord; they rest from their labours, and their works follow them.* Up thy heart, believer, the day of thy complete redemption from sin and sorrow draweth nigh; thy sighs ere long will end in songs, thy labour in eternal rest, thy warfare in victory for evermore.

5thly, This *coming up from the wilderness* implies motion, and progress in her motion heavenwards. The ransomed of the Lord, they are looking with their faces toward Zion, and *they go from strength to strength, 'till they appear before God in Zion. The righteous shall hold on his way, and he that hath clean hands waxeth stronger and stronger. The path of the just is as the shining light, that shineth more and more unto the perfect day.* Whatever length we are come in religion, we must not sit down, as if we had attained, or were already perfect; no, but we must forget things that are behind, and reach forward to things that are before.

6thly, This phrase of *coming up from the wilderness* implies, that religion is an up-the-hill work and way; for the spouse's way here is represented under the notion of an ascent. There are a great many hills and mountains, believer, that lie cross thy way to glory. I only tell you of a few of them.

(1.) There is a hill of *remaining ignorance* that the believer has to climb, in coming up from the wilderness; *for we know but in part, and now we see darkly, as through a glass.* He has got some twilight blinks of the glory of the Lord, and of the mysteries of the kingdom; but O they are so faint and languid, that he is ready to think he knows nothing at all. Hence is that complaint of holy Agur, while wrestling up this hill, *Prov. 30. 1. I'm more brutish than any man, nor have I the understanding of a man: I neither learned wisdom, nor have the knowledge of the holy.*

(2.) There is the hill of *prevailing unbelief*, which stands upon the top of the former; ignorance being the very root and foundation of unbelief. The poor believer is many a time put to a stand while climbing up this hill, as you see in this holy man, *Psal. 77.* What but the prevalency of unbelief made him to cry, *Is his mercy clean gone? has he forgotten to be gracious? has he in anger shut up his tender mercies? David gets such a backset with this hill of unbelief, that he sometime a day cried out, All men are liars, the prophets of God not being excepted. Oh how much need of that caution, Heb. 3. 13. Take heed, brethren, lest there be in any of you an evil heart of unbelief, in departing from the living God.*

(3.) A mountain of *guilt* casts up to the believer in his travelling

ling through the wilderness, which sometimes seems to tumble upon him, and crush him under the weight of it. Hence *David* cries, *My iniquities are gone over mine head, as a burden too heavy for me to bear*: And at another time, *Psal. 40. 12. Innumerable evils compass me about, mine iniquities have taken hold of me, so that I am not able to look up, &c.*

(4.) A hill and mountain of *divine hidings & withdrawings* casts up in the wilderness, and this joins with the former; for 'tis *our iniquities that separate between us and our God*, that he hides his face from us: And O, when the believer is wrestling with this hill, *he walks in darkness, and sees no light*; which makes it exceeding melancholly. Hence *Job, I go mourning without the sun*; and the church, *Isa. 49. 15. Zion said, The Lord hath forsaken, and my God hath forgotten.*

(5.) And, while the believer is involved among the dark clouds of desertion, mountains of wrath sometimes cast up in his view; as you see in the case of *Job*, chap. 4. 6. *The arrows of the Almighty are within me, &c.* And *Heman*, *Psal. 88. While I suffer thy terrors, I am distracted: Thy terrors have cut me off, &c.* Sometimes a hill of strange and cloudy dispensations cast up in the wilderness that he knows not what to make of them: God's way to him is many times *in the sea, and his paths in the mighty waters*. How was *Jacob* overfet with dark dispensations, when he is made to cry, *Joseph is not, Simeon is not; and yet ye will take Benjamin away also: Me ye have bereaved of my children, all these things are against me.* *David*, the man according to God's heart, when he took a view of that dark dispensation of the prosperity of the wicked, and adversity of the truly godly, he is so overfet with it, that he is at the point of giving up with religion altogether as a vain thing, *Psal. 73. 13. Verily I have cleansed my heart in vain, I have washed my hands in innocence.*

(6.) Sometimes a hill of disappointments faints the believer's heart. Perhaps he was expecting a meeting with God in his ordinances, some supply, some communication of the Spirit, some influence and watering; but, alas! he finds ordinances to be dry breasts, or like the brooks of *Tema* where no water is; and thereupon the poor and needy soul is ready to faint, and their tongue to fail for thirst. Such a melancholly disappointment the spouse meets with, *Song 3. at the beginning, By night on my bed I sought him, but I found him not, &c.* I might tell you of the dark hills of temptation from hell, and oppression from the world, and the workings of remaining corruption; but I do not insist. Only, from what has been said, you may see, that religion is an up-the-hill

hill way; they who expect to win heaven in a way of sin and sloth, they'll land in hell: For, *If the righteous are scarcely saved, where shall the sinner and ungodly appear? The kingdom of heaven suffereth violence, &c.* So much for the third thing, what is implied in coming up from the wilderness.

Fourth thing was, To speak to the spouse's posture; she comes up leaning on her beloved. But I shall wave this at present, and only make some practical improvement of what has been said in a doctrinal way.

Use first of this branch of the doctrine, may be information, in the few following particulars. Is it the duty and practice of believers to come up from the wilderness of this world, and to aspire after better and greater things than are hereaway. Then,

1st, See hence the paucity of true believers who are espoused unto Christ. Why, the greatest number, instead of coming up from the wilderness, are going down the wilderness: *Broad is the way that leadeth to destruction, and many there be that go in thereat.* Oh what shoals of people are there in the world, whose god is their belly, and who mind earthly things? But how few are they who have their affections set upon things above, and who are really pointing heavenwards? *Strait is the gate, and narrow is the way, that leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it.* The world perhaps may laugh at them who keep the narrow way of true religion; but behold the end of the day. *The triumphing of the wicked is short, for they shall lie down in sorrow: But as for the righteous and the upright, mark him, for the end of that man is peace; his weeping endures but for a night, joy shall come in the morning.*

2dly, See hence why believers are called men of another spirit than the rest of the world. 'Tis said of Caleb and Joshua, that they were of another spirit; and the Apostle, speaking of himself, and other believers, says, *We have not received the spirit of this world, but the Spirit which is of God, that we may know the things that are freely given us of God.* Why, here is the ground of it, other men are of a mean fordid spirit, and are content with the wilderness, and fill their belly with the husks that they find in the wilderness; but 'tis otherwise with the true believer, he comes up from the wilderness, he seeks and affects these things that are above, where Christ is at the right-hand of God. The world generally have a mistaken notion of true greatness of spirit; they fondly imagine, that it lies in pushing their resentment against these that injure them; or in pushing their fortune, as they call it, in scrambling up to the pinnacles of worldly honour, wisdom, riches or preferment: Whereas true greatness of spirit lies in a contempt of all these

these things, in comparison of things that lie beyond the wilderness; it lies in looking, not at the things that are seen, but at the things that are not seen. O, Sirs, we sink our souls before their original make and excellency, when we lie down, with the serpent, to lick up the dust and vanity of this world: True greatness of spirit is, with the spouse of Christ, to soar above the world, *to mount up with wings like eagles*, to things calculated for the soul and its heavenly nature.

3dly, See hence the excellency of the Christian religion, which makes a discovery of things that lie beyond the wilderness of this world, and calls a man to *come up from the wilderness* in order to his being possessed of them. *Life and immortality are brought to light by the Gospel.* The heathen philosophers had indeed some foolish guesses about another world, a life to come; but, how strangely were they in the dark about it! One of the best of them, when he was dying, told his friends, *That he was persuaded of a future state; but whether he was going to a state of happiness or misery he did not know.* But now the Christian religion *brings life and immortality* (I say) *to light*, and opens a way and passage to a happy eternity: 'Tis like mount Pisgah, from which one may stand and discover the goodly land, that lies on the other side of Jordan. David, Psal. 16. when he wins up to the top of it, and gets a view of the glories of heaven and eternity, he cries out like a man in a transport, *My heart is glad, and my glory rejoiceth: Why? Thou wilt shew me the path of life; in thy presence there is fulness of joy, and at thy right-hand there are pleasures for evermore.*

4thly, See hence a good reason why the saints express such longings to be away out of the body. *I desire to be dissolved*, says Paul; *In this we groan earnestly, desiring to be clothed upon with our house which is from heaven: Why?* 'Tis no wonder; for this world is but a wilderness unto them. And, how natural is it for a traveller in a wilderness to wish and long to be at home in his own country, and among his own kindred, where their inheritance lies, even *an inheritance that is incorruptible, undefiled, and which fadeth not away?*

5thly, See a good reason why the saints should possess their souls in patience under all the trials of a present life. Who is it that, travelling thro' a wilderness, does not lay his account with inconveniences and difficulties? But besides, believer, thou art *coming up from the wilderness*, and ere long thou will come out of it, and beyond it altogether. *In the world* (says Christ) *ye shall have tribulation; but look beyond the wilderness to thy fellow-travellers, whose journey is ended. Who are these that are clothed*

in white robes? and whence came they? Rev. 7. 13. You have the answer in the verse following, *These are they that came out of great tribulation, and have washed their garments, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb: And they are before the throne of God, and serve him day and night in his temple.* Wait a little, believer, and thou shalt be there also; and then *thy present light afflictions, which are but for a moment, shall resolve in a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory; and God shall wipe away all tears from thine eyes.*

Use second of this doctrine may be of reproof. *Is it the duty of believers, and their practice, to come up from the wilderness of this world?* Then,

1st, It reproves those who sit down in the wilderness, and take up with it as their home; like the fool we read of in the Gospel, who, when he had amass'd a great deal of worldly substance together, he cries, *Soul, take thine ease, thou hast much goods laid up for many years.* But, Sirs, read what followed in that parable of the rich fool; perhaps God may come and say, *Thou fool, this night thy soul shall be taken from thee, and then whose shall these things be?* You who are perhaps clothed in purple and fine linen, and fair sumptuously every day, and have no tho'ts of another world, look to it in time, lest in a little you be weltering among purple flames, crying for a drop of water to cool the tip of your tongue.

2dly, It reproves these who, instead of coming up from the wilderness, are going down the wilderness. The way of sin is said to be a downward way, and leads unto hell beneath; and this road all the profane world are taking. You may see a roll of their names, and where their landing will be, Rev. 21. 8. *The fearful and unbelieving, and the abominable, and murderers, and whoremongers, and sorcerers, and idolaters, and all liars, shall have their part in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone, which is the second death.*

3dly, It reproves those who to men would appear to be coming up from the wilderness, and yet are steering a quite other course: such as the painted sepulchre, who goes under a mask of religion, and yet is rotten at the root;—he is going down the wilderness instead of coming up. Christ has pronounced many heavy woes against you, and therefore *the sinners in Zion shall be afraid, &c.* Again, the *Moralist*, whose outward walk before the world perhaps is, *touching the law, blameless*, and yet never comes to him who is the *end of the law*: Your morality and civility will be found wanting a true root, not being grounded and grafted in Christ, of whom only *our fruit can be unto holiness, and the end everlasting life.* The same we may say of the *Legalist*, he is but going down the wilderness, *all his righteousness will be found to be as filthy rags; for by*

the works of the law shall no flesh living be justified. Again, the carnal Gospeller, whose language is, *Let us sin because grace doth abound.* Sirs, whatever may be your evangelick notions, yet if the grace of God in the Gospel don't teach you to deny all ungodliness and worldly lusts, and to walk soberly, rightcously and godly, you are not coming up, but going down the wilderness. *Jude 4.* they are ranked among the number of the ungodly, *who turn the grace of our God into lasciviousness.* The secure sleepy sinner, that was never awakened to see his danger, but is crying with the sluggard, *Yet a little sleep and slumber, a little folding of the hands to sleep;* you are going down the wilderness, for sudden destruction is pursuing you.

4thly, This doctrine reproves those who make a feint to come up from the wilderness, but immediately they turn heartless in the journey: They cry, *There is a lion in the way, a lion in the streets,* and therefore turn back, and steer towards another airth. Of this sort are all backsliders, who put their hand to the plough of religion, but look back again. What an awful sentence is it that God hath pronounced against such, when he says, *that they shall be filled with their own ways, and be led forth with the workers of iniquity.*

5thly, This doctrine reproves those who hinder the spouse of Christ, or hurt her in her way, as she is coming up from the wilderness. We find the spouse frequently complaining of injuries, even from these from whom other things might have been expected; she complains that her *mothers children were angry with her,* chap. 1. 6. these who were mother's children, but not father's children with her; members of the visible church, but were never born of God, they were angry with her: And with them joined the corrupt clergy of that day, and they continually abused her; hence she complains, chap. v. *The watchmen that went about the city, they found me, they smote me, they wounded me, they took away my vail from me.* They were called watchmen, and had got themselves into that office for a piece of bread: But, instead of watching against the enemy, they opened the gates to the enemy, and suffered foxes to come in and spoil the vines; instead of comforting her, and pouring oil into her wounds, they themselves smote and wounded her, by stripping her of the sacred rights and privileges allowed her by her great husband. Instead of drawing a vail over the infirmities and weaknesses of real believers, they studied to expose them as a company of hypocrites, and loaded them with a great deal of invidious calumnies and reproaches, that so they might with the better colour of equity harrass and persecute her. The application of all these things is easy: Even in our own day, what melancholy cries and complaints are going

up to heaven, through several corners of the land, to the *God of Shabaoth*, the great King of *Zion*, against some set of men, who meet together in a judicative capacity even in this city? And I don't know but some of them may be hearing me: I shall only say, That the injured little ones of Christ will have a day about with these that carry it against them now; before the whole scene be over, there will be wound for wound; tribulation will be rendered unto them that trouble the spouse of Christ: And when the reckoning comes, the great men, and the mighty men, the man with the gold-ring, which are now adored, as if they were the only persons to be owned in the planting of churches, they, and those that join hand with them in conspiring to hurt the little ones of Christ, will be crying to the rocks and mountains to fall on them, and hide them from the face of the Lamb; when the poor people of God, that were accounted as the dross and off-scourings of the earth, will be sitting upon the bench with Christ, every one of them shining forth like the sun in the kingdom of their Father. I conclude this with a word of advice unto Christ's oppressed people, and you have it *Jam. 5. 7, 8.*

Use third of this doctrine shall be by way of trial and examination. That which I would have you try is, wherefore are you in this world as in a wilderness, or are you in it as your home? and whether are you sitting down in the wilderness, or are you coming up from it? I am ready to think, that in these words there may be an allusion to *Israel* in their travelling from *Egypt* to *Canaan*: Therefore, with allusion to their journey toward the promised land, which was typical of the true church of God travelling through this wilderness unto glory, I would by way of trial ask the few following questions.

1st, Hath your *Egyptian* bondage been loosed in a day of power? Has God, as with a high hand, and stretched-out arm, bro't you out from under the dominion of sin and Satan, these oppressing task-masters? and has he made you to see these *Egyptian* enemies overthrown in the red-sea of the death and suffering of a glorious Redeemer, while you by the same means made your escape? This is God's way of dealing with all his own *Israel*; he first makes them to groan under the fears of sin and wrath, and then opens up a way for their escape by the death and blood of the Lamb. So then, *has the Son of God made you free?* If so, *you are free indeed.* But,

2dly, I ask, has God ever brought you to the foot of *Sinai*, and discovered himself in such awful majesty, greatness, and in the holiness and severity of his law, as has persuaded you that there

there is no dealing with God without a Mediator? The law was published at mount *Sinai* because of transgression, and that it might be a *school-master to lead them unto Christ*: So then, I ask, if you have seen such a distance between God and you, such holiness and perfection in his law, as has made you fly to him who is *the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth*? If so, you are indeed *coming up from the wilderness* towards the promised land; but, if not, 'tis a sign you are yet in the *Egypt* of a natural state.

3dly, Have you ever seen the tabernacle that God reared, and the glory of God in it? You know, the tabernacle in the wilderness, it was the symbol of God's presence among *Israel*, in which the law was kept; and the glory of the God of *Israel* was therein discovered in the view of *Israel*: This was a type of Christ, the true tabernacle which God hath reared. Now, I say, have you seen this tabernacle, *a God in Christ reconciling the world to himself*? Have you seen the glory of God shining in the face of Christ, and the law magnified and made honourable in him? And, are your motions through the wilderness, and your way to the land of promise, directed by viewing this tabernacle? according to that of the Apostle, *Heb. 12. 1. Let us run our race, looking unto Jesus*. And, are you made to go singing in the way of the Lord through the wilderness, because great is the glory of the Lord?

4tly, I ask, how are you fed in the wilderness? *Israel* in the wilderness were not fed with the fruit of the earth, but with manna rained from heaven? So God has a way of seeding his true *Israel* in the wilderness with the manna from heaven. *Christ the bread of life* comes down in the dispensation of the word, and they gather it by faith, and feed on it: And Oh but this manna hath a pleasant taste with it to the spouse of Christ *coming up from the wilderness*! They can say in some measure of sincerity with *Jeremiah*, *Thy word was found by me, and I did eat it, and it was to me the joy and rejoicing of my heart*.

5tly, Are you frequently drinking of the water of the rock? You know there was a rock smitten, out of which streams of water issued, which followed *Israel* till they came to *Canaan*; *this rock was Christ*, who being smitten with the rod of his Father's anger, refreshing streams of grace and consolations of the Spirit have issued, which *make glad the city of God*. Now, what experience have you as to this? Is Christ to you like rivers of waters in a dry place? And, are you made now and then to see the accomplishment of that promise, *Isa. 44. 3. I'll pour water on the thirsty, and floods on the dry ground*?

6tly, Have you seen the mystical brazen serpent; and have

you got health conveyed to your souls by looking on it, when stung by the fiery serpent in the wilderness, or when wounded by the fiery darts of Satan? For, as *Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, so is the son of man lifted up on the pole of the everlasting Gospel, that whosoever believes in him, or looks to him by faith, may not perish, but have everlasting life.*

7thly, What is it that keeps up your heart in your journey thro' the wilderness: If God had not made a promise of *Canaan* to *Israel*, and engaged his veracity to bear them company in their journey, they had not gone out of *Egypt*; and it was the faith of God's promise that spirited and enlivened them in their travels and battles. Just so is the case here; God hath made a promise of life and rest on the other side of death, through Christ, and that he will be their God and their guide; that his Son, the Angel of his presence, shall be your leader and commander: Now, if you be really coming up from the wilderness to the promised land of glory, 'tis the faith of God's promise that bears you up, and carries you thro' in your travels, and in your wilderness-work and warfare. Hence the spouse here, she is said to come up *leaning on her beloved*, resting on the promise of a God in Christ for a thorough-bearing, and for a comfortable landing at last.

8thly, What pillars of smoke are you sending up from the wilderness? The offerings of *Israel* in the wilderness, they went up to heaven like pillars of smoke towering upward; so you will be frequently sending up the sacrifices of prayer, and of praise, and holy meditation; your affections, like the smoke of the sacrifice, will be soaring heavenward.

9thly, You will be frequently casting your eyes on the promised land that lies beyond the wilderness, and longing with the Church to be there, *Cant. 2. last, Till the day break, and the shadows fly away: Turn, my beloved, and be thou as a roe, as a young hart upon the mountains of spices.*

Use fourth shall be of exhortation, to follow the example of the church of God here, in coming up from the wilderness towards the promised land of glory above: Or, as the Apostle words it, *Col. 3. If ye be risen with Christ, seek those things that are above, where Christ is at the right-hand of God. Set not your affections on things that are on the earth, but on things that are in heaven.* By way of motive, I offer these considerations;

Consider, (1.) What the wilderness of this world is, from which you are called to come up. Beside what was said of it in the doctrinal part, I shall add these things following, to wean your hearts and affections from it. 1. This world is but the reprobate

dogs portion, *Pfal. 17. The men of the world, whose portion is in this life, and whose belly, &c.* It was a common saying of Luther's, *That the whole Turkish empire was but a crumb cast unto a dog.* Now, why should we cast in our lot among the dogs, who profess to be of the Church of God, and the spouse of Christ? 2. This world is groaning under the curse of God; *Cursed is the ground for thy sake*, said the Lord to our first parents, immediately after they had sinned: And under the weight of this curse *the whole creation groans and travels in pain even till now.* Oh who would be content to sit down where the curse of God dwells? 3. Consider, that the wilderness of this world has been a shamble, defiled with blood, with the blood of Christ, and with the blood of an innumerable company of martyrs, from which it has never been purged as yet. It may be called *Golgotha, the place of a scull*; and *Aceldama, a field of blood.* This earth has been stained, and this land and this city in particular have been stained with the blood of Christ mystical; and 'tis to be feared that the guilt of that blood is crying to heaven, like the blood of *Abel*, against the land, and against the place: Now, I say, is not this sufficient to wean your hearts from the wilderness of this world, that it is a *field of blood*, a place of butchering and slaughter of Christ personal and mystical. The men of the world, who take up with it as their home, they are just like the possessed man we read of in the Gospel, lodging among tombs and sepulchres. 4. Consider, that the wilderness of this world is just the gallery where the devil, the god of this world, that *Apollyon*, walks up and down *seeking whom he may devour.* Job 1. says God, *Whence comest thou, Satan? I come, says Satan, from going to and fro on the earth, and from walking up and down in it.* Some think that the devil uttered these words with an air of haughtiness and pride, as if he made his vaunt before God, that he was the *prince of this world*, and that the kingdoms of it and their glory were his; so that the meaning of the devil's answer is as if he had said, *Why, says he, where should I be, but travelling in circuit through my own territories? Now, why should we not come up from the devil's quarters and territories? Who loves to be at home in the devil's quarters, in the very den of that lion and leopard, but only they that are his devoted slaves and vassals? 5. Come up from the wilderness, for it is but a meer empty shadow, and all the glory of it is but a piece of moon-shine. Why should we set our hearts upon that which is not, and which perisheth in the very using? You have seen bubbles of water blown up by children, sparkling with a variety of beauteous colours, but which just perish in a moment; and what is the whole visible creation that we*

now see, but just a great bubble blown up by the breath of the Almighty? By the word of the Lord were the heavens made, and all the host of them by the breath of his mouth. It makes a gay and glorious appearance, but alas, 'tis all imaginary, a mere shadow, a vapour, which appears for a little, and then vanishes. Now, who would be content with such an imaginary thing as this? 6. Come up from the wilderness of this world, for 'tis condemned to be burnt. It was a piece of madness in Lot to linger in Sodom, when he was told it was to be consumed with fire and brimstone: The same madness possesses those that will not come up from the wilderness into a place of safety, when God has told them in his infallible word, that the day of the Lord cometh as a thief in the night, in which the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and be dissolved, the elements shall melt with fervent heat, the earth also and the works thereof shall be burnt up. Now, I say, put all these things together, and see if there be not weight in them to wean your hearts from this world, and to engage you to follow the practice of the spouse, and come *up from the wilderness*.

Consider, 2dly, That there is a better country beyond the wilderness of this world. Heb. 7. 'tis said of the worthies, *that they desired a better country, that is an heavenly*. 'Tis a better kingdom than the kingdoms of this world, even *an everlasting kingdom*; a better inheritance, even *an inheritance that is incorruptible and undefiled, which fadeth not away*; a better city, even *a city that hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God*; a better house than our cottages of clay in the wilderness, even *a house of many mansions, a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens*.

But, more particularly, to encourage you to come up from the wilderness unto this better country, consider, (1.) That there are better joys and pleasures to be had there than in the wilderness. This world is but at best a *Bochim*, a valley of tears, a house of mourning; but the land afar off, that lies on the other side of the wilderness, is a state of pleasure, of continual joy and pleasure, where *the ransomed of the Lord shall have songs and everlasting joy upon their heads: they shall obtain joy & gladness, and sorrow and sighing shall ever flee away*. The joys and pleasures of this world, they do not satisfy: *He that loveth silver shall not be satisfied with silver*: Hence, in the midst of their sufficiency, the covetous worldling is in wants; and, *in the midst of their laughter, their heart is sorrowful*: But now the joys of the land of glory, they are full joys, *Psal. 16. close, In thy presence is fulness of joy, and at thy right-hand are pleasures for evermore*. The joys of the wilderness they are transient: *Hence the triumphing of the wicked is short; they take up the timbrel and*

and harp, and rejoice at the sound of the organ; they spend their days in wealth and ease, but in a moment they go down to the grave: But the joys of the land of glory (as you have heard just now) are everlasting, and shall run parallel with the endless ages of eternity.

(2.) There are better riches *in the land afar off*, than these that the wilderness of this world affords. As for the riches of this world, *the moth and rust corrupt them, thieves break thro' and steal them*; Solomon, who was master of more of this world's riches than any man else, he pronounces them all *vanity and vexation of spirit*: But now the riches of that better country beyond the wilderness are far better, in respect of plenty; for the riches of that land are unsearchable, *Eph. 3. 8*. Better in respect of value; for the gold of that land is better than the gold of *Ophir*; 'tis *gold tried in the fire*, yea, the gold and the silver cannot equal it: 'Tis better in respect of perpetuity; the riches of this world they *make themselves wings, and fly away*, but the riches of glory they are durable and everlasting. Hence Christ exhorts, to *provide for ourselves bags that do not wax old*. (3.) The honours of that better country are better than the honours of this world. What is it to sway a sceptre on earth, in respect of ruling the *nations with a rod of iron*? What is it to sit upon an earthly throne, in respect of sitting on the same throne with the son of God? *ψ. 3.* at the close. What is it to be an heir of an opulent estate, or of a kingdom upon earth, in respect of being *heirs of God, and joint heirs with Jesus Christ, of an inheritance that is incorruptible, undefiled*? &c. (4.) We invite you to come up to a far more peaceable land than is the wilderness of this world. O, Sirs, you and I may know to our experience, that this is a fighting world, 'tis a place of strife; and some may say with *Jeremiah, Wo's me, my mother, for thou hast born me a man of strife and contention to the whole earth. Without are fightings, and within are fears. Deep calleth unto deep, at the noise of thy water spouts. We must run with the footmen, contend with horses, and then go down to the swellings of Jordan.* But Oh! Sirs, *come up from the wilderness*; for the land beyond it is a land of peace, and quiet, and everlasting rest; and this *rest remaineth for the people of God*, where wars and jars, and contentions and strifes, shall come to an eternal end: *They shall enter into peace, they shall rest in their beds, each one walking in his uprightness.* (5.) That land beyond the wilderness is a far more *pure and holy* land than this wilderness is. This world cannot be your rest; for 'tis polluted; the inhabitants of it are of polluted lips, lives, and hearts; and 'tis hard for a man to keep his garments clean, as he is travelling thro' it to eternity: But that land of glory beyond the wilderness, 'tis the holy land, in

the most proper sense ; for *there can in no wise enter into it any thing that worketh abomination, or maketh a lie.* All the inhabitants are such as *have washed their hands in innocence, washed their garments, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb.* (6.) That land that lies beyond the wilderness is a far more durable land than this is. This world is subject to innumerable vicissitudes and sorrows ; a fertile land may be turned unto barrenness, a peaceable land may soon be turned unto confusion. The confused noise of the warrior, and *garments rolled in blood,* may be seen and heard in it ; and, ere it be long, the whole visible frame of nature will be unhinged, &c. But now, heaven is an abiding country an abiding city ; it hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God. The city of the *New Jerusalem is built foresquare,* to shew the stability of it ; *it fadeth not away,* and *the inhabitants of it shall go no more out,* &c. Oh then, be persuaded to come up from the wilderness to this better country, the proper country of the saints.

Consider, 3dly, by way of motive, what a lightsome way is opened from the wilderness to that better country that is above, and let this invite you to come up. The way to heaven, after the breach of the first covenant, was block'd up by the law and justice of God ; the offended majesty of heaven had rolled mountains of fiery vengeance in man's way to heaven ; the cherubim with his flaming sword, turning every way, rendred it altogether impassable : But, O thanks to the glorious *Emanuel,* who as the breaker has gone up before us ; he has roled these mountains out of the way he has opened up the passage from the wilderness to *Canaan,* by his death and blood ; yea, he as our king, captain and general, has gone before us, *Jehovah* is on the head of the travellers to glory : And therefore be encouraged to come up from the wilderness, set your faces toward Zion. And, to encourage you, I'll give you a few qualities of the way you have to travel. (1.) 'Tis a *new way,* Heb. 10. 20. *Adam's way* in innocence by the works of the law is abolished ; but here, by the gospel, there is a new way opened ; a way that is calculated, not for a righteous or innocent person, but for a sinner, a lost sinner ; and *Christ calls not the righteous,* but lost sinners of *Adam's family,* to take this way. And then 'tis new, because it never waxes stale, will never be out of request. (2.) The way to that better land is *a living way,* not only because it leads to everlasting life, but a living Christ is the way ; and so soon as ever a sinner sets the foot of faith in this way, he begins to live a life of justification, a life of sanctification, a life of consolation : *For he that hath the Son, hath life ; and whoever believes in the name of Christ, though he were dead, yet shall he live, and shall*
never

never come into condemnation. (3.) The way to glory is consecrated for us; the great God has opened and devoted this way for the travellers to glory. The revelation of it is to us, and the revelation from him to walk in it is to us: O then, let us come up from the wilderness, since God had a view to your salvation in opening it. (4.) The way is a free way; 'tis free to all comers. 'Tis like the King's high-way, that every man has a privilege to walk in; *whoever will, let him come, and take of the water of life freely.* And then 'tis free, in regard that the traveller has his charges born, and every thing needful for carrying him on laid to his hand, *without money and without price.* All fulness is in the way, and *out of this fulness we all do receive, and grace for grace.* (5.) 'Tis a cleanly & holy way, *Isa. 35. A high-way shall be there, and a way, and it shall be called the way of holiness; the unclean shall not pass over it.* The way of believing in Christ, as 'tis the first and fundamental act of obedience to the law of God, so 'tis a spring of holiness and obedience to all the other commands of God; hence all true obedience is called the obedience of faith. The man that is heartily engaged in the way of believing, he has his heart sprinkled from an evil conscience, and his body washed with pure water; and his daily work is to *cleanse himself from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of the Lord.* (6.) 'Tis a safe way, in which you come up from the wilderness; for *the wayfaring man, tho' a fool, shall not err therein: tho' he may fall, yet he shall arise; for the Lord upholdeth him with his hand.* The Lord is the man's strength; and therefore *he shall hold on his way, and wax stronger and stronger till he come to Zion.* (7.) 'Tis a pleasant way, *Prov. 3. 17. Wisdom's ways are ways of pleasantness, and all her paths are peace.* And how can it be but pleasant? for here is every thing needful to the traveller. Here is meat for the hungry traveller; I am the bread of life: Here is drink for the thirsty, even *the water of life, issuing from the throne of God and of the Lamb:* Here is clothing, yea, white raiment, and the garment of salvation for the naked soul: Here is light to the soul in darkness; *the Lord shall be thy everlasting light, and thy God thy glory.* Here is a shadowy rest to the traveller when he is weary; *I sat down under his shadow with great delight; the Lord is thy shade upon thy right-hand; the sun shall not smite thee by day, neither the moon by night:* Here in this way you have a good guide to lead you, one who leads the *blind in the way they know not,* and who at every turn is crying, *this is the way, walk ye in it.* And that which contributes much to render it pleasant is, that the way is well beaten, 'tis a trodden path, and you have a whole cloud, an innumera-

ble company of travellers, both going before you and coming after you, and going along with you, *Heb. 12. 1. Wherefore, seeing we are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses, let us run the race, &c.* (7.) The way that comes up from the wilderness to the land of glory is a peaceable and a quiet way. There is nothing but noise, and din, and perpetual disturbance in the ways of sin, and the way of men of this world; but oh there is perfect peace in this way that leads to Zion, *Isa. 26. 3. Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace, whose mind is stayed on thee, because he trusteth in thee.* Indeed you may and will have disturbances from without, in the world ye shall have tribulation; but all the noise and disturbances from without cannot marr the quiet the soul has within: No, no; *In me ye shall have peace; be ye of good cheer, for I have overcome the world.* Thus you see, that every thing invites you to come up from the wilderness towards that better country that is above.

I shall conclude this exhortation with a few words by way of counsel and advice. If, after all that has been said, you have a mind to come up from the wilderness towards the land of glory above, then take the few following advices;

1st, Keep your eyes fixed, as you come up from the wilderness, upon an invisible God, on the glorious *Emanuel*, upon the unerring rule of the word, upon a well-ordered covenant, upon the cloud of witnesses that have gone before you, and on the glorious land that lies on the other side of the wilderness.

2^{dly}, Another advice I give you is, If you would make your journey comfortable, or ever arrive at the end of it, study to keep in with these three. (1.) Keep in with God, do nothing that may provoke him to hide his face; for if you do, it will cost you dear, you will walk in darkness through the wilderness: But *Oh! in his favour is life*; every blink of his countenance exhilarates the spirits, and then *the joy of the Lord is the soul's strength, &c.* (2.) Keep in with conscience; *this is our rejoicing, the testimony of a good conscience, that in simplicity and godly sincerity, &c.* (3.) Keep in with them that fear God, and cleave to the word of his testimony; keep close by your fellow-travellers, that are bound for Zion. *My delight (says David) is with the saints, the excellent ones of the earth, &c.*

3^{dly}, There are some things that you should endeavour to keep under your foot, if you would come up to the heavenly *Canaan*; 1. The moon of this world, *Rev. 12. 1.* If it be got into your head and heart, it will be sure to turn you out of the way; for *the friendship of this world is enmity with God: If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him.* 2. Carnal policy and wisdom; for the

the wisdom of this world is but folly to God. *Paul*, whenever it pleased God to reveal his Son in him, immediately he consults not with flesh and blood. It is said of *Babylon*, that her wisdom and understanding perverted her; especially it perverts us in the things of Christ, and is like to ruin the interest of Christ in the land at this day. 3. Self-righteousness, let that be kept under your feet; for this ruined the poor *Jews*, & bro't on a sentence of excommunication upon them, whereby they were cast out of the church of God: *They went about to establish their own righteousness, and would not submit to the righteousness of God*; and so Christ himself became a stumbling-stone, and a rock of offence. 4. Keep the lust and corruption of the heart under your feet. This will keep you in continual work; for the flesh lusteth against the spirit, and the spirit against the flesh. *Paul* had much ado with a body of sin and death, *Rom. 7*. We must crucify the flesh with the affections and lusts thereof. *If we live after the flesh, we shall die; but, if we through the Spirit do mortify the deeds of the body, we shall live*. 5. Keep at a distance from the infection of bad company. Say, with *Jacob*, *Oh my soul, come not thou into their secret; unto their assembly, mine honour, be not thou united: For evil communication corrupts good manners*. The last advice I give is, to follow the example of the spouse here in the text, to come up from the wilderness leaning on the beloved, living a life of faith on the Son of God. But this leads to the second branch of the doctrine.

The Substance of some Discourses upon the same Text, at *Stirling*.

CANT. viii. 5. *Who is this that cometh up from the wilderness, leaning on her beloved.*

THE doctrine insisted upon from these words at another occasion was, *That 'tis the commendable practice of a soul truly espoused unto Christ, to come up from the wilderness of this world toward the land of rest and glory above, staying and resting themselves upon him as their beloved*. Here I endeavoured, 1. To give the character of a soul truly espoused to Christ, drawn from the context. 2. I spake of this world, under the notion of a wilderness. 3. Shewed what is imported in the spouse's coming up from the wilderness. These particulars, I say, were discoursed, and this first branch

branch of the doctrine applied in several uses; the reasons of this branch of the doctrine being adduced in the application, by way of motive to persuade sinners to turn their back on the wilderness, and to come up towards the promised *Canaan* above.

I proceed now to the *second* branch of the text and doctrine, which was the *fourth* thing in the method; namely, To speak a little of the spouse's posture in *coming up from the wilderness*; she comes *leaning on her beloved*. 'Tis the life of faith upon the Son of God that is here intended; and this expression of faith it implies these particulars following.

1st, The spouse's weakness and inability in her self to grapple with the difficulties of her way through the wilderness; that she could never surmount them by the strength of natural, or yet of any created grace in her. Man in his natural state is wholly without strength; so disabled by the fall, that he has no power for any thing that is spiritually good: Yea, believers themselves, tho' they have received a new stock of supernatural grace, yet this inherent grace of theirs is such a feeble creature, and the opposition it meets with from corruption within, and temptation and affliction without, is so strong, it could never bear the believer thro' his wilderness work and warfare, without continual supplies of strength from the glorious head, *in whom dwells all fulness of grace and truth, of merit and spirit*. Hence *Paul*, tho' he had received a very large measure of grace from Christ, yet declares, that *he was not sufficient of himself to think any thing as of himself, but his his sufficiency and ability was of the Lord*. So, whenever a believer begins to think that his mountain stands strong thro' the strength of any grace he has received, presently the Lord withdraws the influence, and suffers him to find his weakness and inability, that he may not trust in himself, but in him who is the strength of *Israel*. And therefore,

2^{dly}, The expression of *leaning on her beloved*, it implies, That however weak and insufficient she was in herself, yet there was almighty strength in her husband and head, on whom she leaned. Christ is the strength of the poor and needy in their distress; he is the glory of their strength, the power of God, the man of his right-hand, whom he hath made strong for the designs of his glory in our salvation. *I have laid help* (says the Lord) *upon one who is mighty*. The arm of *Jehovah* is thro' him reached forth to help, and strengthen, and uphold the believer in his wilderness difficulties; and therefore he goes in this his might, saying, with *Paul*, *I can do all things through Christ strengthening me*.

3^{dly}, This *leaning on her beloved* implies a blessed knowledge or acquaintance

acquaintance with the Lord Jesus. She had got a saving discovery of him by the word & spirit of the Lord, which induced her to lean upon him; for we do not use to lean upon an utter stranger, of whom we have no knowledge. The foundation of faith is laid in knowledge: Not simply in a *head-knowledge*, attained by external revelation, for there are many learned unbelievers; but in a *heart-knowledge*. The light of the *knowledge of the glory of God, in the face of Jesus Christ*, is made to shine into the heart, and this is the very beginning of wisdom. Hence *Paul* describes his first conversion by it, Gal. I. *It pleased God to reveal his Son in me.* And the promise of faith, that radical grace, is expressed by knowledge; *I will give them a heart to know me, that I am the Lord*; they shall know, and follow on to know him, till they arrive at a mid-day vision and fruition of him in glory.

4thly, The expression implies, not only knowledge, but *intimacy* and *familiarity*; for we use to lean upon them with whom we are intimately acquainted. *Verily* (says the Apostle *John*) *our fellowship is with the Father, and with his Son Christ Jesus.* The whole book of the *Song* is designed to describe this fellowship between Christ and the believing soul: They who know it in an experimental way, will be ready to say, with the spouse, *his left-hand was under my head, and his right-hand did embrace me; he brought me to his banquetting-house, and his banner over me was love.* There is more real pleasure and satisfaction in one moment of fellowship with the Lord, than in all the *pleasures of sin, which are but for a season*: Hence *David*, Psal. 84. *One day in thy courts is better than a thousand; I had rather be a door-keeper in the house of God, than dwell in the tents of sin.*

5thly, This leaning posture implies Christ's *nearness* to the spouse; for we cannot well lean upon a person that is at a distance. True, indeed, Christ was at a great distance from the spouse as to his corporal presence, for he was not yet come in the flesh; and now, under the New-Testament dispensation, he is gone within the veil, and the *heavens are to contain him till the time of the restitution of all things*: But yet faith has a way of bringing Christ near, and of taking him up in the word of promise, & so leaning on him by vertue of his word. And therefore, *say not in thine heart, who shall bring Christ from above? for the word is nigh thee, even in thy mouth and heart, that is, the word of faith, which we preach.* Sirs, tho' Christ be ascended as to his human nature far above all heavens, yet he is as much present to faith, as tho' his body were still upon earth; *lo, I am with you always unto the end of the world*: And accordingly, faith eying him in the word of faith, leans on him, as one that is not afar off, but near at hand.

6thly,

6thly, It implies a trusting, resting, or recumbency of her soul upon him, under all her weights and burdens, which the rolls over on Christ, Psalm 55. *Cast thy burden upon the Lord, and he will sustain thee.* Mat. 11. *Come unto me, all ye that are weary and heavy laden, and I will give rest unto your souls.* Psal. 37. *Rest on the Lord, and wait patiently upon him.* As the feeble wife leans on her Husband, or the weak child on his parent, with confidence that he will support him; so the believing soul leans or rests on Christ, with a persuasion of support and thorough-bearing; that according to his promise, he will strengthen, help and uphold to the end, with the right-hand of his righteousness.

7thly, It implies that there is something in Christ that the hand or arm of faith stays and leans upon, as we *come up from the wilderness.* Sometimes faith stays itself on the person of Christ, as he is *Emanuel, God with us*; sometimes upon his love, which passeth knowledge, *Psal. 36. 7. How excellent is thy loving-kindness, O God, therefore the sons of men put their trust under the shadow of thy wings*: Sometimes it stays itself upon his name; for *they that know his name will put their trust in him*: Sometimes on his mission, as the Sent of God, the great Apostle of our profession; it takes him up as God's legate, his ambassador-extraordinary, *sent to seek and to save that which was lost*: It leans upon his general office as Mediator, for peace and reconciliation with God; upon his prophetic office, for instruction and illumination in the knowledge of the mysteries of the kingdom; upon his priestly office, for reconciliation and acceptance; upon his regal or kingly office, for sanctification and deliverance from *the power of sin and satan*: It leans upon his fulness for a supply of all wants, believing that that fulness of grace that is in him is to be communicated; for *he received gifts for men, even for the rebellious, that the Lord God might dwell among us*: It sometimes leans upon the relations that Christ is come under to his people in the word, as a friend, a counsellor, a physician, a leader and commander. You see here, that the spouse *comes up from the wilderness, leaning on him* in the relation of a bridegroom and husband: But of these things I may discourse more fully in the application.

I should next give the reasons of this branch of the doctrine, why it is that the believer *comes up from the wilderness leaning on her beloved*; but as I did in the former branch, I shall improve them as motives to enforce the exhortation which I have in view from this branch of the doctrine.

And the exhortation is, To follow the commendable practice of the spouse in *coming up from the wilderness* of this world, towards

wards the land of glory, *leaning* on him as *your beloved*; or, which is the same thing in other words, study, while you are travellers on the earth, to live by faith on the son of God. This was the practice of Paul the great Apostle of the Gentiles, Gal. 2. 20. *I am crucified with Christ, nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ that liveth in me; and the life I live is by faith in the son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me.* This was the practice of that cloud of witnesses who have travelled to glory before us, Heb. 11. 13. *All these died in faith, not having received the promises, but having seen them afar off, and were persuaded of them, and embraced them, and confessed that they were pilgrims and strangers on the earth.*

But now, in pursuing this exhortation a little, I shall, 1. Endeavour to illustrate and clear it, in answering a few questions. 2. Enforce it with a few motives. 3. Conclude with a few directions.

First, I would illustrate this exhortation, by answering a few questions. And the

1st Question which may be offered is this; You exhort us to a life of faith on Christ, but pray tell us, in the first place, what it is to live upon him by faith, and what influence faith has upon our journey while in the wilderness?

This question was in some measure answered already, in giving the import of the expression in the text, the spouse's *leaning on her beloved*. I shall further add, That this life of faith, it does not lie in one single act of believing, but in the continuation of faith or believing thro' the whole course of your life in the world; *the life I live in the flesh*, that is, while I'm in the body, *is by faith on the Son of God*. Some are ready to imagine, that, when they have once believed in Christ, they have no more ado but to look back on their first closing with Christ; and upon that act of faith they rest, as their security for life and salvation, without any great concern to repeat and renew it. I'm afraid, if this be your way of doing, you are yet strangers both to faith in the first and after-actings of it. Men are called believers, not because they have put forth one single act of faith, but because they are or should be continually believing. 'Tis true, the *first act* of faith *ties* the knot between Christ and the soul, that shall never be loosed through eternity; but, where this act of faith has been exerted, there will be frequent attempts towards the repetition of it. Faith is called an *eating the flesh, and drinking the blood of the son of man*. Now, you know; 'tis not a man's taking one single meal in his whole life that will subsist his body, but he must be eating and drinking every day, and frequently through the day, otherwise his natural life would soon languish: So here, there must be a continual feeding upon

the incarnation and satisfaction of Christ, in order to the preservation and maintenance of the spiritual life of the soul; the life of the soul can no more be maintained by one act of faith, than the life of the body can be maintained by one meal for any long space of time. Faith is called a *drawing water out of the wells of salvation*, *Isa. 12.* It will not do our business to come once to the well, the water in the cistern will soon be spent, and therefore we must be daily coming back to the fountain for new water: So here the life of faith is a continual coming to Christ, and a receiving out of his fulness grace for grace. Grace received into the vessel of the soul will, like water, soon stagnate by reason of the corruption of the vessel, and it will soon be spent; what we get this day will not serve us the next; and therefore there must be a continued application to him for new supply, a continued drawing water out of the wells of salvation. The branches live every day upon their root; the branches draw, and the root communicates sap unto them for their nourishment and growth: So here, *As the branch cannot bring forth fruit, except it abide in the vine, no more can ye* (says Christ) *except ye abide in me.* This continued believing in Christ is called (*Col. 2. 19.*) a holding the head, from which the whole body, as by joint & bands, having *nourishment* ministred & knit together, increase with the increase of God. The members of the natural body, they are continually receiving life, and spirit, and conduct from their head; so, by the faith of God's operation, whereby we are united to Christ, we are continually receiving that grace & fulness that is in him, till we come to a *perfect man, to the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ.* And this is the life of that faith I exhort you to, in order to your comfortable journey thro' the wilderness of this world.

There are two ways by which your life will be maintained and nourished from Christ through eternity; one in this world, and another in the world to come. So long as we are in this world, we are like children in the mother's belly, entirely nourished and maintained by faith (like the string by which we are nourished in our mother's belly) which sucks in the life, righteousness and fulness of Christ into the soul: But no sooner do we pass out of this world into the life of glory, but the string of faith is cut, and then we come to be nourished another way, namely, by immediate vision of the Lord. As the child is nourished in the womb till it is fully ripe for the birth, so faith nourishes the soul till it be fully ripe for glory; and then faith is turned into full fruition, and immediate enjoyment.

To illustrate this matter, I shall in a few particulars shew the influence that faith has through the whole of the Christians work and warfare in the wilderness from first to last. (1.) 'Tis

(1.) 'Tis faith that gives the soul the first knowledge of Christ, and of the way of salvation through him; 'tis the eye that first spies him out, as the all-sufficient Saviour provided by God the Father. When the poor soul has been as it were beaten, battered, and tossed among the waves and tempests of law-terrors, and apprehensions of eternal wrath and vengeance, in which case it has been as it were casting its most valuable goods over-board, its own *righteousness, morality, civility, its duties, abilities, legal attainments,* and every thing else; now, while the soul is in this condition, every moment expecting to be swallowed up in the great deeps of the sea of God's wrath, faith as it were steps up to the top of the mast, and gets a view of Christ, and of salvation in him; and thereupon the poor soul cries out, Oh there is Christ, let me get aboard of him; Oh there is the rock of ages, I'll venture my all upon him; Oh there is a strong hold & refuge, I'll flee in unto him; Oh this is my rest, here will I dwell, for my soul likes it well. Thus, I say, it is by faith that we first enter into a state of grace, peace and righteousness; according to that word of the Apostle, *Rom. 5. 2. We have access by faith into this grace wherein we stand.* When the soul was surrounded with nothing but the black thoughts of despair and ruin, faith lands the soul in a safe harbour: Therefore he that hath believed, is said to have *entred into his rest*, Heb. iv.

(2.) 'Tis by faith that the union is made up between Christ and us. Indeed, there is a radical union that we have with Christ before faith; for he takes hold of us first by his Spirit, before we take hold of him by faith: But yet the union is made up on our part by faith, 'tis that which *ties the marriage-knot*. 'Tis not love, but consent, that makes marriage between man and woman: So here, 'tis the soul's coming off from the law, and all other husbands; its coming off from its own righteousness, and submitting unto Christ, as a saviour, a husband, and a surety; this is it that makes up the union, and this is done by faith. There are two things that marry Christ and the soul together, as is plain from *Hosea 2. 19.* The first is on God's part; he says to us in the covenant, and by his Spirit, *I will betrothe thee unto me in faithfulness, and in loving-kindness*: There, I say, is God's part. But what is it on our part that makes the marriage? it follows, *And thou shalt know the Lord*, that is, thou shalt believe in him; for this is the way that faith is very commonly expressed by in the Old Testament, *viz.* by the knowledge of the Lord. 'Tis faith that brings Christ unto the heart, and reveals him to the soul in all his glory and excellency.

(3.) As union, so our communion with Christ is by faith.

There are two things requisite in order to our having fellowship with another ; the first is, to make the person real and present ; and the second is, to have a familiar access with boldness unto him : Now, 'tis faith that doth both these. *1st*, 'Tis faith that makes God in Christ present unto the soul for it sees him that is invisible : Yea, it brings Christ, and God in him, down from heaven unto the heart ; hence Christ is said to *dwell in our hearts by faith*. 'Tis not love that can make another person present ; it may indeed set the fancy a-work to frame the picture and image of the person beloved, but it is only faith that can view God in Christ as present in and with the soul. And then, *2dly*, 'Tis faith that gives us familiarity and boldness of access unto the Lord, *Eph. 3. 12. In whom we have boldness and access with confidence by the faith of him.* And *2 Cor. 3. 9. Beholding him with open face, we come to him ; with open face, that is, with confidence and boldness.* *Psal. 34. 5. They looked unto him, and were lightned ;* and what follows ? *their faces were not ashamed ;* that is, when they viewed Christ by faith, they had boldness of access unto God in him. The communion that we have with Christ is frequently compared unto eating and drinking, *John 6.* because 'tis faith alone that fetches nourishment from Christ, and makes a person to find a sweetness that is in him, and draws vertue from him : And thus it has the most close and intimate union & communion with him, insomuch that he is one with the soul, and the soul one with him.

(4.) As faith brings us into union and communion with Christ, so faith brings the Spirit of God down into the heart. I own indeed, that, in the work of regeneration and conversion, he is like the rain, that waits not for the sons of men ; he comes unsent for, or unsought for ; *he is found of them that seek him not.* Faith has no instrumentality, there ; faith itself is a part of the new creature, that is formed by the hand of the Spirit. But, I say, faith brings the Spirit into the heart, as a Spirit of sanctification, and consolation, *Eph 1. 12, 13. In whom also, after that ye believed, ye were sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise.* *Gal. 3. 14. we are said to receive the promise of the holy Spirit thro' faith.* All the fulness of the Spirit dwells in Christ, for the use of his mystical body ; now 'tis by faith that this fulness is received, even grace for grace.

(5.) I might tell you further, That our standing in a state of grace is by faith. As we have access or entrance into a state of grace, so we have standing in that state by faith, *Rom. 9. 2. 1 Cor. 1. last, By faith we stand.* *1 Pet. 2. 4. we are said to be kept by the power of God, through faith unto salvation.* There you see, that faith is joined in commission with the power of God, to keep the believer.

liever. Doth the power of God keep you? so doth faith. God is not shy of ascribing that to faith, which is peculiar only to himself; because faith ascribes all to the power of God, and gives him the honour of every thing that it doth. Hence we are said to be kept by the power of God thro' faith unto salvation. When other graces, such as love, repentance, &c. do sag and fail, and have as it were their heels tript up, faith will stand its ground. Hence, *Eph. 6. 16.* there is a particular mark of distinction put upon faith beyond all the other pieces of armour, *Above all, take the shield of faith.* When a man's head-piece is cracked, his sword, his breast-plate, and other armour is taken from him, yet his shield will do him good service; he will lie under it, and thereby defend himself against all the strokes and blows that are levelled at him: Let the devil, corruption and hell, rage and roar as they will, yet faith will keep its gripe, and maintain its ground: Let Satan cast his fiery darts faith quenches them, *Eph. 6. 16.* Let indwelling sin roar and rage, faith will say, Let it rage, yet it shall never reign; for God has said, that sin shall not have dominion: Yea, let God himself carry as an enemy, and set himself in battle-array against the soul; yet even then faith will look in his face, and say, *Though thou shouldst even kill me, yet will I trust in thee, Job 13. 15.* When other graces are fainting, and crying, We know not what to do; faith will say, *Mine eyes are towards thee, I will look to the Lord, I will wait for the God of my salvation, my God will hear me; tho' I sit in darkness, the Lord will be a light unto me &c.* When other graces, like poor faint-hearted things, stand as it were trembling, and crying, Who shall deliver us? Faith will lift up the head, and cry, *Thanks be unto God, that giveth me the victory through Jesus Christ our Lord.*

(6.) 'Tis faith that fetches in peace and quiet to the soul in the midst of trouble, whether from without, or from within. When nothing but storms from heaven, earth and hell, are blowing on the soul, faith will cast out its anchor of hope, and keep the soul steady and quiet, saying with *David Psal. 42. 12.* *Why art thou cast down, O my soul? Why art thou disquieted within me? Hope in God, for I shall yet praise him.* To the same purpose is that famous text, *Isaiah 26. 3.* *Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace, whose mind is stayed on thee, because he trusteth in thee.* And how is the mind stayed on the Lord but by faith? Oh, says faith, let me have what tribulation I will in the world, yet in Christ I shall have peace; 'This man shall be my peace, when the *Assyrian* comes into the land.

(7.) Faith not only brings peace, but joy into the soul, amidst all other disturbances from without. Hence we are said to be filled with joy, as well as peace, in believing. And *2 Pet. 1. 8.* *Whom having not seen, we love; in whom, though now we see him not, yet believ-*

ing, we rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory. The language of faith is, *Psal. 46.* at the beginning, *God is our refuge and strength*; and therefore, *though the mountains should be removed, yet there is a river, the streams whereof do make glad the city of God.*

(8.) 'Tis by faith that we are recovered after falls into sin. Many a time the devil, the world, temptation and corruption, so far prevail against the believer, as to trip up his heels; The righteous man he falleth seven times a-day: Now, in such a case, what is it that recovers him? 'Tis faith; *Though I fall, I shall arise, faith faith, for the Lord upholdeth me with his hand.* Oh, Sirs, if you let faith go, when you fall into sin, you cannot miss to fall into the bottom; just like a man climbing up a ladder, if his foot slip, and he quit the gripe of his hand also, what can hinder him from falling down to the ground? When Christ foresaw that *Peter* would sin by denying him, what said he? *I have prayed for thee, that thy faith fail not*; as if he had said, I plainly see that thou wilt deny me in the hour of temptation, but *I have prayed that thy faith may not fail*, and that is the thing that will recover thee. Oh, Sirs, when you fall into any sin, study to renew the acts of faith on the Lord Jesus Christ; according to that advice of the Apostle, *1 John 2. 1, 2.* *If any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father*; as if he had said, The only way for a fallen saint to recover himself, is by faith to go to Christ as the great advocate and propitiation.

(9.) I might tell you further, That faith is as it were the mother-grace, the radical grace, on which all the other graces of the Spirit do depend: If faith be lively, so will all the other graces be; if faith be languid and faint, so will all the other graces be; if faith be set a-work, it will work by love, that celestial fire will burn, the fountain of holy sorrow will flow; *They shall look on him whom they have pierced, and mourn*: The foot of obedience will be active to run the way of God's commandments.

(10.) Faith carries the soul on high, above time and time's enjoyments; *it mounts up with wings as eagles*: It carries the soul to mount *Nebo* and *Pisgab*, and gives the soul a view of the goodly mountain, even *Lebanon*; and then the believer is like the woman clothed with the sun, having the moon under her feet.

To conclude, As 'tis by faith that you must live, so 'tis by faith you must die, and shoot the gulph comfortably. 'Tis said of the worthies, *Heb. 11.* *All these died in faith.* Faith, as it were, lays its head in Christ's bosom, and says, with a holy confidence. *Into thy hand, O Lord, I commend my spirit.* Faith, leaning on the staff of the divine promise, can say with *David*, *Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil; for thou art with me, thy rod and staff shall comfort me,* *Psal. 23. 4.* A

A second question, that may be moved for clearing this exhortation, is, *What is it in Christ that faith lives and leans upon, in its passage through the wilderness?*

Ans. Christ is such a suitable good, that there is no case the soul can get into in its wilderness-condition, but faith will always find something corresponding to its necessity in him. Is the soul in darkness? he is *the sun of righteousness, the bright and morning-star*: Is the soul in danger? he is a shield, a hiding-place and refuge: Is the soul in trouble? *he is a rest to the weary, he is the shadow of a great rock in a weary land, he is bread to the hungry, drink to the thirsty soul*. But, more particularly, there are these things following in Christ, that faith lives upon in the wilderness, and which it finds like marrow and fatness to the soul.

(1.) Faith lives and leans upon the name of Christ; *for his name is a strong tower, to which the righteous flee, and are safe*: Hence we are so frequently exhorted to *trust in the name of the Lord*. O he has a great name, and pleasant name, *a name above every name, and at his name every knee shall bow*. Whenever a believer engages with work, he is to do it in the name of the Lord; *Whatever ye do, in word or in deed, says the Apostle, do it all in the name of the Lord, to the glory of God by him*. And whenever we go a warfare against sin, Satan or the world, we are to do it in his name; otherwise we can never prosper. This was the way of the church; *We will be joyful in thy salvation, and in the name of our God we will set up our banner*. Whenever we go to God in prayer, we are to present our persons and petitions in the name of Christ; *Whatever ye ask the Father in my name, he will do it*. Oh, Sirs, the name of Christ works wonders, when 'tis managed in a way of believing. When the disciples or apostles went forth and preached the Gospel among the nations, they went forth *in the name of JESUS*; and when they wrought miracles, they did it *in the name of JESUS CHRIST, Acts 3*. *In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, arise and walk*, said Peter and John to the cripple man; and presently he arose. God is so delighted with the name of Christ, that for the sake of that name he will do any thing to us or for us; and therefore let us live by faith, and lean upon his name, as we *come up out of the wilderness*.

(2.) Faith lives upon the flesh of Christ, that is, upon the human nature as it stands personally united unto the divine; *My flesh is meat indeed*. You know, *Israel* in their travels through the wilderness to *Canaan*, which was a shadow or type of our travels through this world unto glory, they lived upon the manna that was rained from heaven upon the camp; but, O Sirs, that was but a shadow of the true bread of life, an incarnate God, that we pre-

sent to you in this Gospel, *John 6. 32. My Father giveth you the true bread which is from heaven.* And again, says Christ in that same chapter, *Except ye eat the flesh, and drink the blood of the Son of man, ye have no life in you.* This seems to be a hard saying to a blind carnal world, and they are ready to think or say, with these Jews, *John 6. How can Christ give us his flesh to eat?* But whatever ye may think of it, the flesh of Christ, or his human nature as it stands united to the divine in the person of the Son, when taken up by faith in the light of the Word and Spirit, it is the sweetest meal and banquet to a believer in heaven or earth; no meat or drink like it to a poor perishing soul: And a believer, in travelling thro' the wilderness, he is always taking a look of an incarnate Deity, and thus he is enlightned, strengthened, quickned and comforted. O, Sirs, what think you of this food? I am sure, if ever ye tasted of it, you will be ready to say, *'Tis like wines on the lees well refined, and fat things full of marrow.*

(3.) Faith lives in the wilderness, not only on the flesh of Christ, or the mysteries of his incarnation, but upon the blood of Christ; by which I understand his satisfaction, which is frequently in Scripture expressed by *his blood: Behold the blood of the covenant*, that is, the satisfaction or death of Christ, that whereby the covenant is confirmed. This is *drink indeed* to the believer, in passing thro' the wilderness. Let the believer get a draught of this red wine of the blood of the slain Lamb of God, he is able to go forth like a giant, or a strong man, to encounter all the powers of hell. *Rev. 12.* 'tis said of the saints in their wars with the devil, that they overcame him by the blood of the Lamb, that is, by faith's improvement of the death and satisfaction of Christ. Let faith be but set a-work upon the death and blood of Christ, it can look God himself in the face with an undaunted boldness, without fear of danger, or without fear of being rejected; *Having, brethren, boldness to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus, let us draw near, &c.* Let faith act on the blood of Christ, it can go to God in prayer, and ask any thing that lies within the compass of the whole Testament of Christ; for, whatever is in the Testament, is the purchase of this blood. O, will faith say, give me *peace*, give me pardon, give me *light, life, strength, grace or glory*, give me the *Spirit*; for here is the blood of the Lamb that bought it. Let faith be acted on this blood, and the man dare, with courage, comfort and joy, look death, eternity and a tribunal in the face. Why? Because faith sees the curse of the law abolished, death unstring'd, the grave vanquish'd, and a tribunal sprinkled by the blood of Jesus; the gates of glory are opened to receive the soul that is sprinkled by the hyssop of faith dipt in the blood of the Lamb. (4.)

(4.) Faith lives in the wilderness upon the life of Christ; *Because I live, ye shall live also. I live, says Paul, yet not I, but Christ liveth in me;* and then follows. *The life I live is by faith on the Son of God.* Faith's way is to follow Christ from his birth, to his cross, from his cross to his grave, and from his grave to his life again; and then it cries in a way of triumph, *He who was dead is now alive, and lives for evermore: I know that my redeemer liveth;* and he lives as my head, my representative, my husband, my advocate, my king, my priest, my prophet, and my all and in all. O, Sirs, the resurrection of Christ unto life, never to die any more, is a sweet and pleasant banquet in the wilderness, by which we are begotten again unto a lively hope of the *inheritance that is incorruptible and undefiled.*

(5.) Faith lives upon the advocacy and intercession of Christ; *If any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous, who makes intercession for the transgressors.* And O how sweetly doth the soul feed here by faith! O, will the soul say, I may be condemned by the world, or by the law, or by conscience; yet I know that I shall carry the day in the court of heaven, because my advocate is the *Lamb in the midst of the throne:* He never lost a cause, he has the Father's Ear; he has such an interest and moyen in heaven, that all power in heaven is his, and his will is a law in the higher court. *Father, I will that those whom thou hast given me may be with me, &c.*

(6.) Faith lives upon the word of Christ, as it comes up from the wilderness. Christ has past his word in his Testament, and he has sealed it with his blood, and he lives as the executor of his Testament; and I know, will faith be ready to say, that the Spirit of Christ will take all that is in his Testament, and shew it unto me, and shew it so as to make all the Testament and latter-will effectual: And therefore in his word do I hope; his promise is not *yea* and *nay*, but 'tis always *yea* and *amen* in him. O, when faith gets the word of promise, the confirmed Testament of Christ in its hand, how will it go to God, and crave the fulfilling of the latter-will of his own Son, saying, with *David, Remember the word on which thou hast caused me to hope?*

(7.) Faith lives and leans on the righteousness of Christ; particularly in the matter of justification and acceptance: It casts away all the works of the law like dung and loss, saying, *Surely in the Lord have I righteousness and strength.*

(8.) Faith leans on the fulness of Christ, and says, *Out of his fulness do all we receive, and grace for grace:* My wants are great, I'm just made up of wants; but O what wants will not the all-fulness

of the Godhead dwelling in Christ supply? for he fills all in all. What is my poor empty vessel unto that ocean that is in him? I'll go with confidence, for that fulness is in him for my use; *for he received gifts for men, even for the rebellious.*

(9.) Faith lives on the offices of Christ, his general offices as mediator and redeemer, and his particular offices as prophet, priest and king. O, will faith say, no man taketh an office upon him, but with a design to execute the duties of his office. Will any man pretend to be a *magistrate*, a *minister*, an *advocate* or *judge*, and yet live in the *neglect*, or refuse to discharge the *duties* of such an office? The world would look on him as very unfaithful: And shall we imagine such a thing of Christ, who is faithful in all his house? O, will faith say, he is a Mediator and Peace-maker, and therefore I trust that he will make my peace with the offended Majesty of heaven; he is a Saviour and Redeemer, and therefore I trust he will deliver me from the hands of all mine enemies; he will save from sin, because it is his office to finish *transgression*, and make an end of it: He is a *prophet*, and therefore I'll trust that he will teach me the good and perfect will of God, open the secrets of his covenant, the mysteries of his kingdom unto me: He is a *priest*, and the great High-priest of our profession now under the New Testament; and therefore he will, by the great sacrifice of atonement, purge away my sins, and make my person and duties acceptable unto God: He is a *King*, and therefore he will subdue my corruptions, and sanctify me throughout, in soul, body and spirit: He is a shepherd, and therefore I trust he will feed me, and lead me in his pastures, and I shall not want: He is a *physician*, his name is *Jehovah-Ruphi*; and therefore I trust he will heal all my diseases, he will open my blind eyes, he will cure the obstinacy of my will, the hardness of my heart, the carnality of my affections: He is the *captain* of salvation, who *leads many sons into glory*; and therefore I trust he will fight all my battles, and make me a conqueror. &c. Thus, I say, faith comes up from the wilderness, leaning on the offices of Christ, general and particular. I shall only add,

(10.) That faith *comes up from the wilderness*, leaning upon the divine attributes as they are manifested and displayed in Christ. God, absolutely considered, is the sinner's terror; and every attribute of God, taken up absolutely, or in a law-view, breathes nothing but wrath and ruin to the whole tribe of *Aram* in their fallen state: But God manifesting himself in the flesh, or in the nature of man, through his death and satisfaction, every attribute of the divine nature presents itself as with a pleasant smile, inviting sinners

sinners to come up to him as an object of trust ; and accordingly faith leans upon these attributes of God, as the soul *comes up from the wilderness*. I shall only instance in these few ;

1. Art thou surrounded with troubles on every hand, art thou called to engage with work thou art not able to manage ? Well, here is the arm of omnipotence stretched out, to *strengthen, be p and uphold*, *Isaiah 41. 10*. And accordingly faith leans on the power of God, according to that command, *Isaiah 26. 3. Trust in the Lord for ever : For in the Lord Jehovah is everlasting strength.* Paul leaned on the power of God, when he cried, *I can do all things thro' Christ strengthening me*. So did the three Children ; *Our God, whom we trust, is able to deliver us*. So did Abraham ; he was persuaded that he who had promised, was able also to perform, &c.

2. Art thou at any time brought to thy witts-end, that thou knowest not what to do ? Well, in that case, faith leans on the infinite wisdom or omniscience of a God in Christ, *2 Chron. 20. 12. Neither know we what to do, but our eyes are toward thee. The Lord knows how to deliver the righteous.* When the poor soul has been trying and searching itself, and, alas ! is afraid it be deceived by a treacherous heart ; in this case, faith will have recourse unto the omniscience of a God in Christ, and say, *Search me, O God, and try me, and see if there be any wicked way in me, &c.* When the poor soul is afraid of the secret plots of Satan, or of his confederates ; in this case, faith leans upon an omniscient God in Christ, who discovers deep things out of darkness, and brings to light the shadow of death.

3. Is the believer in the wilderness deserted by friends, or separated from them by banishment, imprisonment, or the like, saying with the church, *Psal. 102. 6, 7. I am like a pelican in the wilderness, like an owl in the desert ; I watch, and am like a sparrow alone upon the house-top ?* In this case, faith leans upon the immensity of a God in Christ, and is ready to say, *Though I be alone and forsaken by all creatures, yet I cannot be parted or separated from my God ; for a whole God, Father, Son and Holy Ghost, is every where present : Do not I the Lord fill heaven and earth ?* and, *My way is not hid from the Lord, and my judgment is not passed over from my God : And, My fellowship and converse shall be with him, when I cannot have fellowship with my friends and familiars who are removed far from me.*

4. O but, may the believer say, I'm a vile polluted creature, defiled in heart, lip and life ; and therefore the holiness of God is a terror to me, that I dare not so much as look towards the place where his honour dwells ; *he is of purer eyes than that he can behold iniquity.*

iniquity. *Ans.* The very holiness of a God in Christ, which thou makest use of to discourage thy faith, is glorious matter of support and encouragement : For faith's way of arguing from God's holiness is this ; God is infinitely pure and holy, and therefore he will sanctify and purify me from iniquity ; he hates sin, and punishes it, therefore he will destroy my lust : For 'tis not my person, but my sins and lusts, that are the objects of his hatred. If the rod come, why not ? For thereby he will make me a partaker of his holiness, and purge away my iniquity. 'Tis mine iniquity, and not me, that *he will visit with the rod, and my transgression with stripes ; 'tis not me, but my sins, that he designs to destroy.* But,

5. Say you, Can faith lean upon the justice of God ? *Ans.* Yes, it can : For, though this attribute be a rock of offence, to grind the wicked into powder ; yet 'tis a rock of sweet repose and rest to the believer. O, will faith say, Lord, I have indeed sinned, and deserved thy wrath ; and, *if thou mark iniquity, I cannot stand :* But here is my relief, my surety has done and suffered all that the law required ; *He was wounded for our transgressions, bruised for our iniquities, &c.* and 'tis inconsistent with justice to punish the same transgression twice : Hence faith concludes, with *Paul, There is therefore now no condemnation ; Who can lay any thing to the charge of God's elect ? &c.*

6. Faith sweetly leans upon the goodness, mercy and love of God in Christ. O, will faith say, Has God been so good, and gracious, and merciful, as to send his only-begotten Son, &c. has he given him unto the death to be a curse, and to be made sin for me ; and will he not do every other thing ? *He that spared not his own Son, but gave him unto death for us all, how will he not with him freely give us all things ? O how excellent is this his loving-kindness ! therefore the sons of men shall put their trust under the shadow of thy wings.*

7. Faith leans on the truth and faithfulness of God in Christ. Oh, says faith, *faithfulness is the girdle of his loins ;* he is so true to his word, that *heaven and earth shall pass away before one jot of his word fall to the ground ;* and therefore I'll lean and rest myself here with assured confidence ; and though he may defer the accomplishment of his word, yet I'll believe, and wait, *and will not make haste ; the vision is for an appointed time : Tho' it tarry, I'll wait for it ;* for at the end it shall speak, and it will not tarry. Thus, I say, faith goes up from the wilderness leaning on the divine attributes, as they are manifested in Christ : And thus I have minted to shew what is the object of the life of faith, or what it is in Christ that faith leans upon, as it comes up from the wilderness.

Quest. *What is the difference between the life of faith, and the life of faith or sense ?* The words of the Apostle, *2 Cor. 5.* give ground for this enquiry, when he informs us, that while in the body, *we walk by faith, and not by sight ; and because the life he lived in the flesh was a life of faith upon the son of God :* By which he plainly intimates, that a life of faith is calculated for an embodied state, and that a life of sight and sense is not suited unto our present condition here in the wilderness. There are these few things I offer to clear the difference.

1st, Sense regards only what a man hath in hand, or presently enjoys ; but faith looks to what a man hath in Christ, and in the well-ordered covenant. Sense is like a child, that is better pleased with a penny, or any little trifle the parent gives it, than if he were giving it a charter to the whole estate ; but faith, altho' it will not despise any thing that comes from the hand of the father, yet 'tis particularly taken up with the charter of the promise or covenant, and the estate lying in the hand of the great covenant-head Christ Jesus ; it views the promise as 'tis *Yea and Amen* in Christ ; it views the covenant as confirmed by his death and blood, and says, with *David, This is all my salvation,* that he hath made with me, in my new-covenant head, *an everlasting covenant, well-ordered in all things, and sure.*

2^{dly}, Sense is ready to judge of the love of God by the aspect of providence, or his present carriage ; and, whenever he seems to frown or hide, it raises all to the foundation, crying, *The Lord hath forgotten to be gracious ;* but faith reads the love of God in the face of Christ Jesus, in the acceptance that the surety has met with, and in the *declarations, offers, promises* of the word : *In his word will I hope,* says faith ; *Remember the word on which thou hast caused thy servant to hope.* Hence it follows,

3^{dly}, Sense and sight is a variable and fluctuating thing ; but faith is steady and fixed, like *Abraham, who in hope believed against hope, and staggered not at the promise through unbelief.* While the believer lives by sense, and enjoys the Lord in a sensible manner, he is ready then to say, *My mountain stands firm, I shall never be removed ;* but anon the *Lord hides his face, and the man is troubled :* But faith keeps up a persuasion of his love, even when he is withdrawn, saying, *Though I walk in darkness, I'll trust in the name of the Lord, and stay myself upon my God.*

4^{thly}, Sight and sense look only to things present ; but faith, like a *prophet,* looks at things to come, things that are at a distance. *Abraham, the father of the faithful, saw the day of Christ afar off ;* faith is the *evidence of things not seen, and the substance of things hoped for.* When under darknels of affliction, desertion, temptati-

on, it will say, *Tho' I sit in darkness, the Lord will be a light to me*; he will bring me forth to the light, and I shall behold *his righteousness*.

5thly, Sense and sight are superficial and over-lie in their views of things, and easily deceived with *appearances*; but faith is a poring and diving grace, it goes deep into things. Faith will perceive poison in a cup of gold, it will see lions dens and leopards in *Lebanon*, among trees and woods of aromatick scent; and therefore will turn away from them as dangerous, while sense is easily encouraged thereby: And, on the other hand, it will see a paradise of communion with the Lord in a wilderness, where sense can perceive nothing but pricking briars and thorns, 2 Cor. 4. 10. *Our light afflictions that are but for a moment, work for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory.*

6thly, They differ in their consort and order. Faith is the leader, and sense the follower: Faith is the duty, and sense the privilege connected with it, Eph. 1. 12, 13. *After that ye believed, ye were sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise.* Joh. 7. *Said I not unto thee, if thou wouldst believe, thou shouldst see the glory of God?* Faith is the work, and sense is the encouragement. This is God's order, which the legal heart would always invert: We would be at the encouragement of faith, before we set about the duty of believing; like *Thomas*, John 20. *Except I thrust my hand into his side, I will not believe.* But let us remember what Christ says to him, *Blessed are they who have not seen, and yet have believed.*

7thly, Sense is hasty and precipitant in its judgment; but faith is patient, and waits till it see the end. Sense draws *rash* and *hasty* conclusions when difficulties cast up; *I said in my haste, all men are liars; I said I am cast out of thy sight*: But faith waits till the *other side* of the cloud casts up; *The Lord is a God of judgment*, says faith, and *blessed are all they that wait for him. The vision is for an appointed time; tho' it tarry, wait for it: For at the end it will speak, and will not tarry*: Hence, *he that believeth, shall not make haste.* The Old-Testament saints waited about four thousand years for the coming of the promised seed of the woman; and, when they died, they died with the promise in their arms, waiting for the accomplishment, believing that he would come, and would not tarry beyond the fulness of time: Heb. 7. 3. *All these died in faith, not having received the promises, but saw them afar off, and were persuaded of them, and embraced them.*

8thly, A life of sense is *dangerous*, but a life of faith is *sure* and *safe*. The danger of sense appears from the advantage that Satan took to ruin *Adam* and all his posterity: Had our first parents lived in the steady faith of God's promise and threatening in the cove-

nant of works, they had never eaten of the forbidden tree ; but they walked by sight and sense. The fruit was beautiful to the eye, and pleasant to the taste ; this made them the more easily to listen to the hisses of the old serpent, saying, *If ye eat, ye shall be as gods, knowing good & evil* ; and thus he prevail'd. We see, that when Paul was filled with sensible manifestations, *being wrapt up to the third heavens*, he was in danger of being lifted up with pride : But now, I say, the life of faith is safe and sure ; and the reason is, because it will neither believe angels nor men, if what they say does not agree with what God says in his word. It views things as they are laid in the revelation, and forms a judgment and estimate of things according to God's verdict of them ; *To the law and to the testimony*, says faith, *if they speak not according to God's oracles, it is because there is no truth in them*. Hence faith has the moon under its feet ; *this is the victory whereby we overcome the world, even our faith*. Faith, by going this way to work, makes the soul like mount Zion, *which cannot be removed for ever*. *Believe in the Lord your God, so shall ye be established*, says the prophet unto trembling Israel.

9thly, Sense has its only foundation and confidence *within* ; it trades in the shallow waters of created grace, experimental attainments, marks of grace, and the like ; But faith has its foundation *without* the man, in Christ, in God's covenant, in the great and precious promises. While the mariner stays in the shallow waters, he is in continual fear of rocks and sand-banks ; but, when he has launched out in the deep water, he is safe. Faith trades in the deep waters of the fulness of the Godhead that dwells bodily in Christ, *made of God unto us wisdom, righteousness, sanctification and redemption* ; and so it gets above doubts and racking fears of shipwreck. But it is (I say) otherwise with sense ; it deals with created grace, manifestations, experiences, and attainments. And thus I have cleared in some measure the difference between faith and sense. I go on now to the

Second thing I propos'd upon this exhortation, which was to *press a life of faith upon believers* by some motives or arguments ; and I shall only insist a little upon two.

(1.) Then, consider, that the life of faith is adapted and suited unto a wilderness-lot. And this will be evident, if we consider, (1.) That the wilderness is a solitary place, where there is little communion or converse about the things of God : It is too frequent with the believer, that he cannot get a friend to whom he can open his mind in the world. Well, faith is adapted for such a case as this ; for by faith believers see and converse with an invisible God, inasmuch they are able to say, *Verily our fellowship is*
with

with the Father, and with his son Jesus Christ. God has a way of speaking with the believer, and the believer has a way of talking and conversing with God through Christ by faith, even in a wilderness, a solitary land; *My beloved spake, and said unto me, Arise, my love, my fair one and come away.* And what is faith, but just the echo of the soul, when it answers such words of grace, saying, *Speak, Lord, for thy servant heareth; Behold, I come unto thee, for thou art the Lord my God?* (2.) The wilderness is a misty and foggy land, where the traveller is in danger of losing his way; *he walks in darkness, and can see no light.* Clouds of desertion, clouds of sin, clouds of error, cast up; so that the poor believer, in his way to glory, knows not what course to take. Well, faith is adapted to such a lot and condition as this; for 'tis *the evidence of things not seen, and the substance of things hoped for*: It can look through the mists and clouds that cast up in its way, and run its race, *looking unto Jesus as its leader and commander*: And when some are saying, *Lo, Christ is here; or, lo, he is there*; faith can distinguish between the voice of the true shepherd, and the voice of a stranger, and the *voice of a stranger it will not follow.* (3.) The wilderness is a place of want; 'tis a dry, barren, and thirsty land, where there is nothing for the support of the soul. Well, faith is adapted to such a case as this also; for, like the virtuous woman in the *Proverbs*, it fetches its food from the land of glory, *Emanuel's land*. It has meat to eat that the world cannot afford, and which the world knows nothing of. 'Tho' Christ as to his human nature be in heaven, yet faith has a way of eating his flesh, and of drinking his blood, *which is meat indeed, and drink indeed.* Faith can bring manna out of the clouds, and water out of the flinty rock; the hand of faith will pluck the fruit of the tree of life which grows in the midst of the paradise of God, and finds its fruit sweet unto the soul's taste. Many a sweet and heartsom banquet and enjoyment has faith, when the world are feeding on husks. Oh, says *Jeremiah*, *Thy word was found by me, and I did eat it, and it was to me the joy and the rejoicing of my heart.* (4.) The wilderness is a place of danger; thieves and robbers, lions and leopards, frequent the wilderness. Well, faith is of singular use in this condition also: When the enemy's fiery darts are cast at the believer, *faith is a shield* wherewith he beats them back, and turns them off without any hurt; and when the poor soul is like to be overpowered by the might or multitude of its enemies, faith has a way of bringing in the aid of heaven for its help, as *Jehoshaphat* did: *We know not what to do, but our eyes are towards thee.* Faith has a way of wielding the arm of omnipotence in a time of danger; and then it cries,

Through

Through thee we shall do valiantly, and break down our enemies; we will be joyful in thy salvation, and in the name of the Lord we will set up our banner. And, when 'tis proper to make a retreat, faith turns into its *strong hold*, which is the name of the Lord. (5.) The wilderness is an unsettled place, where a person undergoes a variety of dispensations, turnings and windings in their lot. Well, faith is of particular use to the believer in this case, in regard that, like an anchor sure and stedfast, it enters within the veil, and keeps the soul steady and firm under all vicissitudes and temptations: Hence Paul, *I have learned in every state wherein I am therewith to be content; I know how to be abased, and how to abound; I'm instructed how to be full, and how to be hungry: how to abound, and to suffer need.* Faith keeps the soul stedfast and unmoveable, *always abounding in the work of the Lord, knowing that its labour shall not be in vain in the Lord.* (6.) A wilderness is a place of manifold thorns and trials; *in the world ye shall have tribulation.* Now, faith is of singular use here also; for it sees and considers, that this is the lot that God has ordered; that he will bring good out of all afflictions; *that they are but light, and for a moment, and not worthy to be compared with the glory that is to be revealed:* And with the views of this future glory it balances all the afflictions of a present life. Thus you see that a life of faith is adapted and suited unto a wilderness-lot; and therefore let us take the example of the spouse here, *Come up from the wilderness, leaning on her beloved,* living by faith upon him.

Notice 2d, To encourage and engage you to a leaning on Christ by faith as you *come up from the wilderness*; consider, believer, that he is thy husband and bridegroom: There is a marriage-relation between thee and him, and should not this encourage you to live and lean upon him? It is under this consideration that the spouse here takes him up; *she comes up from the wilderness leaning on her beloved.* And, to encourage faith in him under this relation, will you only consider the particulars following. 1st, Consider, that he took thee for his bride and spouse when thou wast in a wretched and miserable plight, *blind, poor and naked,* having the hue of hell upon thee, *Ezek. 16. When I passed by thee, and saw thee in thy blood, I said unto thee, Live; and thy time was a time of love, &c. When thou wast lying among the pots, he loved thee; and he loved thee so dearly, as that he bought thee off from the hand of justice with the price of his precious blood. He loved me, and he gave himself for me,* says Paul. And, should not this encourage thee to live and lean on him in thy journey thro' the wilderness? 2^{dly}, He gave thee thy *marriage-clothes.* When thou hadst not a rag to cover thee, he *clothed thee with white raiment,* that the *shame of thy nakedness*

nakedness might not appear : Hence is that song of the church, *Isa.* 51. 10. *I will greatly rejoice in the Lord, my soul shall be joyful in my God, &c.* and *Ezek.* 16. 7, 10, 12, 13. Now should not the consideration of this kindness encourage thee to lean on him as thy beloved ? 3dly, Consider, that in the marriage-contract of the new covenant, he has made over himself, and all that he is, and all that he has, unto thee : *All things are yours, for ye are Christ's, and Christ is God's.* There he says, *Thy maker is thy husband ; I will betroth thee unto me for ever, in faithfulness, &c.* 4thly, Consider the closeness and intimacy of the union between him and thee, and let this encourage thee to lean and live on him by faith. 'Tis far more intimate and dear than the union between husband and wife among men ; for they indeed are *one flesh*, but he is *one body* and *one spirit* with his spouse ; he is *in them*, and they are *in him* : And by vertue of this intimate union, thou hast a title to him and his whole purchase. As the wife, when married to a man of a liberal estate, may look to his lands and lodgings, and say, this house is mine, and this land is mine, and such and such things are mine, for they are my husband's, and *he is mine*, and *I am his* ; so may the *believer*, by vertue of his marriage-union with the Son of God, when he looks to heaven, he may say, *that this is my habitation* ; when he looks to the earth, he may say, *this is my inn* ; when he looks to the angels, he may say, *these are my guards* ; when he looks round about him, he may say, *all things are mine*, for they belong to my blessed husband, who is heir of all things, and I am heir of God through him ; his righteousness is mine to justify me, his grace is mine to sanctify me, his spirit is mine to comfort me, his covenant is mine, for it was made with him, and with me, through him, &c. 5thly, Consider, That thy blessed husband, believer, he calls thee to lean upon him, he counsels & encourages thee to depend on him as thou comest out of the wilderness : He speaks to his spouse in a kindly way, saying, *Cast thy burden on the Lord, and he will sustain thee ; cast all your cares upon him, for he careth for you ; trust in him at all times, ye people, pour out you hearts before him &c.* 6thly. To encourage thy dependance on him in the wilderness, consider his tender sympathy with thee under all thy ailments and infirmities. Thou art as dear to him as the very *apple of his eye*, and he *has thee set as a seal on his heart and his arm*, and he is *touched with the feeling of thy infirmities* ; he *gathers the lambs with his arms*, he *carries them in his bosom*, he *gently leads them that are with young* ; and he *giveth power unto the faint*, and *increaseth strength to them that have no might*. Lastly, if you do not lean on him, you will surely faint, and sag, and set up in thy journey through the wilderness ;

but,

but, if you lean and rest on him, thou shalt *renew thy strength, and mount up with wings as eagles, thou shalt run and not weary, and walk, and not faint, till thou come to Zion with songs.* Now, let all these considerations encourage you to *come up from the wilderness leaning on your beloved.*

To shut up this discourse, it may be asked, *What advice do you give us, in order to our living a life of faith, or our leaning on the beloved as we come up from the wilderness?* I answer in general, that there is a threefold object that must be kept in view, in order to our living by faith; and every act of saving faith terminates upon all the three in their proper order. (1.) There is the promise. (2.) There is Christ in the promise. (3.) Upon God in Christ. True faith can want none of them, and 'tis not a right faith that misses one of them. The promise is but a cypher, without Christ; and Christ is no Christ, without we take God up in him. Faith cannot fix upon Christ without the promise, and it cannot fix upon God but as he is in Christ. Take away the promise, and you take away Christ; and take away Christ, and you take away God; for God is no God to a sinner, but as he is in Christ. So then, of necessity these three grand objects of faith must be taken in, & taken up, in order to a *life of faith*: And therefore I shall endeavour to shew how faith is to act upon every one of them, by answering a threefold question; 1. How faith is to act upon the promise of the word, which is the next and immediate object of faith? 2. How it is to be acted upon Christ? 3. How it is to act upon a God in Christ?

Question 1. *What counsel or advice do you give us, in order to our living by faith upon the promise, which is the next or most immediate object of faith?*

Answer, in order to your living by faith upon the promise, I give you these few advices following.

In your reading of the scriptures, *collect the promises*, and gather them, pick them up; for in all these do men live, and in all these is the life of your souls. *By the great and precious promises we are made partakers of the divine nature, &c.*

Treasure them up in your minds, for they are the fuel of faith; and faith can as little act without the promise, as fire can burn without fuel: And therefore let your minds be like the pot in the ark, always full of the manna of the word. A promise hid in the heart will do you service, when you have neither access to read nor hear, &c.

Be frequently meditating on them, and *rolling them like a sweet morsel under your tongue.* *While I was musing, the fire burned,* says David. *Faith, which works by love,* is set a-work by serious medi-

tation. The promises are the sweetest lines in Christ's love-letters to his spouse : There is majesty in the command, severity in the threatening ; but love and mercy predominates in the promise, &c.

Be frequently pleading the promise in prayer. The promise is God's bond, and God's bond is to be pursued in the court of grace, at the throne of grace ; *for these things will I be enquired of,* &c. This was *David's way ; Remember the word on which thou hast caused me to hope,* &c.

Study to know and be persuaded, that the promise of God is a notable and excellent security : And this appears from this consideration ; 'Tis the word of God who cannot lie, &c. 'Tis his registrate word, &c. 'Tis his sealed word, &c. He has given caution that his word shall be good, &c. He gives the earnest of his word, the holy spirit of promise, &c. He has added his oath to it, &c. He has attested it by the *three that bear record in heaven,* &c.

I advise you to take up the promise as delivered and indorsed unto you ; *To you is the word of this salvation sent ; the promise is to you and to your seed,* &c. *Heb. 4. 1. Let us fear, lest a promise being left us,* &c.

Take up the promise as the genuine thought and picture of his heart, and that he really thinks as he speaks ; for unbelief is ready to suggest, that he says one thing, and thinks another. Be aware of this, 'tis an imputation upon man to do so, and the use of words is lost if men do not think as they speak : Far less are we to imagine that there is any dissimilarity in a *God of truth* ; no, no, his words correspond to his mind, &c.

Be persuaded, that 'tis an easy thing for God to fulfil his promise. There is no such distance between God's saying and workings, as we are ready to imagine, *Psal. 33. 9. He said, and it was done,* &c. Unbelief represents the promise as a thing difficult or hard to be performed, but 'tis quite otherwise : Saying and working is all one with God ; he commands things that are not, as if they were.

In pleading the promise, beware of limiting the Holy One of *Israel*. To clear this, take these two cautions, (1.) Beware of being preemprory in expecting what is not absolutely promised, &c. (2.) Do not always expect a present accomplishment of the promise, *but wait ; for the vision is for an appointed time,* &c. *He that believeth, does not make haste,* &c.

When faith cannot get fixt upon the conditional promise, then let it go to the absolute, where the condition mentioned is always to be found, &c.

Take care, that in acting faith upon the promise, you always remember the relation between Christ and the promise ; *for all the promises, are in him yea, and in him amen.* Many break their necks upon the promise, by separating between Christ and the promise ; Christ is the *alpha* and *omega* of all the promises.

Quest. *What is the relation between Christ and the promise ?*

Ans. (1.) Christ is to be considered as the first heir of all the promises. Adam was the heir of the promise of life made in the first covenant while he continued in his obedience ; but he lost this heirship to himself and his whole tribe by the fall ; Christ, as the second Adam, steps in, and fulfils the command of the first covenant, and undergoes its penalty in our room ; and so he becomes a new heir to the promise of eternal life, and of every thing pertaining to it. Now, our title to the promise comes in through him, through his obedience and death, his everlasting righteousness ; so that, in believing the promise, we must at the same time submit to his righteousness.

(2.) Christ is to be considered as the great blessing contained in all the promises ; hence called, in a way of eminency, *the mercy promised to the fathers.* What is the first promise in paradise, but Christ the seed of the woman ? What was the promise to Abraham, but Christ, *in whom all the nations of the earth were to be blessed ?* And when he is promised, all is promised ; for he is *all in all.* There is not a promise in the bible, but has less or more of Christ in it. In a word, Christ himself, as contained in the word of faith, draws all the blessings of heaven and a long eternity after him.

(3.) Christ is to be considered as the glorious fountain and treasury, in whom all the promised blessings are hid. He it is in whom all the treasures of grace and glory are hid ; and its out of his fulness that we receive all promised grace, &c.

(4.) Christ is the foundation and ground upon which they all stand. The believer and the promise stand upon the same foundation ; *Behold, I lay in Zion a foundation.* And all the promises are founded upon him, upon his blood and satisfaction, without which never a promise had been given out by God to any of the children of men. And faith, in improving the promise, leans upon this foundation, stands upon this ground ; just as a man leaning upon a staff, he sets the staff upon the ground, and so leans upon the staff: For, except the staff lean to the ground, it will not support us ; so unless the staff of the promise be set upon Christ as its proper ground, it will do us no service. And I fear a defect here is the ruin of many gospel-hearers : They pretend to lean to God's promise, but in the mean time they do not set the staff of the promise

mise upon Christ, and his satisfaction and intercession ; and so they and their faith fall into hell together in the end. Thus I have given you some advices, in order to your improvement of the promises in a way of believing.

Quest. second, *How is faith to act upon Christ in the promise, or by virtue of the promise ?* For, as I told you, all the promises are in him, and he is in all the promises.

For answer to this, I would have you know, that, in every promise of the word, Christ is represented as clothed or vested with one or other of his mediatory offices of prophet, priest, or king ; he is made of God unto us wisdom as a prophet, righteousness as a priest, and sanctification, as a king ; and in one or other of these offices he gives out all the sure mercies of *David*, all the blessings of a covenant of grace. And therefore, in order to your living by faith upon Christ in the promise, take the few following advices.

(1.) Study to be well acquainted with the person and offices of Christ : Study, I say, to be well acquainted with the dignity and excellency of his person as he is *Emanuel*, the word made flesh, *God manifested in the flesh* ; for upon the excellency of his person depends the validity of the whole of his undertaking as our redeemer. Without this be kept in the soul's view, it cannot but wander in the dark, without knowing where to fix ; we shall be apt to mistake a shadow instead of a substance, without we have becoming views of the excellency of a redeemer's person. But then, I say, we must study to know him, not only in his person, but in his offices wherewith he is vested ; for faith or trust has a respect unto a person vested with some office or other : As, when you employ an advocate, you trust the person as clothed with that office ; when you employ a physician, you trust the person as clothed with that office ; and when you employ a minister, you trust his person as clothed with the ministerial office : so here, when we employ Christ, or lean upon him, we trust him as clothed with his prophetic, priestly, or kingly offices. And therefore, in order to the life of faith, study to be well acquainted with the person of Christ as vested with these offices, and what it is that we are to expect from him as clothed with these offices.

Quest. *What has faith to expect from Christ as a prophet ?*

Ans. As a prophet, he reveals his father's will by his word externally, and by his spirit internally ; and therefore faith eyes him for instruction in the things of God, &c. As a prophet, he received gifts for men, and gives *apostles, prophets, pastors and teachers* ; and therefore faith looks to him for pastors according to his heart, and for his blessing upon the word and ordinances dispensed by them.

them, for the edification of his body, &c. As a prophet, he received the Spirit, and all his influences ; and therefore faith looks to him in this office for the Spirit to lead unto all truth, to rend the veil, dispel darkness, and to lead in the way we know not.

Quest. *What has faith to expect from Christ as a priest ?*

Ans. As a priest, he satisfies justice, redeems from the curse of the law, from hell and wrath. As a priest, he brings in everlasting righteousness, and makes intercession for the transgressors, opens the way to the holiest. And hence faith has ground to expect from him the benefits of his purchase, every mercy of the covenant, as the price of his blood, and the fruit of his intercession.

Quest. *What has faith to expect from Christ as a king ?*

Ans. As a king, he gives forth his laws, and a heart to obey them ; and therefore faith expects that he will mould heart and life in a conformity to his will, according to that promise, *I will write my laws in their hearts, &c.* As a king, he subdues his and his peoples enemies ; and therefore faith expects that all shall be well, according to his promise, *Rom. 8. All things shall work, &c.* As a king he gives peace of conscience, joy in the Holy Ghost, increase of grace, and *perseverance* therein to the end ; and therefore faith expects all these things from him, as vested with a kingly office. Thus you see what excellent matter faith has to work upon, when it views the person of Christ, as clothed with his prophetic, priestly, and kingly offices. Now, in order to your living by faith on him, study to have a clear uptaking of his person, God-man, clothed with these offices.

2. Another advice I give you, consequential to the former, is this ; study to know and be persuaded, that these offices of Christ are purely relative, that is, they are not for his own, but for our Advantage ; it was for us that he took these offices upon him, and 'tis for our benefit that he exercises them ; yea, in some respect, these offices depend on us as one relation depends upon another ; for as there cannot be a father without a child, so Christ could not be a *prophet*, without there were ignorant sinners to instruct, he could not be a *priest* without there were guilty transgressors for whom he might satisfy and intercede, he could not be a *king* without subjects to govern. So that these offices of Christ are purely relative ; he is a prophet for us, a priest for us, and a king for us : Hence, 1 Cor. 1. 30. *He is made of God unto us* (not to himself, but to us) *wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, and redemption.* Oh what strong ground has faith to lean upon, when these offices of Christ are taken up in this view and relation to us ! Oh,

will faith say, I'll trust him for illumination and instruction, because he is a prophet for to instruct the ignorant ; I'll trust him for pardon, peace, and reconciliation, because he's a priest *ordained for men in things pertaining to God*. I'll trust him for sanctification and victory over death, and sin, and *Satan*, and the world, because he is given for a commander and king to the people : He will instruct me, he will justify me, he will sanctify, and subdue mine iniquities, because he is my prophet, priest, and king.

3. Be persuaded, that Christ executes all these offices as a duty or a trust committed to him. When a man is cloathed with any office, he is obliged to discharge the duties of that office ; and he is unfaithful to his trust, if he do it not. His Father's commandment is upon him to this purpose, and therefore called his Father's *servant* ; *this commandment, as a servant, he received from the Father*. And not only his Father's command, but his own voluntary engagement, *Psal. 40. 5. Mine ear hast thou bored*. Now, is it to be once thought or imagined that Christ will fail in the duties of his offices, which the father commanded him, and which he himself has voluntarily engaged with.

4. Let faith begin first to act upon the priestly office of Christ ; for this is the basis and foundation of the other two, *Isa. 53.* at the close, *Phil. 2. 8, 9, 10. Psal. 110.* last. The Priest under the law, he had the *Urim* and *Thummin* in his breast-plate, and a crown upon his head, to learn us, that the kingly and prophetic offices of which these were the badges, were both founded on the sacerdotal or priestly office : So then, study to improve Christ as a priest and propitiation set forth in the glorious Gospel, to be applied by faith ; and then it will be easy to believe that he is thy prophet and king. If thou canst believe that he suffered and satisfied for thy sins, it will be easy for thee to believe, that as a Prophet he will wash thee, and as a King he will sanctify and subdue thine iniquities : Yea, know, Sirs, for your encouragement, that the very end why Christ purchased grace and glory by his blood was, that it might be offered unto all, and actually applied unto every soul that believes in him. So then, let faith ground first upon the priestly office of Christ, and upon that foundation claim the benefit of his other offices.

5. Remember how affectionately Christ executed these offices upon earth, and this will be a strong ground to believe that he will not neglect them, now that he is ascended into heaven. He had a great desire to be sacrificed, *Luke 12. 50. I have a baptism to be baptized with, &c.* He longed to be dipt in the red-sea of his Father's wrath. The word signifies that his soul was big or swell'd within

within him with desire: He had not only desire, but delight in his mediatory work; *I delight to do thy will, O my God.* Yea, he rejoiced in spirit, when the time of his suffering drew near. Now, may faith argue, did Christ execute his offices with such desire, delight and joy, in a state of humiliation; and, will he not much more do it in a state of exaltation? Yea, surely he will; for he is Jesus Christ, the same to-day, yesterday, and for ever.

6. Consider, that both the Father and the Holy Ghost are engaged for the execution of these offices of Christ. The Father is engaged, because he ordained him to these offices, and ordained him with the solemnity of a decree, *Psal. ii.* and with the solemnity of an oath, *Pf. 110.* and with the solemnity of a proclamation from heaven, *Matt. 3.* at the close; *this is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased; hear ye him.* Now, may faith say, was Christ ordained with such solemnity to his mediatory offices by his father; and, will not the father see to the execution of them with respect to my soul, that puts its trust in him? Again, as the Father, so the Holy Ghost is concerned in the execution of these offices: The Holy Ghost furnished him with gifts, and graces for this very end, *Isa. 61. 1.* *The Spirit of the Lord God is upon me, &c.* Now, will ever the Spirit of the Lord lose his labour? No, no: God has put his Spirit upon him, therefore he will bring forth judgment to the *Gentiles*, and the isles shall wait for his law. Thus you see, that faith has all the security that heaven can afford for the execution of his offices. Thus then, *Come up from the wilderness leaning upon the beloved.*

Quest. 3. *How is faith to act upon a God in Christ, who is the ultimate object of faith?*

Ans. In these particulars; 1. Let faith view a God in Christ in a way of *appropriation*, as its own God. This, we find, has been the way of the saints in all ages and generations; it still lays claim to God in Christ with its appropriating *My, &c. Psal. 16. 2.* *O my soul; thou hast said unto the Lord, Thou art my Lord.* And *Ps. 5.* *The Lord is the portion of my cup, &c.* And *Psal. 73. 26.* *My flesh and my heart faileth; but God is the strength of my heart, and my portion for ever.* And if you ask, upon what ground doth faith go, in laying claim to a God in Christ as its own God? I answer it goes upon the ground of his assuming our nature in the person of his eternal Son, and the covenant-grant and promise through him; *I am the Lord thy God; I will be your God, and ye shall be my people.* Faith sets to its amen unto the grant, and says, *this God is my God for ever;* and it shall be so, because he has said it: and, *has he said it, and will he not do it? Hath he spoken it, and shall it not come to pass?* 2. Having

fixed thy claim unto a God in Christ as thy own God, then proceed to take a view of all his *attributes* and *perfections*; for every one of them (as I shewed before) is a pillar and strong rock, on which thy faith may lean with the greatest confidence and security, even though the earth should be removed, though the mountains should be cast into the midst of the sea. O will faith say, my God is a God of infinite power, and doth whatever pleases him, in the armies of heaven, and among the inhabitants of the earth; and this power is thro' Christ engaged for my preservation, *he will hide me as in a pavilion in the evil day*. My God in Christ is a God of infinite wisdom; and therefore he will lead me in the way I know not, and make me wise to salvation. He is a God of infinite justice, and therefore having accepted a satisfaction for my sins in the surety, he is faithful and just in forgiving; he will blot out mine iniquities as a cloud, &c. He is a God of unspotted holiness; and therefore he will sanctify me, according to his covenant; *I will sprinkle them with clean water*, &c. He is a God of infinite bowels and mercy; and therefore he will pity and pardon me, and *hear me when I cry*, &c. He is a God of infinite faithfulness, this is the girdle of his loins and reins; and therefore he will not suffer his promise to fall, *his covenant he will not break*, &c. Thus faith leans and rests on the divine attributes as they are manifested in Christ. 3. Faith leans upon a God in Christ, as one that is infinitely bountiful and liberal; and, argues as the apostle doth, *Rom. 8. He that spared not his own son but gave him to death for us all, how will he not with him freely give us all things?* Faith sees that his treasures can never be diminished, far less can they be spent or exhausted; and oh how heartfully doth faith lay claim to these treasures; when it hears him saying, as *Jam. 1. 5. If any man lack wisdom, let him ask of God*, &c. 4. Faith views the providence of a God in Christ as calculated and designed for the advancement of his own glory, and levelled at the good of them that love him; and this quiets the soul amidst all the reelings and shakings of this lower world. *The Lord doth reign, let the earth rejoice, let the multitude of the isles be glad thereof*. 5. Faith, acting upon a God in Christ, will see an eternity of happiness beyond time, in the immediate fruition and enjoyment of him; hence is that of David, *Psal. 73. 26. My flesh and my heart faileth; but God is the strength of my heart, and my portion for ever.*

A
COLLECTION
OF
SERMONS
ON

Several Subjects.

PREACH'D,

Some by the Rev. EBENEZER ERSKINE, M. A.
Minister of the Gospel at *Sterling*;


AND

Others by the Rev. RALPH ERSKINE, M. A.
Minister of the Gospel at *Dumfermline*, and Author of
the GOSPEL-SONNETS.

V O L. II.

B O S T O N :

Printed by ROGERS and FOWLE, for JOSHUA BLANCHARD, at the *Bible*
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GOD's little Remnant keeping their Garments clean in an evil Day.

BEING A

SERMON preached at the Sacrament of
Strathmiglo, June 3. 1714.

By the Rev. Mr. EBENZER ERSKINE, M. A.

REV. III. 4.

Thou hast a few names even in Sardis, which have not defiled their Garments: and they shall walk with me in white: for they are worthy.

THE first six verses of this chapter contain an epistle sent by Jesus Christ unto the Church of *Sardis*; where we have, first, the preface, and then the body of the epistle. In the body of the epistle we may notice these three things, (1.) An accusation or charge in the close of the first verse. (2.) An exhortation unto several duties, such as, repentance, watchfulness, and the like, v. 2. 3. (3.) We have a commendation given to this church in the words of my text, *Thou hast a few names even in Sardis, &c.* Where, more particularly, we have, 1st, The commendation itself, *Thou hast a few names even in Sardis, which have not defiled their garments.* 2^{dly}, A reward, *they shall walk with me in white.* 3^{dly}, The reason and ground of this, *for they are worthy.* First, I say, we have the commendation itself, where we may notice the commender, the commended, and the ground on which the commendation runs. 1. The commender, who he is may be gathered from the connection: It is he that hath the *seven spirits of God, and the seven stars*, v. 1. It is Christ himself; and his commendation may be depended upon; for he trieth the heart and reins, and needs not that any should testify of man unto him because he knows what is in man. 2. The party commended; who are described, (1.) From their designation, they are called

called names, God had given them a new name, a name better than of sons and daughters, even a name among the living in Jerusalem; they were marked among the rolls of his chosen, redeemed and sanctified ones; by their zeal, uprightnes, integrity, and their honest appearance for God, in that degenerate day and place, they had distinguished themselves from others, and so purchased a name to themselves, and they were known to men as well as unto God: *The Lord knoweth the righteous*, and he knows them by name, they are marked out from among others. (2.) They are described by their paucity, they are a *few names*; they were comparatively *few*, when laid in the balance with the multitude and bulk of carnal secure professors in this church; there was but a small part of them, that had kept themselves free of the corruptions and defections of that church, and that had not bowed the knee unto *Baal*. (3.) They are described from the place of their residence, *Sardis*, one of the seven churches of the *Lesser Asia*. The expression here is observable, *a few names even in Sardis*. Christ's character of this church, in the close of the first verse, was, that they were generally dead, tho' they had a name to live; but, as if he had said, 'Tho' the generality of this Church be dead, yet even there I have a *few* lively and tender Christians. But then (3.) Notice the ground on which the commendation runs, they have kept their garments clean, or *have not defiled their garments*. Perhaps there may be an allusion in this expression unto the *Jews*, who were not to come near any thing that was unclean, by the law of *Moses*, or to touch them with their garments, lest they should be defiled; or it may allude unto the practice of the eastern countries, who used to gird up their long garments, to keep them from being defiled, or spotted: The meaning is, that this little remnant in *Sardis* had maintained their integrity, like *Job*, they were *perfect and upright* men, men that *feared God and eschewed evil*: they had not complied with the abounding errors and corruptions of their day, but *exercised themselves to keep consciences void of offence towards God and man*: When others were sleeping, they were awake about their work; when others in that church were dead and secure, they were lively. So much for the commendation given by Christ unto this remnant. *Secondly*, In the words we have a reward, or rather we may call it a consolatory promise, made unto this little remnant, *they shall walk with me in white*. Perhaps the expression may allude unto the practice of the *Romans*, who clothed their nobility at any solemnity in white; or to their conquerors, who triumphed upon any victory obtained in white garments; or to the priests under the law, that ministered in the temple in white garments;

garments ; *they shall walk with me in white*, that is, they shall be admitted to the immediate enjoyment of fellowship and communion with me, and be partakers of my glory in heaven through eternity. But the import of the expression may be more fully spoken to afterward. *Thirdly*, In the words, we have the reason and ground, why the Lord puts such a difference between his remnant and others, *for they are worthy* ; that is, valuable and excellent persons, as *Solomon* speaks, *the righteous is more excellent than his neighbour* : Not as if they had any worthiness or excellency in themselves beyond others by nature : No, no ; *they are children of wrath and condemnation even as others* ; but they are made worthy by justifying and sanctifying grace, by imputed righteousness and inherent holiness. Some render the word, *for they are meet* ; so the word is render'd, *Matt. 3. 8. Bring forth therefore fruits meet for repentance* : So here the Lord promises, that they who keep their garments clean, *should walk with him in white* ; why ? because it is meet or suitable it should be so, that they who are holy here, should be happy hereafter.

Doct. *That, altho' there be but few in a visible church, that keep their garments clean in a declining time, yet these few are highly valued by Christ, and shall be admitted to partake of his glory in heaven.*

This doctrine I take to be the Scope of the verse, *thou hast a few names*, &c. In discoursing this point, I shall endeavour, through divine assistance, to do these six things, (1.) Offer a few propositions concerning this little remnant. (2.) Shew that Christ has a high value for this remnant, they are worthy in his esteem. (3.) What is imported in their keeping their garments clean. (4.) What it is to walk with Christ in white. (5.) Enquire into the connection between the duty and priviledge. (6.) Apply the whole.

The *first* thing is to offer a few propositions concerning this remnant, who are said to keep their garments clean. And, *first*, That God the Father gave a remnant unto Christ of the posterity of *Adam*, in the covenant of redemption, to be ransomed and redeemed by him from that wo and wrath, into which *Adam* by his apostacy had involved himself and all his posterity. That such a remnant was gifted unto Christ by the Father, is plain from *John 17.* where Christ in his Prayer frequently speaks of those that the Father gave him, particularly *v. 6. Thine they were, and thou gavest them me, and they have kept thy word.* He promised to him, for his encouragement in that great undertaking, that he should *have a seed to serve him, and see of the travel of his soul.* *Second*, The Lord Jesus, the eternal Son of God, in the fulness of time, took on the nature of man, and in our nature obeyed the law, and died in the

the room and stead of this remnant which the Father gave him: He did not obey the law, and satisfy justice for the whole world, or for all men, as *Arminians* talk; no, but he died for a select number: Hence he is said to *lay down his life for his sheep*, and not for the goats. And, as his death, so his intercession is confined unto this remnant, as it is plain from *John 17. 9. I pray for them: I pray not for the world, but for them which thou hast given me, for they are thine.* Third, This redeemed remnant are, in God's own time sooner or later, under the ministry of gospel-ordinances, determined by the power and efficacy of divine grace, to close with Christ upon the call of the gospel, and to go in to the blessed contrivance of salvation and redemption through him: He translates them, in a day of his power, out of darkness into his marvellous light, and into the kingdom of his dear Son; not one of this elected remnant, but shall in due time be brought home; for whom he did predestinate, them he also called. Fourth, God's remnant are a holy people, they are a set of men that study to keep clean garments; they study to purify themselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of the Lord; and therefore called, the people of his holiness, *Isa. 63. 18.* Holiness is the design of their election, for he hath predestinated us unto the adoption of children, that we should be holy, and without blame before him in love. Holiness is the design of their redemption by Christ Jesus, *Tit. 2. 14. He hath redeemed us from all iniquity, and purified unto himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works.* Holiness is the design of their effectual calling: For God hath not called us to uncleanness, but unto holiness; and he hath saved us, and called us with a holy calling: So that God's remnant is a holy remnant. Fifth, The Number of this remnant is but small, there are but a few names in *Sardis* that have not defiled their garments. Christ's flock is but a little flock; it is indeed a great flock, and an innumerable multitude, abstractly considered; but, considered comparatively, or when laid in the balance with the droves and multitudes of the wicked, it is but a little flock and a small remnant: They are few that are elected, for many are called, but few are chosen: They are few that are redeemed, it is only God's elect that are bought with a price: They are few that are effectually called, for, to whom is the arm of the Lord revealed? Few that hold out in the time of temptation, but seven thousand among all the thousands of *Israel*, that have not bowed the knee to *Baal*: Sixth, Altho' they be but few, yet in the worst of times God has always some of this remnant, who cleave to him and his way, even when all about them are corrupting their ways. He had a *Lot* in *Sodom*, whose righteous soul was vexed with the abomi-

abominations of the place; he has a remnant of mourners in *Jerusalem*, when the whole city was defiled with wickedness; he has *his two witnesses* to bear testimony unto his Truths, when *the whole world is wondring after the beast*, and overrun with antichristian darkness and idolatry. *Seventh*, God has a special eye of favour and kindness on this remnant, in a sinful and declining time; he has a mark set upon the men that *sigh and groan for the abominations in Jerusalem*; *his eyes run to and fro thro' the whole earth, to shew himself strong in the behalf of them, &c.* But this leads me to

The *second* Thing proposed, which was to shew, that Christ has a high value for this remnant; they are the worthies of the world in his esteem, however they be disesteem'd and undervalued by the world. This will appear from these following considerations,

(1.) Consider what an account he makes of them, when compared with the rest of the world; he values them so highly, that he will give whole nations and kingdoms of the wicked for their ransom, *Isa. 45. 3, 4. Ever since thou wast precious in my sight, thou hast been honourable, and I have loved thee, and I gave men for thee, &c.* that is, he will sacrifice whole nations and kingdoms of wicked men, before he be bereft of his little remnant. The scriptures are very full to this purpose; his remnant is the gold, the rest of the world are but dross, *thou puttest away all the wicked of the earth like dross*, *Psal. 119. 119.* But the precious sons of Zion are comparable to fine gold, *Lam. 4. 2.* Not only gold, but fine gold, polished by the hand of the spirit. Again, his little remnant are the wheat, but the rest of the world are the chaff; and *what is the chaff to the wheat, saith the Lord?* When he comes with his fan in his hand, he will gather his wheat into his garner, but the chaff he will burn up with fire that is unquenchable, *Matth. 3. 12.* His little remnant is the good corn, but the wicked are the tares; and he will say to his reapers at the last judgment, *gather the tares together, and bind them in bundles to burn them; but, gather the good corn into my barn.* His remnant are his sheep, but the rest are the goats; and he will say to the sheep on his right hand, *Come, ye blessed*; but to the goats he will say, *Depart, ye cursed.* His remnant are his vessels of honour, whom he reserves as furniture to adorn *the house not made with hands*; but the wicked are vessels of wrath, whom he will break in pieces as a potter's vessel, and cast into the furnace of his anger.

Thus, I say, that they are worthy in his esteem, is evident from the account he makes of them when laid in the balance with others. (2.) That this little remnant is worthy in Christ's account, will appear, if we consider the names & appellations that he gives them: He sometimes calls them his *Love*, his *Dove*, his *Undefiled*,

his *Hephzibab*, his *Beulah*, his *Jedidiabs*, the very darlings of his heart; he calls them sometimes his *Jewels*, Mal. 3. 17. *They shall be mine, saith the Lord, in the day that I make up my jewels; and I will spare them as a man spareth his own son that serves him.* He calls them the very *apple of his eye*, the most tender part of the body, and the eye-lid of his special providence doth cover them: Yea, such is the value that he has for them, that he calls them *himself*, and speaks of them as if *he* and they were but one. *Saul, Saul*, says the Lord, *why persecutest thou me?* (3.) Consider the endeared relations they stand under unto him, and from thence you will see that they cannot but be worthy in his esteem: There is a legal, a moral, and a mystical union between him and them; he is their head, and they are his members; he is the root, and they are the branches that grow upon him; he is the husband, and they are his spouse and bride, *thy Maker is thy husband*; he is their father, and they are his children; he is their elder brother, and they are his younger brethren; he is heir of all things, and he makes them joint-heirs with himself of his heavenly kingdom; he is their advocate, and they are his clients; he is their king, and they are his subjects. (4.) They cannot but be worthy in his esteem, if ye consider how much he values, not only their persons, but whatever pertains unto them: He values their names, *I have a few names in Sardis*; he keeps them among the records of heaven, and has them *written in the lamb's book of life*. He values their prayers, *Cant. 2. 14. O my dove that art in the clefts of the rock! let me hear thy voice, for it is sweet*; the prayers of the wicked are like the howling of dogs to him, but the prayers of the upright remnant are his delight: He values their tears, and *puts them into his bottle*; he, as it were, gathers every drop from their eyes, *I have heard thy prayers, I have seen thy tears*, saith the Lord to *Hzekiah*; he values their blood, *Psal. 116. 15. precious in the sight of the Lord is the death of his saints*; and they that shed their blood, he will give them blood to drink. (5.) That they are worthy in his esteem, appears from what he does for them: He *remembered them in their low estate*, and set his love on them, when they were *wallowing in their blood*; *he has loved them with an everlasting love*, an unalterable love, with an ardent love; his love to them is *strong as death*; *he has redeemed them with his blood*; *for we are not redeemed by corruptible things, such as silver and gold, &c. He hath loved us, and wash'd us with his own blood*, Rev. 1. 5. He confers many excellent privileges upon them; they have an excellent pardon, it being full, final and irrevocable, *Heb. 8. 12.* they have an excellent *peace, which passeth all understanding*; an excellent *joy,*
being

being unspeakable, and full of glory; excellent food, they eat of the hidden manna; have access to an excellent throne with boldness, Heb. 4. 16. They have excellent communion, even fellowship with the Father, and with his son Jesus Christ; they have the interposition of an excellent mediator, even Jesus the mediator of the new covenant; they have an excellent guard attending them; they are guarded with the divine attributes, even as the mountains are about Jerusalem; guarded with the twenty thousand chariots of angels; *Mabanim*, the host of God, is about them; they have an excellent store-house, even the wholefulness of the Godhead dwelling bodily in Christ; they are clothed with excellent robes, even the garments of salvation, and robes of righteousness: They are heirs of an everlasting inheritance, that is incorruptible and undefiled: yea, heirs of God and joint-heirs with Jesus Christ. And, to crown all, they have excellent security for all this, the word of God, his covenant, his oath, his blood, and the earnest of his spirit. From all which, it appears, what an high value he has for them, and how worthy they are in his account.

The third thing proposed was, to enquire what is imported in the remnant *their keeping their garments clean*: And, (1.) it imports, that God's remnant are clothed, or that they have garments given them; they are not naked, like the rest of the world: And there is a two-fold garment, wherewith God's remnant are arrayed, *viz.* a garment of imputed righteousness, and a garment of inherent holiness: By the first, all their iniquities are covered, and they skreened from the curse and condemnation of the law, and the stroke of avenging justice: By the last, *viz.* the garment of inherent holiness, their souls are beautified and adorned, the image of God restored, and they, like the *King's daughter*, made all glorious within: And it is the last of these that is here principally intended. (2.) It imports, that the garment which God gives his remnant is a pure and a cleanly robe, and therefore called *white raiment*; Rev. 3. 19. and *fine linen*, Rev. 19. 8. speaking of the *lamb*, the *bride's wife*, it is said, that *to her was granted, that she should be arrayed in fine linen, pure and white: For the fine linen is the righteousness of saints.* So that ye see *white* is the livery wherewith Christ clothes his little remnant; and, Rev. 7. 9. they are said to be clothed with *white robes*. (3.) That sin is of a defiling and polluting nature: As mire and filth defile our garments, so doth sin defile and pollute our souls, and renders us vile and loathsome in the sight of God: Hence it is commonly called *uncleanness*, Zech. 13. 1. *There is a fountain opened in the house of David, for to take away sin and uncleanness*; it is the abominable thing which God's

foul doth hate, and is more lothsome in his sight, than the most detestable things in nature are unto us. (4.) That it may be the lot of the Lord's people to live and walk among a people, the generality of whom are polluting and defiling themselves; for this is the commendation of the remnant here, that tho' the body of this church was corrupted, yet they had not gone along with them. Thus it fared with *Noah* in the old world, and with *Lot* in *Sodom*: And the prophet *Isaiab*, Chap. 6. cries out, *I dwell in the midst of a people of polluted lips*. (5.) That even God's remnant are not without danger of defiling themselves with the sins and defections of their day. Sin comes gilded with such fair and plausible pretences, and such powerful motives and arguments, that even some of God's own remnant are not only in danger, but some of them may be actually ensnared and defiled therewith; and, no doubt, some that had the root of the matter in *Sardis*, were tainted with the corruptions of that church, as I doubt not but many in our own church, who have made very wide steps, are notwithstanding dear and near unto God. (6.) That foul garments are very unbecoming and unsuitable unto God's remnant; for they that *name the name of Christ*, and profess to be his friends and favourites, they are bound to *depart from iniquity*. It brings up a reproach upon religion, and makes the *name of God to be blasphemed*, when any of God's remnant make a wrong step; as you see in the case of *David*; his murder and adultery opened the mouths of the wicked in his day, and made *the enemy to blaspheme*; and, I am sure, it cannot but be bitter to any that belong to God, when, thro' their untenderness, the way of God is evil spoken of. (7.) A careful study of universal obedience unto all known & commanded duties. God's remnant are of *David's* mind and principle, they *have a respect to all God's commandments*; his law is the rule and standard of their walk, it is *a light unto their feet, and a lamp unto their paths*; and they are always breathing after more and more conformity thereunto, saying, with *David*, *O that my ways were directed to keep thy statutes!* they study to have a gospel-adorning conversation, and that *their light may so shine before men, that others seeing their good works, may glorify their Father which is in heaven*. (8) A holy caution and tenderness in guarding against all sin, especially the prevailing sins of the day and generation wherein they live; they will not *walk according to the course of the world*, but they *are transformed in the renewing of their minds*; they keep at a distance from common defections, errors in doctrine, profanity in practice, and innovations in the worship of God; they will not so much as give their consent unto these abominations, but endeavour

vour in their station to oppose them, and give their honest testimony against them. *Keeping of the garments clean* in a declining time, implies a steady adherence unto the truths, laws and ordinances of Christ, and the government that he has appointed in his house: Hence they are said to *keep the word of his patience*. They will not sell one hoof of divine truth; no, not tho' it should cost them the warmest blood of their heart; they will *buy the truth* at any rate, but sell it at no rate. It implies, that they have supplies of covenanted strength given them, to uphold and keep them from defiling their garments; for they are not able to keep themselves; no, *the way of man is not in himself*; it is the *Lord that keepeth the feet of his saints*, when the *wicked shall be silent in darkness*; yea, *they are kept by the power of God, through faith unto salvation*, 1 Pet. 1. 6. which implies a keeping them, as in a garrison: *The Lord Jehovah is their strength, and the munition of rocks round about them*. Lastly, It imports the mortification of sin in the root and fruit of it, together with a holy care to have grace improved and exercised, till it be crowned with glory; for *he that hath this hope in him, purifieth himself*, &c. And thus ye see what is imported in keeping of the garments clean.

The *fourth* thing proposed was, to enquire a little into the import of the consolatory promise made unto the remnant that *keep their garments clean, they shall walk with me in white*, saith the Lord; that is, as I told you in the explication of the words, they shall be admitted to share of my glory at death and judgment. But I shall endeavour more particularly to enquire into the import of this promise; and, 1. What is imported in walking with Christ. And, 2. What in walking with him in white.

First, What is imported in walking *with him*? 1st, It necessarily supposeth the soul's subsistence in a separate state, or after its separation from the body; otherwise it could not be said to walk with him. This is one of the fundamental truths of our religion, which Christ himself proved & maintained against the *Sadducees*, from that scripture, *I am the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob*; *God is not, says he, the God of the dead, but of the living*. No sooner are the souls of God's remnant divorced from their bodies, but, by the ministry of angels, they are *carried into Abraham's bosom*. 2^{dly}, Their walking with Christ, not only supposes the soul's existence in a separate state, but also its activity, for it (*walks*) *with Christ*. *The spirits of just men*, upon their separation from the body, are *made perfect*, and so perfect, as they *serve him day and night in his holy temple*, with infinitely more activity and liveliness, than when they were coopt up in the prison of the body; which in this state

of sin and imperfection, is a dead weight, as it were, upon the soul, in the service of God. 3dly, Their walking with Christ, implies perfect peace and agreement between Christ and them; for, *how can two walk together, except they be agreed?* The Lord's people, while here, are many times under the affrighting apprehensions of his anger and displeasure, which makes them to cry out, with David, Pſal. 77. 9. *Hath God forgotten to be gracious? hath he in anger ſhut up his tender mercies? Selah.* But there will be no ſuch complaint in heaven: No, no; there will not be the leaſt grudge in his heart, or frown in his countenance through eternity; nothing but a perpetual ſmile of his reconciled countenance. 4thly, It implies intimacy, which is more than agreement; for there may be a good underſtanding where there is little intimacy and familiarity: But the Saints in glory, they *ſhall walk with Chriſt*; that is, he and they will be very intimate one with another. This intimacy is begun on earth; for ſometimes, even in the wilderneſs, he brings them into the chamber of *his preſence*, and allows them ſweet fellowſhip with himſelf; ſometimes they *ſit down under his ſhadow with great delight*: But this intimate fellowſhip ſhall be conſummate and completed in heaven, where all veils ſhall be rent, and all clouds ſhall be for ever diſpelled, and nothing ſhall remain to interrupt the bleſſed familiarity betwixt him and them: Then that word ſhall be fully accompliſhed, *John 17. 23. I in them, and they in me, that they may be made perfect in one.* 5thly, It implies, that they ſhall be in the preſence of Chriſt, and this is an addition to intimacy; for two intimate friends may be at a diſtance one from another. The Lord's people, while in *the body*, are ſaid to be *absent from the Lord*: But then they ſhall be at home; he and they ſhall dwell together through eternity, in the manſions of glory, *the houſe not made with hands*. So much Chriſt tells his diſciples, *John 12. 26. Where I am, there ſhall alſo my ſervants be.* And *John 14. at the beginning, I will come again and receive you to myſelf, that where I am, there ye may be alſo.* 6thly, It implies that they ſhall be privileged with the ſight of Chriſt: for two cannot well walk together without ſeeing one another; then they ſhall ſee the man Chriſt, *exalted at his Father's right-hand, far above all principalities and powers, and every name that is named, not only in this world, but in that which is to come.* This is a privilege enſured unto the little remnant by Chriſt's own prayer, *John 17. 24. Father, I will that thoſe whom thou haſt given me, may be with me where I am, that they may behold my glory which thou haſt given me.* O how raviſhing a ſight will this be, to behold the glory of Chriſt in heaven!

When

When he was transfigured upon mount *Tabor*, his face did shine as the sun, and his raiment was white as the light: What will he be on mount *Zion* above, when he shall be seen with all his robes of glory, and all his heavenly retinue attending him? *Seventhly*, They shall walk with me: It implies full pleasure, satisfaction and complacency; for walking is an act of recreation, heaven is a place of joy and pleasure, *Psal.* 16. 11. *In thy presence there is fulness of joy, &c.* Then the joy of the Lord shall not only enter into them, but they shall enter into the joy of their Lord. *The ransomed of the Lord shall come to Zion with songs, and everlasting joy upon their heads.*

Secondly, What is imported in walking with him in white? *Answer*, (1.) That then all their black and beggarly garments shall be laid aside, a *body of sin and death* shall not then molest them; they shall not any more complain of the *errors of their hearts*, or the *iniquity of their heels*; no, they shall be *presented without spot or wrinkle, or any such thing.* (2.) White is a badge of purity and innocency; they shall walk with me in white; that is, they shall not only lay aside their beggarly garments, but they shall be *clothed with change of raiment*; perfect holiness shall then be their ornament; they shall be brought unto the king in raiment of needle-work; and, like the king's daughter, they shall be all glorious within; they who had *lied among the pots*, shall become like the wings of a dove, covered with silver, and her feathers with yellow gold; yea, they shall shine forth like the sun in the kingdom of their Father. (3.) White is a badge of victory, as we told you in the explication of the words, *Rev.* 7. 9. The triumphant company there, of all nations, tongues and kindreds, they stand before the throne and before the lamb, clothed with white robes and palms in their hands, as a sign of their complete victory over all their enemies, whether outward or inward. Sin is an enemy that the believer has many a hot conflict with, while here; but, in heaven, the inhabitants are all forgiven their iniquities, there is no more sin, *Rev.* 22. As for Satan, that grand enemy, that went about like a roaring lion, seeking to devour them, they shall then tread him under their feet; know ye not that saints shall judge angels? saith the apostle: And, as for the world, they shall never any more be ensnared, either with its frowns or flatteries. (4.) White is a badge of honour; the Romans clothed their nobility in white, as ye heard. O what honour is reserved for the saints of God, his little remnant! They shall be honoured with a place among them that stand by in the new *Jerusalem*; yea, they shall be honoured with the white stone, and the new name; they shall sit with Christ upon his throne, *Rev.* 3. 22. They shall be honoured with a crown of burnish'd glory: *When the chief shepherd shall appear, we shall receive a*

crown of glory which fadeth not away. They shall be honoured with a kingdom; I appoint unto you a kingdom, as my Father hath appointed unto me. They shall be honoured to be assessors with Christ at the last judgment. Know ye not that the saints shall judge the world? They'll applaud the Judge in all his proceedings, & cry, True and righteous are thy judgments, Lord God Almighty: Then that passage will be fully accomplished, Pf. 149. 5, 6, 7, 8, 9. Let the saints be joyful in glory: let them sing aloud upon their beds. Let the high praises of God be in their mouth, and a two-edged sword in their hand, to execute vengeance upon the heathen, and punishments upon the people; to bind their kings with chains, and their nobles with fetters of iron; to execute upon them the judgment written: This honour have all his saints. Praise ye the Lord. (5.) White was a garment appointed for the priests under the law, when they were to minister about holy things; the saints of God are all priests, *Rev. 1. 5. Unto him that loved us, and hath made us kings and priests to God; and, as priests in the heavenly temple, their continual work shall be to offer up eternal sacrifices of praise unto God and the Lamb. There every bird in every bush shall sing, and say, Worthy is the Lamb that was slain, and hath redeemed us unto God by his blood; salvation unto our God that sitteth upon the throne, and to the Lamb for ever and ever. (6.)* We find the angels frequently appearing in white, *Acts 1. 10. While the disciples are looking towards heaven after their exalted Lord, behold two men, that is, two angels in the form of men, stood by them in white apparel: So the saints, they shall walk with Christ in white; they shall be like the angels of heaven, Matt. 22. 30. In the resurrection they are as the angels of God in heaven. The original word signifies, they shall be equal to angels, or angels mates. Like angels, they shall not be liable to hunger, thirst, weariness, or such like bodily infirmities. The angels are said to behold the face of God in heaven; so shall ye who are God's little remnant: Now ye see darkly as thro' a glass, but then ye shall see face to face. The angels serve God with the greatest voluntariness & freedom, with the greatest activity and nimbleness, for he maketh his angels spirits, and his ministers a flame of fire; so shall the saints in glory, they shall do the will of God, as it is done by the angels in heaven. (7.)* We find Christ sometimes appearing in white, particularly at his transfiguration, *his countenance did shine as the sun, and his raiment was white as the light; and so it may import thus much, they shall walk with me in white, that is, there shall be a blessed conformity between them and me in glory, Rev. 19. 11. Christ is there represented as mounted upon a white horse, and the armies which were in heaven followed him upon white horses, clothed in fine linen, white and clean: Christ and all*

his redeemed company, shall be clothed with the same livery, 1. *John* 3. 2. *When he shall appear, we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is: Their souls shall resemble him in righteousness and true holiness; yea, their vile bodies shall be made like unto his glorious body.* (8.) White has a great reflection of light with it, when the sun shines upon it; O how bright and dazling will the glory of the saints be in that day, when the *sun of righteousness shall shine upon them with a meridian splendor!* Christ will then be admired in his saints, for they shall shine forth like the sun, and like the brightness of the firmament; the beauty of the Lord their God will then be upon them, and such beauty as shall eternally astonish & confound the wicked, who contemned them upon earth, and did not reckon them worthy to sit with the dogs of their flock. And this much for the fourth thing.

The *Fifth* thing was, to enquire into the connection between the duty and the privilege, between *keeping the garments clean, and walking with Christ in white.* (1.) Then, negatively, you should know that there is no connection of merit, as if our *keeping of clean garments* did deserve that we should *walk with Christ in white*; no, no: Let every mouth be stopped, for all the world is guilty before God, and therefore can merit nothing but wrath and vengeance at the hand of God; *By the works of the law shall no flesh living be justified, or saved*; it is by the merits of Christ, his doing and dying, as the surety of the little remnant, that they are brought to *walk with him in white*: But, tho' there be no connection of merit, yet, (1.) There is a connection of decree, or purpose in this matter; God, by an unalterable decree, has ordained, that they who are holy shall be happy, that *they who keep their garments clean shall walk with him in white*, 2 *Thess.* 2. 13. *God hath from the beginning chosen us to salvation, through sanctification of the Spirit, and belief of the truth.* (2.) There is a connection of promise, as well as of purpose. Ye have them linked together in this promise in the text, and every where almost through the scriptures of truth; we have a cluster of these promises, in the second and third of the *Revelation*, *To him that overcometh* (which is the same thing with keeping the garments clean) *will I give to eat of the hidden manna*; and this link is so strong, that it can never be broken; for it is one of these *immutable things, wherein it is impossible for God to lie.* (3.) There is a connection of meetness or congruity. It is suitable, that those who are holy should be happy; that they who have *white garments here*, should be clothed with white hereafter: It is suitable unto the nature of God, for he cannot behold iniquity, *neither can evil dwell with him*; none but holy ones shall enjoy a holy

God:

God: it is suitable unto the work of heaven, for *no unclean thing can enter the gates of the new Jerusalem*: To this purpose is the last clause of our text, *they shall walk with me in white, for they are worthy*, or meet, as the word may be rendered, *Col. 1. 12. Giving thanks unto the Father, who hath made us meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light.* (4.) There is a connection of evidence: Holiness or clean garments is an evidence of the soul's title or claim to glory. *Who is the man that shall ascend into the hill of God? or who shall stand in his holy place?* The answer is, *He that hath clean hands and a pure heart*, *Psal. 24. 3.* (5.) There is a connection of legacy: Christ, by his latter-will, has ensured the kingdom to his little remnant that keep their garments clean, *Luke 22. 28, 29. Ye are they which have continued with me in my temptations, and I appoint unto you a kingdom, as my Father hath appointed unto me.*

The Sixth thing is the application. And the first use shall be of information, in these particulars; (1) See hence, holiness is to be studied and pursued, however it may be ridiculed, and mocked at by a profane world: For it is they that do not *defile their garments shall walk with Christ in white*. The blind world is ready to imagine that the way to heaven is not so strait and narrow as ministers call it; that there needs not be so much ado, and all is but a piece of needless nicety, preciseness, and the like: But remember, sirs, that strict holiness will carry the day at the long-run; and ye that are for a lax religion, and a broad way to heaven, will at length land in hell, unless mercy and repentance prevent: *Walk circumspectly, therefore, not as fools, but as wise*, &c. (2.) See, from this doctrine, that they labour under a damnable mistake, who think or say, that it is *a vain or unprofitable thing to serve the Lord*, and to keep his way; for they that *walk with Christ* here, shall partake of his glory hereafter: *Godliness, saith the apostle, is great gain, having the promise of the life that now is, and of that which is to come.* Religion carries a reward in its bosom, beside the reward that is prepared for the saints in the life to come. *In keeping of thy commandments, says David, there is great reward; O how great is the goodness thou hast laid up for them that fear thee!* &c. *Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither hath it entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him*, *1 Cor. 2. 9.* (3.) We may see, that gospel-purity and holiness is not such a common thing as the world apprehend: for there are but *a few names*, few persons that are helped to *keep their garments clean*. My friends, beware of taking every thing for holiness, that is the shadow and appearance of it: Some are ready to think, that their garments are clean enough, if they keep free of gross scandalous outbursts,

ings, such as lying, swearing, stealing, uncleanness, and the like; but the proud Pharisee came this length, who said, *God, I thank thee, I am not as other men; I am no extortioner, adulterer, or injurious person, &c.* Some think their garments clean if they be moral in their walk, just in their dealings between man and man; I wish indeed there were more morality among these that profess the name of Christ: But, O sirs, mere morality, in the highest degree now attainable, comes infinitely short of the nature of true holiness, it is quite another thing; and to put morality in the room of gospel-holiness, is in effect to renounce Christ and the covenant of grace, and to run back to *Adam's* covenant for life and salvation. Some think their garments clean enough, because of some personal reformation that they have made in their outward walk, they have left off lying, swearing, drunkenness, uncleanness, and the like: But this will not amount to true holiness; *Herod*, he reformed his life, and *did many things through the ministry of John the Baptist*, and yet beheaded him at last. Some reckon upon their diligence in the outward duties of religion; they read, hear, pray, communicate, and run the round of outward performances, and thereupon conclude, that they are holy persons; but who more diligent in the externals of religion than the Pharisees, *who fasted twice a week, and gave tithes of all that they possessed?* And yet Christ tells us, *except our righteousness exceed the righteousness of the Scribes and Pharisees, we cannot enter into the kingdom of heaven*; so that I say, gospel-holiness is no common thing. (4.) See hence, that the division of mankind, and particularly of these that live in the visible church, between Christ and the Devil, is very unequal as to the number; for the greatest part, even of the visible church, go to the Devil's share, for there are *but a few in Sardis, that do not defile their garments*; Christ's flock is a *little flock*, *I'll take them, one of a city, and two of a family or tribe, and bring them to Zion*. It is true, they will be a great company, and make a goodly appearance, when they shall be gathered by the angels from the four winds of heaven; but yet they are only like the *gleanings after the vintage*, in comparison of the vast multitudes of mankind, that run in the broad way to destruction. (5.) See hence what it is that sweetens the pale countenance of the king of terrors to believers; it is this, they see, that after death they will be admitted to *walk with Christ in white*. This made the apostle to long so vehemently for his dissolution, saying, *I have a desire to depart, and to be with Christ*: Faith's views and prospect of this makes the believer to triumph over death, as a vanquished and slain enemy, saying, *O death! where is thy sting? O grave! where is thy victory?* (6.)

See

See hence what they may expect after death, who habitually wallow in the puddle of sin. It is only they that *have clean garments*, that shall walk with Christ in glory; and therefore it inevitably follows, that the gates of glory will be shut upon you, *Rev. 21. last. There shall in no wise enter into it any thing that defileth, neither whatsoever worketh abomination, or maketh a lie*; and *ψ. 8. of the same Chapter, the fearful, the unbelieving, and the abominable, and murderers, and whoremongers, and sorcerers, and idolaters, and all liars shall have their part in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone.* O Sirs! ye that live and die in this condition, with the guilt and filth of sin lying on your consciences, ye will find a sting in death which will stick in your souls through eternity; for it is only God's little remnant, *whose garments are washed and made white in the blood of the lamb*, that shall triumph with him in glory; while ye that wallow in sin now, shall be found weltering in the flames of *Tophet*. (7.) See hence, that honesty is the best policy in a declining time, for it is only the honest-hearted remnant that shall walk with Christ above. Keep God's ways, sirs, whatever come, and beware of sinful shifts to shun the cross: *They that walk uprightly shall walk surely*; whereas they who think to shun danger by shifting duty, they really run themselves into greater danger and inconveniencies than these which they imagined to avoid.

USE 2d, may be of *lamentation*, That there are so many foul garments among us at this day. Alas, sirs, may we not say, that there are but *a few names in Scotland*, that have not defiled their garments with the corruptions and pollutions of the time? All ranks have corrupted their ways, magistrates, ministers and people. May not the character which God gave of *Israel of old*, be too justly applied to us, *Isa. 1. 4. That we are a sinful nation, a people laden with iniquity, a seed of evil-doers, children that are corrupters, who have provoked the holy One of Israel to anger, and are gone away backward?* I cannot now stand to shew wherein we have defiled our garments; Has not the *land been defiled with the blood* of many of the saints of God under the late reigns, from which it is not as yet purged? Is not the whole land defiled with breach of solemn national engagements, while these solemn covenants have been scandalously burnt in the capital city of the nation, and that by the countenance and command of authority? And are there not many at this day amongst us, who profess to be of the communion of the church of *Scotland*, that do renounce and disown the obligation of these solemn ties? Are not many defiling their garments with *Arminian* and *Socinian* heresies; others with a superstitious worship, which, to the reproach of our holy religion, is tolerate a-

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mong us by law? Have not many defiled their garments in our land, with a customary swearing by the name of God; others by juggling with God in the matter of solemn oaths, abjuring a popish pretender, with a design to put themselves in a better capacity to do him service, and promote his interest? Others have, even in this province, lately defiled their garments, by putting their hands to scandalous libels, by way of address to the sovereign, wherein they represent ministers as rebels against authority, for appointing fasts, and preaching against the sins of the time; and for giving warning to people of the tokens of God's anger that are visible among us: And, alas! may we not all lament that we have defiled our garments, by the breach of sacramental and sick-bed vows? But I must not stand on these things.

USE 3d, is of *trial and examination*. Try, Sirs, whether you be among God's little remnant, that are keeping their *garments clean*, when all round about you are defiling themselves; and, for your trial, I offer you the few following marks of God's remnant. (1.) God's remnant are a people unto whom *Christ is exceeding precious*; his very name is unto them as ointment poured forth; they love to hear of him, they love to speak of him, and their meditations of him are sweet; the desire of their soul is unto him, and the remembrance of his name; and they are ready to say with David, *whom have I in heaven but thee?* &c. or, with Paul, *I count all things but loss, for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord.* (2.) God's remnant are a people that do not reckon themselves at home while they are here on earth: This is not their proper country, but they look for a better country, that is, an heavenly, Heb. 11. They look for a city that has foundations, whose builder and maker is God. See this to be the character of God's remnant, Heb. 11. 13. The Apostle tells us of these worthies, *That they confessed they were strangers and pilgrims on the earth*: This confession David makes, Psal. 119. 19. *I am a stranger in the earth, hide not thy commandments from me.* So then, Sirs, if your home be here, ye are none of God's remnant, if your thoughts and affections be confined within the narrow limits of time. God's remnant are a people that are coming up from the wilderness; they are always ascending and mounting heavenward, in their affections and desires: They look not at the things that are seen, but the things that are not seen. (3.) God's remnant are a people that speak & think much on God; see this to be their character, Mal. 3. 16. *Then they that feared the Lord spake often one to another; and a book of remembrance was written for them that feared the Lord, and thought on his name.* Try yourselves by this: It is the character of the wicked, that God is not in all their thoughts; and he is as seldom.

feldom in their mouths, except in a way of prophanation: But God's remnant, I say, they think much on God; and the tho'ts of God, *O how precious are they unto their souls!* Pf. 139. and *out of the abundance of their hearts their mouths speak honourably and reverently of him.* They will speak to one another of his word, of his works, of his providences, and of his ordinances; *their lips are like lilies dropping sweet-smelling myrrhe.* (4.) God's remnant are a praying people, *Pfal. 24. This is the generation that seek thy face, O Jacob, or O God of Jacob;* whereas it is given as the character of the wicked, *Pfal. 14. That they call not upon God;* they either live in the total neglect of this duty, or, if they do it at all, it is in a hypocritical, formal and overly manner: But God's remnant, they seek the face of God, they seek him with fervency, with *truth in the inward parts;* they seek him believingly, constantly and perseveringly, which the hypocrite will not do, *Job. 26. 10. Will he delight himself in the Almighty? Will he always call upon God?* (5.) God's remnant are a mourning people: They mourn over their own sins in the first place, *Ezek. 7. 16. The remnant of Jacob that escape, they shall be on the mountains like doves of the vallies, every one mourning for their iniquity.* They mourn over the errors of their hearts, and the iniquity of their lives, and are ready to cry out, *innumerable evils have compassed me about, mine iniquities have taken hold on me, &c.* and then they mourn, not only for their own personal sins, but for publick sins; the sins of others, whereby the land is defiled: *Rivers of waters run down mine eyes, because they keep not thy law; I beheld transgressors, and was grieved.* That this is the character of God's remnant, ye may see from *Ezek. 9. 4. Go thro' the city, and set a mark on the fore-heads of the men that sigh, and that cry for all the abominations done in the midst of it.* And then they mourn for the calamities and desolations of Zion, *when they see the bear out of the wood wasting her, and the wild beasts out of the forest devouring her,* *Pfal. 137. 1. By the rivers of Babylon we sat down and wept, when we remembred Zion.* And then they mourn, when they see ordinances corrupted, or God's candlestick in any measure removed, the Lord's people deprived of their wonted freedom and liberty in waiting upon him in these galleries, *Zeph. 3. 18. I will gather them that are sorrowful for the solemn assembly, unto whom the reproach of it was a burden.* (6.) God's remnant are a people that will rather venture upon suffering than sinning; they rather venture to run the risque of displeasing kings and queens, potentates and parliaments, than venture upon the displeasing of God; they can rather venture on the rack of outward torments, than upon the rack of an accusing conscience.

See this to be the character of God's remnant in *the three children*, Dan. 3. &c. and *Moses*, Heb. 11. 27. *forsook Egypt, not fearing the wrath of the King*. Many other marks of God's remnant might be insisted upon; they are a people that *cannot* live without Christ, and fellowship & communion with him, *Cant.* 3. 1 *Job* 23. 3. *O that I knew where I might find him, that I might come even to his seat!* They are people that will not rest in their attainments; but press towards the uttermost of grace and holiness, *Phil.* 3. 12. They press after more nearness unto Christ, *Can.* 8. 1. They love holiness for itself, *Psal.* 119. 140. Christ for himself; yea, they love heaven for Christ and holiness: In a word, they love holiness, be the event what will.

USE 4th, is of *exhortation*. Is it so, that God's remnant, who are privileged to *walk with Christ in white*, are such as keep their garments clean? O then! let me exhort all hearing me, particularly you who have been professing yourselves among the number of God's remnant by drawing near to him in the holy ordinance of his supper: Let me, I say, exhort you to keep your garments clean; be exhorted to the study of true gospel holiness, both in heart and life. And by way of motive, I would have you to consider these following things.

MOTIVE 1st, Consider, that ye are in continual hazard of defiling your garments. Ye are in danger from every quarter; as, *First*, Ye are in danger from the world, there are many things in the world that are of a very defiling and polluting nature; there are many polluting opinions broached in the world, which go very glib away with nature, and which nature is very ready to catch at and embrace; as, that God is altogether made up of mercy, and will never damn any of his creatures; that Christ died for all; that morality runs parallel with grace; that an empty profession is enough to save people; that it is better to keep the body whole, than the conscience pure; that to be zealous for religion, is to be righteous overmuch. These and many other opinions are of a polluting nature; and we are in danger of defiling ourselves with them. And then the examples of the world are very infectious, the examples of magistrates and ministers, as ye see from *Hos.* 5. 1. *Hear ye this, O priests; give ear, O house of the king, because ye have been a snare in Misphah, and a net spread upon Tabor*. And then ye are in danger from the example of professors, who perhaps have a great name for religion in the church of God; O! will ye say, such a man doth so and so; and why may not I do it also? But remember, sirs, that there are many hypocrites in the church of God, that go under a mask of religion; and supposing
them

them to have the reality of grace, yet they may be under a spiritual decay, they may be sadly deserted of God; and do ye think, that in this case they are to be imitated? And besides, suppose them to be never such eminent persons, yet according to the Apostle's direction, we are *to be followers of them*, no further than *they are followers of Christ*. And besides, we are in danger from the frowns and flatteries of the world; if the world cannot get us allured into sin by its enticing promises, it will study to drive us into a compliance, by threats of trouble and persecution. Thus, I say, we are in imminent danger from the world; the apostle *James* exhorts us *to keep ourselves unspotted from the world*, Chap. 1. last. 2dly, Ye are in danger from Satan, that subtil and malicious enemy, *that goes about as a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour*; he waits for your halting, and is always ready to trip up your heels; and I assure you, sirs, if ye have got any love-token from the Lord at this occasion, this enemy will do his best, or worst rather, to deprive you of it. It was but a little after *Peter* had been feasting with Christ, at this holy ordinance of the supper, that Christ told him, *Luke 22. 31. Simon, Simon, Satan hath sought to winnow thee as wheat*; and therefore ye had need to be on your guard as to this enemy, and labour *not to be ignorant of his devices*. 3dly, Ye are in danger of defiling your garments, from your own hearts. My friends, would not that city be exposed to great danger, which is not only besieged with an army from without, but has a strong and powerful party within, that keeps a correspondence with the enemy without, and is ready to comply with all his demands? Just so is it with us; we are not only besieged with the world, and with Satan, who are our enemies without; but there is a strong party of indwelling sin and corruption within us, that is ready upon all occasions to betray us into our enemies hands. This made *David* cry out, *who can understand his errors?* and *Paul*, *wretched man that I am, who will deliver me from the body of this death?* So much for the first motive.

MOTIVE 2d. By keeping *your garments clean*, ye comply and fall in with God's great design in all his dispensations toward you, whether more immediate, or mediate. God's great end in all is, to bring his people to the study of gospel-purity and holiness; this is the design of his electing some of the posterity of *Adam*, from all eternity, *Eph. 1. 4. He hath chosen us in him; before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy, and without blame before him in love*. It is a very foolish way of arguing, that some people have, If I be elected I shall be saved, let me live as I list; for God like all other wise agents, not only decrees the end, but the means leading

leading unto that end: Now, holiness is the king's high-way, in which he has ordained and decreed to bring the elect to glory, 2 *Theff.* 2. 13. *God hath chosen us from the beginning unto salvation, through sanctification of the spirit, and belief of the truth.* This is the design of redemption: Christ did not die, sirs, to purchase a latitude to us to sin; No, no, *Titus* 2. 14. *He gave himself for us, to redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works.* This is the design of our creation: Why did ye get a being, but that ye might glorify and serve God? *This people have I formed for myself, that they may shew forth my praises.* And this is not only the design of our first, but of our second creation; *For he hath created us in Christ unto good works.* This is the design of our effectual calling; *For God has not called us unto uncleanness, but unto holiness;* no, *he hath saved us, and called us with an holy calling.* This is the design of the whole word of God: Why has God privileged us with his statutes and testimonies, but that they *be a light to our feet, and a lamp to our path,* to keep us out of the polluting ways of sin? *Psal.* 119. 9. *Whereby shall a young man cleanse his way, but by taking heed thereunto, according to thy word?* This is the design of the promises of the word; however carnal persons may make the promises a pillow of security, yet God's design in giving them is, to excite his people to keep clean garments, 2 *Cor.* 7. 1. *Dearly beloved, having these promises, let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God.* This is the design of the threatenings of the word, that so men, *knowing the terror of God, may be persuaded to keep at a distance from sin, the abominable thing that his soul hates,* and may not defile their garments therewith. This is the design of all providences whereby God exercises his people; why doth God cast thee into the furnace, O man? His design is to purge away thy dross, *Isa.* 27. 9. *By this therefore shall the iniquity of Jacob be purged, and this is all the fruit, to take away his sin;* the Lord *chastens us, that we may be partakers of his holiness,* *Heb.* 12. 10. This is the design not only of crosses, but of favourable providences; the *goodness of God should lead us to repentance,* and lays a deep obligation on us to stand off from sin, which is offensive to our gracious benefactor. This is the design, not only of all providences, but of all ordinances, and of the whole dispensation of the grace of God in the gospel, *Tit.* 2. 11, 12. *For the grace of God that bringeth salvation, hath appeared unto all men, teaching us, that denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world.* This is the design, not only of the preaching of the word, but of the administration of the sacra-

ments: In baptism, we are solemnly devoted to the service of God, and are engaged to walk as those that are called by *the name of Christ*, who are bound to *depart from iniquity*: And, in the sacrament of the Lord's supper, we solemnly renew, before God, Angels and men, our baptismal engagements, and swear to keep our garments clean from the pollution of sin, and that by laying our hands on the body and blood of the Lord Jesus. This is the design of every frown, and of every smile. Doth God at any time fill thee with joy and peace in believing? Lifts he up the light of his countenance upon thee? The language of this is, O do not defile thy garments! *God will speak peace unto his people, and to his saints; but let them not return again to folly.* And why doth God at any time hide his face, and leave thee in the dark, but to engage thee to more tenderness in time to come, in keeping at a distance from these pollutions, whereby he has been provoked to *forsake thee*? Thus, I say, if ye do not keep your garments clean, ye counteract the great design of God in all his dispensations towards you: How dangerous is it to be found fighting against God?

MOTIVE 3d. Consider the dismal effects that will follow upon your defiling your garments. *First*, Ye will ruin your reputation, and render your names unfavoury in the world; and this is no small loss; for, *a good name, says Solomon, is as precious ointment*, and renders a man capable to do service unto God in his day and generation. *Prov. 6. 33.* it is said of the adulterer, *A wound and dishonour shall he get, and his reproach shall not be wiped away.* When professors of religion or ministers defile their garments by sin, especially sins of a publick nature, they wound their reputation, bring a reproach upon themselves, that is not easily wiped away; and, not only so, but make the word of the Lord, in their mouths, to be contemned and despised. Ye may read a scripture for this, *Mal. 2. 8, 9.* It is spoken of the priests of that day, *Ye are departed out of the way: Ye have caused many to stumble at the law: Ye have corrupted the covenant of Levi, saith the Lord of hosts. Therefore have I also made you contemptible and base before all the people, according as ye have not kept my ways, but have been partial in the law.* *Secondly*, Ye will stain and pollute your souls, which ye ought to keep pure as a holy temple unto God; and how dangerous a thing this is, ye may see from *1 Cor. 3. 17.* *Know ye not that ye are the temple of God, and that the spirit of God dwelleth in you? If any man defile the temple of God, him shall God destroy.* My friends, ye have been solemnly consecrating your souls and bodies unto God, as his temple; and, if any of you shall after this *return with the dog to his vomit, and with the sow that seemed to be washed, to wallow again in the puddle of sin,*

ye run a very dreadful risque. Utter destruction from the Lord, and from the glory of his presence, is abiding all these that are hypocrites in heart; and dreadful temporal destruction from the Lord, may overtake even his own children, who do defile their garments: *For this cause many are sick and weakly, and many sleep.* Thirdly, Ye will break your peace and mar your comfort; if you keep not your garments clean, you may provoke the Lord to fill you with terrors, and to cast such a spark of hell-fire into your bosoms, as shall make you roar and cry out of *broken bones*, with *David*, or with *Job*, *The arrows of the Almighty are within me, the poison thereof drinketh up my spirits.* Fourthly, Ye will cast a blot upon religion, and on the good ways of the Lord, if ye who have been professing to own Christ at his table shall be found defiling your garments, by lying, swearing, drunkenness, or the like; what will the graceless world say? they will conclude, that professors are but a company of hypocrites; that religion is nothing but a piece of trick and imposture: Ye will be a blemish to christian society; *these are spots*, says the apostle, *in your feasts of charity*; and he speaks of some, who through their untenderness made *the way of the Lord to be evil spoken of.* Fifthly, Ye will dishonour Christ, that glorious master, whom ye have been professing to own; hence the Lord complains of the children of *Israel*, that they, by their wickedness, *caused his name to be polluted among the heathen*: *David's sin made the name of God to be blasphemed and reproached.* Sixthly, By polluting your garments, *ye will offend the generation of the righteous*; and it were better for you, *that a Millstone were hanged about your necks, and ye cast into the midst of the sea, than that ye should offend one of Christ's little ones.* It is a dangerous thing to grieve the hearts of these that are dear unto God, for God will not grieve their hearts; and he will resent it, if any other do it by their untenderness. Seventhly, Ye will harden others in their sins: When the wicked see professors or ministers going along with them, they conclude that their way is the best of it, and preferable unto the way of religion. Thus ye see the dismal effects that will follow upon your defiling your garments.

MOTIVE 4th. Consider the great advantages that shall accrue unto you by keeping your garments clean. 1st, It will yield you great peace: Peace in life; for, *as many as walk according to this rule, peace shall be upon them*: Peace in the midst of all troubles, *This is our rejoicing, the testimony of a good conscience*: Peace at death, *Psal. 37. 37. Mark the perfect man, and behold the upright, for the end of that man is peace*: Peace after death, *Isa. 57.* at the beginning, we are told, *That the righteous, at death, they enter into peace, they*

rest upon their beds, each one walking in his uprightness: Peace at the last judgment; it is only the cleanly remnant to whom the Lord will say then, *Lift up your heads, for the day of your redemption is now come.* 2dly, By keeping clean garments, ye will be in a continual fitness for maintaining fellowship and communion with God, in any ordinance of his appointment; for it is the man that *hath clean hands, and a pure heart, that shall stand on God's holy hill*, and have a place in his tabernacle: And not only so, but it will fill you with a holy *boldness and confidence* in your approaches unto God in the ordinances of his appointment, *Job II. 14, 15. If iniquity be in thine hands, put it far away, &c.* 3dly, The influences or ordinances will stay the longer upon you, that ye keep your garments clean; what is the reason, why the impression of any thing of God, that we meet with in ordinances, doth so soon vanish, like the morning cloud? The reason is the untenderness of our walk; we lie down among the pots of sin, and this makes God to withdraw from us. We read of some mountains, that are so high, that, if men drew figures in the sand upon the tops of them, they will abide for many years; the reason is, they are so high, that they are above the winds and rains. O sirs, if we were living and walking on high with God, the impression of ordinances would stay longer with us than they do. 4thly, By keeping your *garments clean*, ye will, perhaps, save the souls of others, and commend religion unto them: Hence is that of Christ, *Mat. 5. 16. Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven.* 5thly, By keeping your garments clean, ye will find more strength to keep yourselves, *For the way of the Lord is strength to the upright*; if ye keep God's way, he will *keep you in the hour of temptation.* *Rev. 3. 10. God will keep you by his power, thro' faith unto salvation.* 6thly, After a little time is elapsed, ye shall be clothed in white, and walk with Christ in the New *Jerusalem*, according to his promise in the text.

Now I conclude all with *directions and advices*. In order to your keeping of your garments clean; (1.) Be perswaded of your own utter inability to keep your garments clean by your own power, or the strength of created grace; for *the way of man is not in himself: It is not in man that walketh to direct his own steps.* (2.) Take care that ye be united to Christ the fountain of holiness; for ye do but wash the *Ethiopian*, while ye attempt to make yourselves clean and holy, while ye grow on the root of the old *Adam*. Ye may indeed wash the outside of the cup and platter, but ye will remain filthy still in the sight of God, 'till ye be created in Christ, the true root of sanctification: *Can a man gather grapes of thorns, or*

figs of thistles? the tree must be good, before the fruit be good. (3.) Being united unto Christ, ye must make daily use of him by faith. Do not think that when ye have first believed in Christ, your work is done: No, your life must be a life of faith; by faith we live, by faith we stand, by faith we work, by faith we fight; and, whatever we do in word or in deed, we must do all in the name of the Lord Jesus. Ye must be always building up yourselves in the holy faith, and going on from faith to faith; and whenever ye have, through infirmity, or the prevalency of temptation, defiled your garments, be sure to run by faith unto the blood of sprinkling, that ye may get your hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience. (4.) Set God continually before you, and keep up the impression of his all-seeing eye on your spirits, *Psal. 16. 8. I have set the Lord always before me: Because he is at my right-hand, I shall not be removed.* (5.) Be much in viewing and meditating on the dismal and terrible effects of sin, how it did cast Angels out of heaven, *Adam* out of *Paradise*, and brought God's curse upon all his posterity; how it brought a deluge on the old world, *Sodom* and *Gomorrab* burnt by fire and brimstone; how it made the earth to swallow up *Korah*, *Dathan* and *Abiram*. (6.) If ye would keep your garments clean, O then, beware of going to the utmost length of christian liberty! it is dangerous to come too near God's marches. We should take heed to ourselves, even in the use of things that are in themselves lawful; many things are lawful, but every thing lawful is not at all times expedient. Ye should shun every appearance of evil; do not stand in the way of temptations, or occasions of sin; and, in particular, take care to avoid evil company: *For, can a man take fire in his bosom, and his clothes not be burnt?* (7.) Beware of giving your consent and countenance unto the sins of others; for hereby ye shall be partakers with them in their sins. We may not only defile our garments by personal sins, but by sins of others, when we encourage them in an evil way, when we assent or consent unto them, or do not faithfully warn and reprove them, or endeavour to reclaim them. (8.) Be importunate with God at the throne of grace for guidance and direction: *For unless the Lord keep the city, the watchmen watch in vain;* unless his grace be sufficient for us, we will soon be carried down the stream of temptation and corruption; *for the way of man is not in himself:* And therefore, I say, plead hard at the throne, that the Lord would keep you, who keeps the feet of his saints; and, for this end, plead the promise that he has made to his people, *Jer. 32. 40. 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. Zech. 10. and last. I will strengthen them in the Lord, and they shall walk up and down in his name, saith the Lord.

The Wind of the HOLY GHOST blowing upon the dry Bones in the Valley of Vision.

Being a SERMON preached in the *Tolbooth* Church upon a Fast before the Sacrament of our Lord's Supper, *March 15. 1715.*

By the Rev. Mr. EBENEZER ERSKINE.

EZEK. xxxvii. 9.

Come from the four winds, O breath, and breathe upon these slain, that they may live.

IN the beginning of this chapter the Lord in a vision brings the prophet *Ezekiel* into a valley full of dead men's bones, quite dried and withered, and asks him the question, If he tho't it possible for these dry bones to live? Thereby intimating, that altho' it was a thing impossible with men, yet it was easily effected by the almighty power of God; and to convince him of it, he commands the prophet to speak unto the dry bones, & to tell them in his name, that he would make the breath of life to enter into them, which accordingly is done; for the prophet having in the name of the Lord called upon the four winds to breathe upon the dry bones, immediately life enters into them, and they come together, bone to his bone, and they lived and stood up upon their feet, and became an exceeding great army. By which vision we have a lively representation of a threefold resurrection (as a late commentator Mr. *Henry* very well observes.) (1.) Of the resurrection of the body at the last day, and general resurrection, when God will command the earth to give up its dead, and the sea to give up its dead; and when, by the ministry of angels, the dust and bones of the saints shall be gathered from the four winds of heaven, to which they have been scattered. Or, (2.) We have in this vision a lively representation of the resurrection of the soul from the grave of sin, which is effected by preaching or prophesying, as the instrumental, and by the powerful influence of the Spirit of the Lord as the principal efficient cause of it; and the wind here spoken of, is plainly said to be understood of the

the Spirit, v. 14. *I will put my Spirit within you, and ye shall live.* Or, (3.) We have by this vision a representation of the resurrection of the church of God, from the grave of her bondage & captivity in *Babylon*, under which they were at present detained. And this indeed is the primary and immediate scope of the vision, as is plain from the explication that follows it, v. 11, 12, 13, 14. However, seeing the deliverance of the children of *Israel* out of their *Babylonish* captivity, was typical of our spiritual redemption purchased by the Lord Jesus Christ upon the cross, and in a day of power applied by the mighty and powerful operation of the Holy Spirit of God; and seeing it is this redemption that we under the gospel are principally concerned with, therefore I shall handle the words that I have read under this spiritual sense and meaning.

And in them briefly we have, 1. A dismal case supposed, and that is spiritual deadness. The people of God they were not only in bondage under their enemies, but likewise their souls were at this time in a languishing condition. But of this more afterward.

2. We have a blessed remedy here expressed, and that is the breathings of the Spirit of the Lord, the influences of the Holy Ghost. *Come from the four winds, O breath, &c.* Now these influences of the Holy Ghost are here described, (1.) From their nature, held forth under the notion and metaphor of wind. *Come from the four winds, O breath.* There are three elements, by which the operations of the spirit are held out to us in scripture. Sometimes they are compared unto fire, *Mat. 3. He shall baptize you (speaking of Christ) with the Holy Ghost, and with fire.* Sometimes they are compared unto water, *Isa. 40. 3. I will pour water upon the thirsty, and floods upon the dry ground. I will pour my spirit upon thy seed, &c.* Sometimes the influences of the Spirit are held forth under the metaphor of wind, as in *Cant. 4. 16. Awake, O north wind, and come thou south, and blow upon my garden.* So here by the wind, or breath here spoken of, we are principally to understand the Spirit; it is plainly declared to be the Spirit of God in v. 14. of this chapter. I cannot stand to shew you the grounds of this metaphor. Wind, you know, is of a cleansing, cooling, fructifying nature and virtue, acts freely and irresistibly. It is not in the power of man to resist or oppose the blowings of the wind; so the influences of the Spirit they cleanse and purify the heart; they allay the storms of conscience, make the bones which were broken to rejoice; they make the soul to grow as the lily, and to cast forth its roots like *Lebanon*; they render the soul fruitful like the garden of God; and the Spirit acts with a sovereign freedom and irresistible efficacy,

cy, as ye may hear afterwards. But (2.) These influences of the Holy Ghost, they are described from their variety, four winds. *Come from the four winds, O breath*, importing the manifold influences and operations of this one and eternal Spirit. Hence we read of the *north and south wind*, Cant. 4. 16. and of *the seven spirits that are before the throne of God*, Rev. 5. 6. (3.) These influences are described from their acting or operation, which is here called a breathing, *breathe upon these slain*. By the acting of this almighty wind, our natural life was produced and formed, Gen. 2. 7. We are there told, that after *God had formed man of the dust of the ground, he breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, and he became a living soul*. Hence is that of *Elibu, Job 33. The Spirit of God hath made me, and the breath of the Almighty hath given me life*. And it is by the influences of the same Almighty breath, that our souls are quickened, when dead in trespasses and sins, and our spiritual life is formed within us. But then, (4.) These influences are described from the end and effect of their operation, *breathe upon these slain, that they may live*, that is, that the dry bones may become living souls, that out of these stones children may be raised up to *Abraham*.

Now, from these words thus briefly explained, I only offer you this one observation, namely, *That as the generality of a church and people in covenant with God, may be in a very dead and languishing condition as to their souls, so the breathings and influences of the Holy Spirit of God are absolutely necessary for their revival*. This is the sum of what I intend from these words, *Come from the four winds, O breath, and breathe upon these slain that they may live*.

In discoursing upon this doctrine, I. I shall speak a little unto this deadness, which is incident unto a people externally in covenant with God. II. Unto the influences or breathings of the wind of the Holy Ghost, which are so absolutely necessary in order to their revival. III. Touch at that life which is effected by these breathings. IV. I shall make application.

I. I say, I would speak a little unto this deadness, which is incident unto a people externally in covenant with God. And here I shall only give you some of its kinds. 2. Some of the causes of it. 3. Some of the symptoms of it.

The *first* thing, is to give you some kinds of deadness. Know then in general, that there is a two-fold death; one is proper and natural, the other is improper and metaphorical. *Death*, properly so called, is a thing so well known, that 'tis needless for me to tell you what it is; there is none of us all, but we shall know it experimentally within a little time; for *it is appointed for every man once*

to die. The grave is a house appointed for all living, and therefore with *Job*, we may say to corruption, *Thou art our father, and to the worm, thou art our brother and sister.* But this is not the death I now speak of; and therefore, 2. There is a death which is improper or metaphorical, which is nothing else but a disease or distemper of the soul, whereby it is rendered unmeet and incapable for holy and spiritual exercises; and this again is twofold, either total or partial. (1.) There is a total death incident unto the wicked and ungodly, who are stark dead, and have nothing of spiritual life in them at all: Hence *Eph. 2. 1.* men in a state of nature are said to be *dead in trespasses and sins*; that is, under the total reigning power of sin, *in the gall of bitterness, and under the bond of iniquity*, without God, without Christ, and therefore without hope. (2.) There is a partial death incident to believers, whom God hath raised out of the grave of an unrenewed state, and in whose souls he hath implanted a principle of spiritual life; and this partial death, incident to believers, consists in a manifest decay of spiritual principles and habits, in the abating of their wonted life and vigour, and activity in the way and work of the Lord; their faith, their love, their hope, and other graces are all in a fainting and languishing condition, they ly dormant in the soul, like the life of the tree that lies hid in its root without fruit or blossoms during the winter-season: Such deadness as this, we find the Lord's people in scripture frequently complaining of, particularly *Isa. 56. 3.* *The son of the stranger, that has joined himself to the Lord, and taken hold of his covenant, he is made to speak, saying, the Lord hath utterly separated me from his people: And the eunuch cries out, I am a dry tree, wherein there is no life or sap;* it is this kind of spiritual deadness, incident to believers, that I now principally speak of. The leaves of his profession may in a great measure be withered, the candle of his conversation may burn dimly, or with a very imperfect light: The flame of his affections, his zeal, love and desire, may, like that of a great fire, be reduced into a few coals and cinders: There may be a great intermission or formality in the discharge of commanded duty; the mind, which once with delight and admiration could meditate upon God and Christ, and the covenant, and things that are above, may come to lose its relish of these things, and to dote upon the transitory fading vanities of a present world. The common gifts of the Spirit, thro' carnal ease, and defect of employment, may be in a great measure blasted; and, which is worst of all, the saving graces and fruits of the spirit may come to be woefully impaired as to their former degrees & actings. But now, this partial death of believers again, it is twofold, there

is a deadness which is felt by God's people, and a deadness which is not felt; *gray hairs are here and there upon them, sometimes, and they do not behold them.* The Lord was departed from *Samson, and he wist not,* Judg. 16. 20. But then, there is a deadness which is felt, when God's people have a sense of their deadness, and are lamenting it: And it is an evidence of spiritual life, or of some revival, when the Lord's people are beginning to cry out with the Church, *Psal. 85. 6. Wilt thou not revive us again, that thy people may rejoice in thee? Why hast thou hardened our hearts from thy fear?* *Isai. 63. 17.* But

The *second* thing is to take notice of some of the causes of this spiritual deadness; I shall only name them, because your time would not allow me to enlarge. *1st* then, Abstinence or neglect of food, you know, will soon bring the *body* into a pining languishing condition; so, if the means of grace be not diligently improved, if we neglect by faith to apprehend and to improve Christ, and to feed upon him, whose flesh is meat indeed, and whose blood is drink indeed, the spiritual life of the soul will soon languish and wither: Hence is that saying of Christ, *John 6. 53. Except ye eat the flesh and drink the blood of the Son of Man, ye have no life in you.* *2d*, Surfeiting the soul with sensual pleasure, is another great cause of spiritual death, *Hos. 4. 11. Whoredom, and wine, and new wine, take away the heart:* They suck out the very life of the soul. What is the reason why many professors of religion have lost their wonted vigour in the way of the Lord, and are in such a languishing condition as to their soul-matters? the plain reason of it is this, they are glutting themselves with the pleasures of sense. If *Samson* do but sleep in *Dalilab's* lap, she will betray him into the hands of the *Philistines*, and cut the locks wherein his strength lies; and when he goes out to shake himself as at other times, he will find his strength gone away from him. *3d*, Inactivity, and sloth in salvation & generation work, is another cause of spiritual deadness. Physicians observe, that *as too violent exercise, so too much rest, or a sedentary way of living, is prejudicial to the health of the body.* This holds also in spirituals; if we do not exercise our selves unto godliness, and endeavour to abound in the work of the Lord, the spiritual life will soon languish and dwindle away; and therefore, *let us not be slothful in business, but fervent in spirit, serving the Lord; and whatever our hand findeth to do, let us do it with all our might.* And beware of resting upon empty wishes and desires in spiritual matters, *for the desire of the slothful kills him, because his hands refuse to labour.* *4th*, The contagion of ill example, of a carnal world, and irreligious relations, has a fatal influence this way: Ye know 'tis

'tis exceeding dangerous for these who have the *seed* of all diseases in them, to frequent the company of these who are infected with the *plague* or *pestilence*. A *Joseph*, if he stay long in the *Egyptian* court, will learn to swear by the life of *Pharaoh*: It is true indeed, as fire sometimes burns with the *greater vehemence* & casts the *greater heat* the *colder* the air be, so the *zeal* & *life* of God's people is sometimes rather quickened by beholding the wickedness of these among whom their lot is cast, as *Paul* among the *Athenians*; but if we shall adventure to cast ourselves into the *society* of the wicked, without a special call and warrant from providence, it will be next to an impossibility to keep ourselves free of the contagion; for, *can a man carry fire in his bosom, and his cloaths not be burnt; can a man walk upon hot coals, and his feet not be burnt.* *Evil communications corrupt good manners.* 5th, Some deadly wound in the soul, not carefully noticed, may be the cause of spiritual death. You know, a man may die, not only by a draught of poison, or the like, but also by the cut of a sword. While we are in the wilderness, we live in the very midst of our spiritual enemies; the fiery darts of Satan are flying thick about us; he is always seeking to bruise the believer's heel, going about seeking to devour; and not only so, but our own lusts also do war against the soul, so that we cannot miss to be wounded thereby: And if the filth and guilt of these wounds be not carefully washed away by the blood and Spirit of the Lord Jesus Christ, they cannot miss exceedingly to impair the spiritual life and health; therefore *David*, after he had been wounded by murder and adultery, is so earnest that God would wash and cleanse his wounds, and purge him with hyssop, that so the joy of his salvation might be restored: But then, 6th, A holy God has sometimes a righteous and holy hand in this spiritual death, that the Lord's people are liable unto, by withdrawing and suspending the influences of his spirit from them; for as the plant and herb of the field withers and languishes when the rain of heaven is with-held; so, when the influences of the Holy Ghost are suspended, the very sap of the soul, and its spiritual life goes away; and the Lord with-holds the influences of his Spirit for many reasons: As, (1.) He does it sometimes in a way of awful and adorable sovereignty, to shew that he is not a debtor unto any of his creatures. However, because the Spirit's influences are seldom withdrawn in a way of sovereignty, 'tis our part to search and try if conscience do not condemn us, as having a sinful and culpable hand in it ourselves, (2.) Sometimes he does it to humble his people, and to prevent their pride, which makes him to behold them afar off. If we were always under the lively

gales and influences of the Spirit, we would be ready to mistake ourselves, and in danger, with *Paul*, of being lifted up above measure, when he was wrapt up into the third heaven. Upon this account, some of the saints have said, that they have got more good sometimes by their desertion than by their enlargement. (3.) He does it to make them prize Christ, and see their continual need of fresh supplies out of his fulness. - He lets our cisterns run dry; that we may come a-new & lay our empty vessels under the flowings of the blessed fountain of life, that out of his fulness we may receive, and grace for grace. (4.) He does it sometimes for the trial of his people, to see if they will follow him into the wilderness, in a land that is not sown, as well as when he is feeding them with sensible communications of his grace and spirit, to see if they will live on him by faith, when they cannot live by sight or sense. (5.) Sometimes he does it for their chastisement, to correct them for their iniquities; and this indeed is the most ordinary cause why the Spirit of the Lord is suspended and withdrawn.

I have not time to enumerate many of these sins which provoke the Lord to withdraw his spirit. I shall only mention two or three, 1. Not hearkening to the motions of his Spirit, is one great reason why the Lord withdraws his Spirit, as you see in the spouse, *Cant. 5.* There Christ comes, and moves and calls for entrance; the spouse she does not hearken to the motion; *I have put off my coat, how shall I put it on? I have washed my feet, how shall I defile them?* Whereupon he immediately withdraws and leaves her, as ye may read at your own leisure. 2. Lukewarmness and formality in the discharge of duty is another cause of it, as we see in the church of *Laodicea*, it made him to spue that church out of his mouth. And then, 3. Proflituting the gifts and graces of the Spirit unto carnal, selfish and base ends, to procure a name, or make a shew in the world: This is another reason of it. 4. Sinning against light, trampling upon the belly of conscience, as *David* no doubt did in the matter of *Uriah* and *Bathsheba*, whereby he provoked the Lord so far to leave him, that he cries out, *Psal. 51, Cast me not out of thy sight, and take not thy Holy Spirit away from me.* 5. Barrenness and unfruitfulness under the means of grace, *Isa. 5. The clouds are commanded to give no rain upon the barren vineyard.* And then 6. and lastly, Their not listening carefully to the voice of God in ordinances and providence; this is another cause of it, *Psal. 81. 11, 12. My people would not hearken unto my voice, therefore I gave them up to their own hearts lusts, and they walked after their counsels.* And thus ye have some of the causes of this spiritual deadness. I come to

The *third* thing, which was to give you some of the symptoms of it ; and would to God they were not too visible, rise and common in the day, and upon the generation wherein we live. I shall name a few of them to you. 1. Want of appetite after the bread and water of life, is a symptom of spiritual death. You know that man cannot be in a healthful condition that loaths his food, or has lost his appetite after it. Alas! is not the manna of heaven, that God is raining about our tent-doors generally loathed? The great truths of God, which some of the saints have found to be *sweeter than the honey from the honey-comb*, have not that favour and relish with us that they ought to have? Are not sabbaths, sacraments, sermons, fast-days and feast-days a burden to many among us; so that if they would but speak out the language of their hearts, they would be ready to join issue with these, *Mal. 1. 13. What a weariness is this?* Whereas the soul that is in a lively condition, is ready to say of the word, *It is better to me than thousands of gold and silver; I esteem it more than my necessary food.* And of ordinances, *I love the habitation of thy house, and the place where thy honour dwelleth;* and *Psal. 84. 10. One day in thy courts is better than a thousand.* 2. Tho' a man have something of an appetite, yet if he do not grow or thrive by his food, it looks something dangerous and death-like. The thriving Christian is a growing Christian. *They that be planted in the house of the Lord, shall flourish in the courts of our God. The righteous shall hold on his way, and he that hath clean hands shall be stronger and stronger.* But alas! is it not quite otherwise with the most part? Many are going backward instead of forward, as it is said of *Jerusalem, Lam. 1. 8. She sigheth and goeth backward.* May we not cry out of our *leanness, our leanness*, notwithstanding of all the fattening means and ordinances that we enjoy. 3. Ye know, when death takes a dealing with a person, it makes his beauty to fade. *When with rebukes thou dost correct man for iniquity, thou makest his beauty to consume away like a moth;* pale death soon alters the ruddy countenance. Perhaps the day has been, O believer, when the beauty of holiness adorned every step of thy conversation; thy *light did so shine before men, that they seeing thy good works, could not but glorify thy heavenly Father;* but now alas the beauty of thy conversation is sullied and stained, by lying among the the pots of sin; this says, that spiritual death is dealing with thy soul. 4. Death not only wastes the beauty, but the strength also, *Eccles. 12. 3. The keepers of the house do tremble, and the strong men do bow,* upon the approaches of the king of terrors. Now see, if your wonted strength and ability to perform duty, or to resist temptations, be not abated. Perhaps the day has been,

when thou could have said, with *Paul, Lord, what wilt thou have me to do, for thro' Christ strengthening me I can do all things?* But now, thou art ready to faint at the very thoughts of duty. The day, perhaps, has been, when, tho' Satan, that cunning archer, did shoot sore at thee, yet thy bow did abide in its strength, *and the arms of thy hands were made strong by the mighty God of Jacob*; thou wast in case to beat back the fiery darts of Satan, and to stand thy ground against the *corruptions and defections* of the day; but now, like a dead fish, thou art carried down the stream: Doth not this proclaim thy soul to be under a sad decay? 5. Death wastes the natural heat and warmth of the body; there is a kind of chillness and coldness that seizes a man when death takes a dealing with him; so it is a *sign of a spiritual decay and deadness*, when wonted zeal for God and his glory, and the concerns of his church and his kingdom, is abated. Perhaps, the day has been, when, with *David, the zeal of God's house did in a manner eat you up, and you preferred Jerusalem to your chief joy*; but now, you are almost come the length of *Gallio's temper, to care for none of these things*; indifferent, whether the work of God in the land sink or swim. *Laodicea's distemper* is too prevalent among us at this day; we are neither *cold nor hot* in the things of God, and therefore have reason to fear, lest we be *spewed out of God's mouth*. The day has been, when your spirits were lifted up in prayer, in hearing, in communicating, you were fervent in spirit, serving the Lord; you could rejoice to work righteousness, and say, in some measure with *David, I will go unto the altar of God, to God my exceeding joy*; but now, all this holy warmth is gone in a great measure, you are become formal and careless in the concerns of God's glory. 6. A dead man, you know, cannot move, but only as he is moved from without, in regard he wants a principle of motion within; so it is a *sign of spiritual death*, even in believers, when external motives and considerations have a greater influence upon them in the duties of religion, than an internal principle of *faith and love*. When the believer is himself, the love of Christ constrains him in every duty; this is the one thing he desires, *that he may behold the beauty of the Lord, and enquire in his temple*; but when any selfish or external motive sets him to work, it is a sign of spiritual death. Other things might be added; but I hasten to speak to

The *second* thing proposed in the method, and that was, to speak a little unto these breathings and influences of the Spirit of God, which are absolutely necessary for the revival of the Lord's people under deadness. *Come from the four winds, O breath, and breathe upon these slain, that they may live*. And here, I would 1. Clear the

nature

nature of these influences in a word or two. 2. Speak unto the variety of these influences, *four winds*. 3. To the manner of their operation upon the elect, they are said to *breathe upon these slain*. 4. Speak a little unto the necessity of these breathings. 5. To the several special seasons of the Spirit's reviving influences.

I fear your time will cut me short before I have done ; but, I shall run thro' these particulars as quickly as possible.

The *first* thing, is to clear the nature of these *breathings* or *influences* ; and what I have to offer upon this head, you may take in these few propositions.

First then, ye should know, that the *influences* and *gifts* of the Spirit of God are of two sorts, either *common* or *saving* : As for the common influences of the Spirit, which are sometimes bestowed upon the wicked and reprobate world, I am not to speak of these at this time ; all I shall say about them, is to tell you, that they are given in common to the children of men, *for edifying of the* (mythical) *body of Christ*, until it arrive at *the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ*, as you read, *Eph. 4.* and therefore, they are commonly called by divines *dona ministrantia*, or ministring gifts ; altho' they have no saving efficacy upon the person in whom they dwell, yet God, in his holy wisdom, makes use of them for the good of his church in general, as we read, *Eph. 4.* And another thing that I would tell you likewise, concerning these common influences, is, that they are of an exceeding dangerous nature, when they are not accompanied with saving grace ; the man that has them, is like a *ship* having large sails, and but little or no ballast at all, in the midst of the ocean, and therefore in danger of being split in pieces against every rock. *Mat. 7. 22.* we read of some, who had extraordinary common gifts, they prophesied in Christ's name, wrought miracles, and cast out devils in his name, and did many wonderful works, and yet Christ utterly disowns them ; I do not speak of these common influences now, but of such as are saving ; and therefore,

A *second* proposition is, that the Holy Spirit of God, considered in his particular œconomy in the work of redemption, as the applier of the Redeemer's purchase, is the author and efficient cause of all saving influences ; it is he, I say, that prepares and disposes the soul of man for the entertainment of the things of God, which are not received nor discerned by the natural mind ; it is he that plows up the fallow ground of the heart, and brings in the wilderness, and turns it into a fruitful field ; it is he that garnishes the face of the soul with the saving graces of the Spirit, these are flowers of the upper paradise, therefore called *the fruits of the spirit*,

rit, Gal. 5. 22. It is he that preserves, cherishes, and maintains them by renewed influences; he cherishes the smoking flax, and at last turns it into a lamp of glory in heaven, for he brings forth judgment unto victory.

3. Again, ye are to understand, that the elect of God are the subject recipient of all saving influences of the Spirit of God; I say, they are peculiar only unto the elect of God, and to them only, upon their conversion, when they come to be united unto Christ as members of his mystical body. We must be ingrafted into this true olive, otherwise we can never partake of his sap, and receive out of his fulness, grace for grace. That these influences are peculiar unto the elect of God, is plain from *Tit. 1. 1.* where we read of the faith of God's elect.

4. These influences of the Spirit are given for various ends unto the elect of God. The judicious Dr. Owen, in his *discourses on the spirit*, observes, that these saving influences are given unto the elect of God for regeneration, unto the regenerate for sanctification, unto the sanctified for consolation, and unto the comforted Christian for further building up, and edification and establishment, until they arrive at perfection in glory: But the nature of these influences will further appear from

The *second* thing proposed, which was to speak a little to the variety of these influences of the Spirit. You see they are diversified here, while they are called four winds. *Come from the four winds, O breath.* The apostle tells us, *that there are diversities of gifts and operations, but the same spirit*, 1 Cor. 12. 4. And we read, as I was telling you, of seven spirits that are before the throne, *Rev. 1.* Here, if time would allow me to enlarge, I might tell you that the saving influences and breathings of the Spirit are either primary, fundamental, and absolutely necessary to salvation, or they are accumulative, additional, necessary only for the believer's comfort and well-being. Some of these influences are antecedent or preparative unto conversion; some of them are regenerating, and others are subsequent and posterior unto regeneration: But I shall not stand upon such nice distinctions: You may take a few of them in the order following.

1. There are the convincing influences of the Spirit, *John 16. 3.* *When he is come, he will convince the world of sin.* This is what I conceive we are to understand by the *north wind*, Cant. 4. 6. which is commonly boisterous, cold, chill, and nipping. The elect of God, by nature, ly fast asleep within the sea-mark of God's wrath, upon the very brink of everlasting ruin, crying *peace, peace to themselves*; the Spirit of the Lord comes like a stormy north-wind, blows

blows hard upon the sinner's face, and awakens him, breaks his carnal peace and security, brings him to himself, lets him see his danger, and fills him with remorse and terror. Hence *Isa.* 28. 17. the hail is said to sweep down the refuge of lies before the sinner come to settle upon the foundation that God hath laid in *Zion*. *Acts* 2. 37. 'tis said *they were pricked in their hearts, and then they cried out, Men and brethren, what shall we do ?*

2. There are the enlightening influences and breathings of the Spirit. Hence he is compared unto eye-salve, *Rev.* 3. *Ye have received an unction from the Holy One, whereby ye know all things*, *1 Joh.* 2. We read *Isa.* 25. 7. of a veil and face of a covering that is spread over all nations. The wind of the Holy Ghost must blow off this veil of ignorance and unbelief; and then the poor sinner comes to see a new world of wonders that he never saw before, a wonderful great God, a wonderful Redeemer, a wonderful covenant, and a wonderful holy law: Hence we are said to be translated out of darkness into a marvelous light. *The Spirit searcheth all things, yea even the deep things of God.* And *1 Cor.* 2. 12. *By the Spirit we know the things that are freely given us of God.*

3. There are the renewing influences of the Spirit. We are said to be saved *by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost*, *Tit.* 3. 5. Hence he is called a new Spirit: He renews the will, and *makes old things to pass away, and all things to become new.*

4. There are the comforting influences of the Spirit. This is the *south wind*, as it were, gentle and easy, and refreshing; and therefore he is called the *Comforter*; and indeed his consolations are strong consolations, they put more gladness into the heart, *than corn, wine and oil in abundance*, and fill the soul with a joy that is *unspeakable and full of glory.* And then

5. There are the corroborating and strengthening influences of the Spirit. By the breathings of the Spirit, the feeble are made like *David*, and as the angel of God before him; it is he that *gives power to the faint, and increases strength to them that have no might*; 'tis by him that *worm Jacob is made to thresh the mountains, and to beat them small, and to make the hills as chaff.* And then

6. There are the drawing and enlarging influences of the Spirit. *Draw me*, says the spouse, *we will run after thee.* The poor believer lies many times, as it were wind-bound, that he is not able to move one step in the way of the Lord; but O! when the Spirit of the Lord comes, then comes liberty and enlargement: *I will run the way of thy commandments*, says *David*, *when thou hast enlarged my heart*, to wit, by the influences of thy Spirit. He

is like oil to their chariot-wheels, and, when he comes, they are as the chariots of *Aminadab*, or a willing people.

7. There are the sin-mortifying and sin-killing influences of the Spirit: *We, through the Spirit, are said to mortify the deeds of the body, that so we may live.* When this wind of the Holy Ghost blows upon the soul, he not only makes the spices to revive, but he kills the weeds of sin and corruption, making them to wither and decay; so that the poor believer, who was crying, *Wretched man, what shall I do to be delivered from this body of death?* is made sometimes to tread upon the neck of these enemies, as a pledge of his compleat victory at last. And then,

8. There are the interceding influences of the Spirit, *Rom. 8. 26. The Spirit maketh intercession for us with groanings that cannot be uttered.* He interceeds in a physical and efficient way: He makes us to wrestle and pray; therefore he is called *the Spirit of grace and supplication*, *Zech. 12. 10.* He fills the believer's heart and mouth with such a heavenly rhetorick, that God is not able to withstand it: Hence *Jacob* had power with the angel, and prevailed, for he wept and made supplication to him. And then,

9. There are the sealing and witnessing influences of the spirit; he *witnesseth with our spirits that we are the sons of God*; he bears witness of the glorious fulness and suitability of Christ to the soul; *the Spirit shall testify of me*, *John 15.* And he is said to seal believers *to the day of redemption*, and his seal is the earnest of glory, *Eph. 1. 13. Ye are sealed by the holy spirit of promise, which is the earnest of the inheritance:* But these things I have not time to insist upon. So much for the *second* thing.

The *third* thing that I proposed here, was to speak a little to the manner of the acting or operation of these influences, or how is it that this wind blows upon the soul?

I answer, 1. then, the wind of the Holy Ghost blows very freely; the spirit acts as an independent sovereign, *John 3. 8.* It doth not stay for the command, nor stop for the prohibition of any creature; so the breathings of the spirit are sovereignly free as to the time of their donation, free as to their duration and continuance, free as to the measure, & free as to the manner of their working. And then 2. he breathes on the soul sometimes very surprizingly. *Ere ever I was aware*, says the spouse, *my soul made me like the chariots of Aminadab.* Can thou not seal this in thy experience, believer, that sometimes when thou hast gone to duty in a very heartless and lifeless condition, perhaps beginning to raze foundations, and to say with *Zion*, *the Lord hath forsaken, and my God hath forgotten*, a gale from heaven has in a manner surprized thee,

thee, and set thee upon the high places of *Jacob*, and made thee to cry with the spouse, *It is the voice of my beloved! behold! he cometh leaping upon the mountains, skipping upon the hills: His anger endures but for a moment, in his favour is life. Weeping may endure for a night, but joy cometh in the morning.* 3. These breathings and influences of the spirit are sometimes very piercing and penetrating. The cold nipping north-wind, ye know, goes to the very quick. *The sword of the spirit pierces to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, of joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart.* Wind, you know, is of a very seeking, penetrating nature; it seeks thro' the closest chambers: So the spirit, which is the candle of the Lord, *searcheth the lower parts of the belly*; he makes a discovery of these lusts and idols that skulk in the secret chambers of the heart. 4. The *breathings* of this wind are very powerful, strong and efficacious, who can oppose the blowings of the wind? Some winds have such a *mighty force* with them, that they bear down, overturn and overthrow every thing that stands in their way; so the Spirit of the Lord sometimes, *especially at first conversion*, breaks in upon the soul like the *rushing of a mighty wind*, as he did upon the Apostles, breaking down the strong holds of iniquity, casting to the ground every high thought and towering imagination of the soul, that exalted itself against Christ, with a powerful and triumphant efficacy: He masters the *darkness* of the mind, the *contumacy* and *rebellion* of the will, and the *carnality* of the affections, the *enmity* of the heart against God; and all the *spiritual wickednesses* that are *in the high places* of the soul are made to fall down at his feet, as *Dagon* did before the ark of the Lord. 5. Although he act thus powerfully and irresistibly, yet it is with an overcoming sweetness, so as there is not the least violence offered unto any of the natural faculties of the soul; for whenever the spirit comes with his *saving influences*, he sweetly overcomes the darkness of the mind; the sinner becomes a volunteer, and content to list himself a soldier under Christ's banner, *Psal. 100. 3. Thy people shall be willing in the day of thy power. No sooner does Christ by his Spirit say to the Soul, Follow me, but immediately they arise and follow him. Behold we come unto thee, for thou art the Lord our God.* Then, 6. There is something in the breathing of this wind that is incomprehensible by reason, *Joh. 3. 8. Thou hearest the sound thereof, but thou cannot tell whence it cometh, or whither it goes, says Christ, so is every one that is born of the Spirit.* There is something in the operation of the Eternal Spirit, and his influences, beyond the reach not only of natural, but of sanctified reason. Who can tell how the bones are formed in the womb of her

that is with child; so far less can we tell, how the Spirit forms the babe of grace in the heart; how he preserves, maintains and cherishes the smoking flax that is not quite extinguished. We may in this case apply the words of the Psalmist in another case, and say, *Thy way is in the sea, and thy path in the great waters, and thy footsteps are not known*: and that of the apostle, *How unsearchable are his judgments, and his ways past finding out!* 7. These influences of the Spirit are sometimes felt before they are seen, as you know a man will feel the wind, and hear it, when he cannot see it: So it is with the Lord's people many times, on whom the Spirit breathes; they *feel* his actings, they are sensible that he has been dealing with them; and all that they can say about it is, with the man that was born blind, *One thing I know, that whereas I was blind, yet now I see*; the kingdom of heaven comes not with observation.

The fourth thing proposed, was to speak a little to the necessity of these *breathings*. And here I shall shew (1.) That they are necessary. (2.) To what things they are necessary.

(1.) That they are necessary, will appear, 1. From the express declaration of Christ, *Job. 15. 5. Without me ye can do nothing*; that is, without the aid and influences of my Spirit: He doth not say, without me ye cannot do many things, or great things, but, *without me ye can do nothing*. 2. It is evident from the express acknowledgment of the saints of God upon this head, 2 Cor. 3. 5. *We are not (says the apostle) sufficient of ourselves to think any thing of ourselves; but our sufficiency is of God*. It is he that must work all our works in us and for us. 3. It is plain from the earnest prayers of the saints for the breathings of this wind, Cant. 4. 16. *Awake, O north wind, come thou south, and blow upon my garden*. Psal. 85. 6. *Wilt thou not revive us again, that thy people may rejoice in thee*. They are promised in the covenant, and therefore necessary, *Isa. 44. 3. I will pour waters on the thirsty, and floods upon the dry ground: I will pour my Spirit upon thy seed, &c. Ezek. 36. 27. I will put my Spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes*. Now, there is not a mercy promised in the covenant that can be wanting.

But, *secondly*, To what are these breathings necessary? I answer, they are necessary. 1. To the quickening of the elect of God, when they are stark dead in trespasses and sins. Can ever the dry bones live, unless this omnipotent wind blow upon them? It is strange to hear some men that profess Christianity, talking of the power of their own wills to quicken and convert themselves; they may as well say, *that a dead man may take his grave in his two arms, and lay death by him*, and walk, *No man, says Christ, can come unto me,*

me, except the Father who hath sent me, draw him. Oh, what a dead weight is the sinner, that a whole Trinity must draw; for both Father and Son draws the sinner by the breathings of the Holy Ghost. 2. These influences are necessary for the suitable discharge of every duty of religion. You cannot read, you cannot hear, you cannot pray or praise, you cannot communicate to any advantage, unless the wind of the Holy Ghost blow upon you; it is the Lord that must enlarge our steps under us, and make our feet like hinds feet in the ways of the Lord. 3. They are necessary for accomplishing our spiritual warfare against sin, Satan, and the world: We will never be able to combat with our spiritual enemies, if he do not help us; it is he only that must *teach our hands to war, and our fingers to fight, so as bows of steel may be broken in pieces by us*. Without the Spirit we will fall before every temptation, like Peter, curse and swear, that we never knew him. 4. They are necessary to the exercise of grace already implanted in the soul. As we cannot work grace in our hearts, so neither can we exercise it without the renewed influences of the Holy Ghost, Cant. 4. 16. When this wind blows, then, and never 'till then, do the spices flow out. But I shall not stand on this; the Spirit's influences are necessary to all the uses mentioned upon the second head, for conviction, illumination, renovation, consolation, enlargement, mortification of sin, and for assurance of our adoption.

The *fifth* thing that I proposed upon this head, was, to give you some of the seasons of these influences of the Spirit; for the wind, you know, has its seasons and times of blowing and breathing. I shall only name a few of them to you.

1. The Spirit's reviving influences, they blow very ordinarily in a day of conversion; this, as you were hearing, is a season when this wind breathes on the soul, Ezek. 36. 26. When God takes away the stony heart, and gives the heart of flesh, he puts his Spirit within them, when the soul is first espoused unto Christ. So Jer. 2. 2. *I remember thee, the kindness of thy youth, the love of thine espousals, when thou wentest after me in the wilderness, in a land which was not sown*.

2. When the soul has been deeply humbled under a sense of sin and unworthiness; when Ephraim is brought low and is smiting on his thigh, acknowledging his sin and folly, then the spirit of the Lord comes with a reviving gale upon his spirit. *Is Ephraim, says the Lord, my dear son, is he a pleasant child, ever since I spake against him, I do earnestly remember him still, my bowels are turned for him, I will surely have mercy on him, saith the Lord*.

3. After a dark night of desertion, when the Lord returns a-

gain, it is a time of sweet influences. After *Zion* had been crying, *The Lord hath forsaken me, my God hath forgotten me*; immediately after this comes a sweet gale of the Spirit, *Can a woman forget her sucking child, that she should not have compassion on the son of her womb? yea, she may forget, yet will I not forget thee.*

4. Times of earnest prayer and wrestling; for he giveth his Spirit to them that ask it. This is agreeable to the promise, *Ex. 37. 37.*

5. Times of serious meditation are times of sweet influences of the Spirit, *Psal. 63. 3. When I remember thee upon my bed, and meditate upon thee in the night-watches, my soul is satisfied as with marrow and fatness, and my soul followeth hard after thee.*

6. Communion-days are sometimes days of sweet influences. Some of the Lord's people can attest it from their experience, with the spouse, *That while the king sat at his table the spikenard sent forth the smell thereof*; and when they sat down under his shadow, they found his fruit sweet unto their taste. *He brought me into the banqueting-house, and his banner over me was love.*

7. The day of death has sometimes been found to be a day of such pleasant gales of the Spirit, that they have been made to enter into the haven of glory with a triumphant song in their mouth, saying, *Thanks be unto God which giveth us the victory, thro' our Lord Jesus Christ.* Thus *David, Tho' my house be not so with God, yet he hath made with me an everlasting covenant, ordered in all things and sure, and this is all my salvation and all my desire.* Thus *Simeon, &c.* thus *Paul, &c.*

The third thing in the text and doctrine to be spoken to, is the life that is effected and wrought in the souls of God's elect by these influences and breathings of the Holy Spirit. Your time will not allow me to enlarge upon this; I shall only tell you in a few particulars what sort of life it is.

1. It is a life of faith. The apostle calls it so, *Gal. 2. The life I live in the flesh, is by faith in the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me.* And the just is said to *live by faith*: The man is always embracing a Redeemer, and the fulness of the Godhead in him, always deriving fresh supplies out of that full treasury and store-house. 2. It is a life of justification; the law pronounces a curse against every one that doth not continue in all things that are written in the book of the law to do them. The believer gets this sentence of death cancell'd, *Rom. 8. 1. There is no condemnation to them that are in Christ Jesus.* And not only so, but he has the everlasting righteousness of *Immanuel* God-man imputed to him, so that with a holy boldness he may challenge justice & challenge the law what they have to say against him, as the apostle doth,
Rom.

Rom. 8. 33. *Who can lay any thing to the charge of God's elect? &c.*

3. It is a life of reconciliation with God; God and they are at friendship, which follows naturally on their justification, *Rom. 5. 1. Being justified by faith, we have peace with God.* God doth not retain the least grudge in his heart against them, and he and they walk together, because they are agreed ⁴⁶ that is, they have fellowship one with another, according to that, *1 Job. 1. 3. Verily, our fellowship is with the Father, and with his Son Jesus Christ.*

4. It is a life of holiness and sanctification; for the Spirit of the Lord is a cleansing and purifying and renewing Spirit; he renews the soul after the image of God, makes the heart, that was a cage of unclean birds, a fit temple for the Holy Ghost to dwell in; he garnishes the soul, and makes it, like *the king's daughter, all glorious within*: They that had lien among the pots, become like the wings of a dove, covered with silver, and her feathers with yellow gold.

5. It is a very pleasant and comfortable life; and no wonder, for his name is *the Comforter*; his consolations are so strong, that they furnish the soul with ground of joy in the blackest and cloudiest day, *Hab. 3. 17. Tho' the fig-tree shall not blossom, neither shall fruit be in the vines, the labour of the olive shall fail, and the fields shall yield no meat, the flocks shall be cut off, &c.* And the joy that he gives is deep, *your heart shall rejoice*; and it is abiding, *your joy shall no man take from you*; and it is such as cannot be made language of, *we rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory.*

6. It is a life of liberty; *for where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty.* He brings us into the glorious liberty of the sons of God. Before the Spirit comes with his saving influences, the man is in bondage, in bondage unto sin, unto Satan, unto the law, and unto the curse and condemnation of God; but the Spirit of the Lord frees us from all these: Christ, by his Spirit, sets the captives of the mighty at liberty, and delivers the prey from the terrible.

7. It is a hid life, *Col. 3. 3. Your life is hid with Christ in God*: And believers are called God's hidden ones, *Psal. 83. 3.* The spring and fountain of this life is hid, namely, an unseen Christ, for with him is the fountain of life. The subject of this life is hid, even the hidden man of the heart. The actings of this life are hid, and the means of its support; he feeds upon the hidden manna and the tree of life, *which is in the midst of the paradise of God.* And then the beauty and the glory of this life is hid; *for the king's daughter is all glorious within.* The beauty of the hypocrite's life lies all in the outside, painted sepulchres.

8. It is a heavenly life, they are made to live above the world; *Our conversation is in heaven,* says the apostle. They look on themselves as pilgrims and strangers on

the earth, and therefore look not so much to the things that are seen, and temporal, as to the things that are not seen, and eternal. With *Moses*, they have a respect to the recompense of reward: Their eyes are set upon the land that is very far off, and the king in his beauty. 9. It is a royal life, for they are made kings and priests unto God, Rev. 1. 5. They have a royal kingdom, of which they are heirs; I appoint unto you a kingdom, says Christ, a royal crown, a crown of glory which fadeth not away. They shall have a royal throne at last, Rev. 3. 21. royal robes, princely attire, the garments of salvation, a royal table provided for them, *Isa.* 26. 6. *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.* A royal guard continually attending them, the angels of God and the attributes of the divine nature, &c. 10. It is an eternal life, *Joh.* 17. 3. *This is life eternal, to know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom thou hast sent.* The saving knowledge of a God in Christ, what is it but the first dawns of eternal glory in the soul? and where he once dawns, he is always in the ascendant until the mid-day of glory come: for his goings forth are prepared as the morning.

The fourth thing is the use of the doctrine; and waving other uses that might be made of this doctrine, I shall only improve it by way of examination and of exhortation.

The first use shall be of trial and examination. Oh, try sirs, whether or not these saving influences of the spirit did ever breathe upon your souls, yea or not: For your trial, I shall only suggest these few things.

1. If these breathings have blown upon thy soul, then he has blown away the veil and face of the covering that was naturally upon thy mind and understanding; he has given you other views of spiritual and divine things, than you can have by any natural or acquired knowledge: The spirit of the Lord is called a spirit of wisdom and revelation, *Eph.* 1. because he reveals these things to the soul, which flesh & blood is not able to receive or understand. So then, has the spirit testified of Christ unto you? Has he, who commanded light to shine out of darkness, shined into your hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ, and as a fruit and consequent of this?

2. If the Wind of the Holy Ghost has blown upon thy soul, he has blown away some of the filth of hell that did cleave to thy soul, and has transformed thee unto his own image, *2 Cor.* 3. *Beholding, as in a glass, the glory of the Lord, thou art changed into the same image from glory to glory, even as by the spirit of the Lord.* If you have the spirit, the same mind will be in you that was also in Christ Jesus; for
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he that is joined to the Lord is one spirit. You will imitate and resemble him in his imitable perfections, in his holiness, meekness, self-denial, patience. He is a holy God, and wherever he comes he works holiness, and makes the soul holy.

3. If this *wind* has blown upon your souls, then it has driven you from your lying refuges, and made you take sanctuary in Christ. He has driven you from the law, and made you consent to the method of salvation thro' the righteousness of the son of God. *I thro' the law, says the Apostle, am dead to the law, that I may live unto God.* This is the design of all the Spirit's influences, to lead sinners off from sin, off from self, off from the law, that they may rest in Christ only.

4. If ever you felt any of the reviving gales of this *wind of the Spirit*, you will long for new gales and *breathings* of it; and when these *breathings* are suspended and withheld, your souls will be like to faint, as it were, like a man that wants breath; you will pant for the air of the spirit's influences, like *David*, Psal. 63. *My soul longeth for thee in a dry and thirsty land, wherein there is no water;* and Psal. 84. 2. *My soul longeth, yea, even fainteth for the courts of the Lord; my heart and flesh cry out for the living God;* Oh, for another gale of his spirit in publick ordinances.

5. If you have felt the *breathings* of this *wind*, you will not snuff up the east-wind of sin and vanity, *Job. 4. 14. Whosoever drinketh of the water that I shall give him, shall never thirst.* You will not thirst immoderately after the things of time; no, no, you will see them to be but mere trash and vanity. You will chuse the better part that cannot be taken from you: You will *seek things that are above, where Christ is at the right hand of God.*

6. If this *wind* has blown upon thy soul, then you will follow the motion of this *wind*; you will not run cross to this wind, but will go along with it; I mean, you will yield yourselves unto the conduct of the spirit speaking in his word; *for as many as are led by the Spirit, are the sons of God.* But, say you, how shall I know if I be led by the spirit of God? I answer. (1.) If ye follow the spirit, then you will not fulfil the lusts of the flesh; but, on the contrary, you will study *to crucify the flesh with the affections and lusts*: You will be ready to cut off your right hand, and to pluck out the right eye sins at the Lord's command. (2.) Then the way wherein you walk will be a way of holiness, for he is a spirit of sanctification, and a way of truth; for the spirit of the Lord is a spirit of truth, and he leads into all truth. A way of uprightness, *Ps. 143. 10. Thy spirit is good, lead me into the land of uprightness.* (3.) Ye know, *leading* imports spontaneity and willingness. There is a great difference

difference between leading and drawing, between being driven by the wind, and following the motion of the wind. Sometimes indeed the wicked, a hypocrite, a natural man, by a strong north-wind of conviction, may be driven on to duty through the force of terror; but the believer, he is a volunteer, he freely yields himself to the spirit's conduct: He rejoices to work righteousness, and to remember God in his ways; whenever he hears the spirit whispering in his ears and saying, *This is the way, walk ye in it*, presently he complies; when the spirit of the Lord says, *come*, he immediately echoes back again, and says, *Behold, I come unto thee, for thou art the Lord my God*. Now try yourselves by these things.

The second use shall be of *exhortation*. Is it so, that the *influences* of the spirit are so necessary in order to our revival? then be exhorted to look up to heaven, and cry for the *breathings* of the spirit. O sirs, will ye turn the words of my text into a prayer, and say, *Come from the four winds, O breath, and breathe upon these slain, that they may live*. I might enforce this exhortation by many *motives*, I shall only name them.

Motive 1. Consider, sirs, that *spiritual deadness* is very prevalent in the day wherein we live. There is a great multitude of *dry bones* scattered up and down our *valley of vision*; there are many that carry the marks of a deadly leprosy on their foreheads; their *atheism*, their *profanity*, *irreligion*, and other *gross abominations*, plainly declare to the world, that they are *stark dead in trespasses and sins*. And alas, may it not be for matter of lamentation, that even many of these, who, in the judgment of charity, have the *root of the matter*, the principles of spiritual life, are yet under sad decays of the life of grace. Alas, it is not with *Scotland's* ministers and professors as once in a day it has been. I might produce many melancholly evidences of this, if time would allow. Remember these already mentioned, the general loathing of the word, &c.

Motive 2. Consider the *evil and danger* of *spiritual deadness*. The evil of it will appear, (1.) If ye consider, that it is a frame of spirit directly crosses to the command of God. God commands us to *present ourselves a living sacrifice unto him*; and indeed *this is our reasonable service*, Rom. 12. 1. Yea, it is cross unto the very nature of God; for *God is a spirit*, Joh. 4. 24. *and they that worship him, must worship him in spirit and in truth*. (2.) The evil and danger of it appears further from this, that it unfits the soul for every duty, and mars our communion and fellowship with God. God meets the lively christian in the way of duty, *thou meetest him that rejoiceth and worketh righteousness*, those that remember thee in thy ways; but

but for the man that comes to him with a *Laodicean*, dead, lifeless and lukewarm frame of soul, he will not hold communion with that man; no, he will *spue him out of his mouth*. 3. It opens a door for all other sin, and renders a man an easy prey unto every temptation. A dead man can make no manner of resistance, he is carried down the stream without opposition. Then, (4) It lays a foundation for sad and terrible challenges from conscience. *David's* spiritual deadness brought him to that pass at the long run, that he is made to cry out of broken bones, &c.

Motive 3. Consider, that as the *breathings of the spirit* are necessary for every duty, so particularly for that solemn work which you have before your hands, of *commemorating the death of the exalted Redeemer*. I might here let you see, how the influences of the spirit are necessary for every part of your work, if time would allow. Without the spirit's influences of light you can never examine your selves to purpose; it is *the spirit of the Almighty that giveth understanding*, how to search out the mystery of iniquity in the heart, which is *deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked*. And then without the spirit you cannot mourn for sin; for it is the kindly influences of the spirit that thaws the heart into evangelical tears, *Zech. 12. 10*. Without the spirit you cannot discern the broken body of a Redeemer, for it is the spirit that testifies of Christ. *I will pour the spirit of grace on the house of David, and inhabitants of Jerusalem*; and then follows, *They shall look unto me whom they have pierced, and they shall mourn for him*. In a word, you cannot exercise any grace, you cannot wrestle in prayer, you cannot have any right views of the contrivance of redemption, you cannot take hold of God's covenant, or improve any promise of the covenant, without the spirit.

Motive 4. Consider the *excellency of these influences of the spirit*. 1. They blow from an excellent corner and original; the Holy Ghost is the author of them, and you know he proceeds from the *father and the son*; so that a *whole trinity*, as it were, convey themselves with these *breathings*. 2. They are the purchase of a Redeemer's blood, and therefore excellent. There is not the least grace, or the least gale of the spirit that is given to believers, but it cost Christ the *blood of his heart*; he purchased grace as well as glory. 3. These influences of the spirit, as it were, supply Christ's room while he is in glory. And truly, sirs, I may safely say it upon scripture warrant, that the presence of the spirit with believers upon earth is a greater blessing than the mere bodily presence of Christ; and therefore Christ tells his disciples by way of comfort, *Joh. 16. If I go not away, the comforter will not come; but if I go a-*
way

way, *I will send him.* As if he had said, when I am gone, the spirit will be poured out from on high, which is far better for you than my bodily presence. 4. These breathings of the spirit are pledges of glory, the earnest-penny of the inheritance, *Eph. 1. 13. After that ye believed, ye were sealed with the holy spirit of promise, which is the earnest of our inheritance.* 5. Their excellency appears from the excellent effects that they produce upon the soul; they beautify the soul on whom they fall, and make it like a field which the Lord hath blessed; they render the soul fruitful in every good word and work, *Hof. 14. 5. I will be as the dew unto Israel.* And what follows? *They shall grow as the lilly, and cast forth their roots as Lebanon. Isa. 44. 3, 4. I will pour water upon him that is thirsty, and floods upon the dry ground: I will pour my spirit upon thy seed, and my blessing upon thy offspring;* and then follows, *ψ. 4. They shall spring up as among the grass, as willows by the water-courses.*

Quest. What advice or counsel do you give in order to our obtaining or recovering the enlightning and reviving gales of the spirit? *Ans.* Be sensible of your deadness, and mourn over it; for the Lord comforts them that mourn in Zion; he will give them beauty for ashes, the oil of joy for mourning, and the garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness. And then follows, *They shall be called trees of righteousness, the planting of the Lord, that he may be glorified, Isa. 61. 2, 3.*

2. Be much upon the mount of divine meditation, for here it is that the spirit of the Lord breathes. *While I was musing, the fire burned,* says David, *Pfal. 39. 23. Pfal. 63. 5, 6. While I meditate on thee in the night-watches, my soul shall be satisfied as with marrow and fatness.*

3. Cry mightily unto God for these influences, that he would pour down his spirit from on high; for if ye being evil (says Christ) know how to give good gifts unto your children, how much more will not your heavenly Father give his spirit unto them that ask him, *Luk. 11. 13.* Plead the promises of the new covenant: and particularly be much in pleading this absolute promise of the spirit, *Isa. 44. 3. I will pour water upon him that is thirsty, and floods upon the dry ground. I will pour my spirit upon thy seed, &c. Ezek. 36. 27. I will put my spirit within them, and cause them to walk in my statutes.* But still remember, sirs, that these promises are to be managed by the prayer of faith. We are to turn God's promise into prayers; for it is added, *ψ. 37. For these things will I be enquired of by the house of Israel, to do it for them.*

4. Make conscience of waiting on him in all the duties and ordinances of his appointment, particularly the preaching of the word;

word ; and beware of a legal frame of spirit in your attending upon these ordinances, as if thereby you could merit any thing at God's hand, or as if God were obliged to you for what you do this way ; for *we receive the spirit*, says the Apostle, *not by the works of the law, but by the hearing of faith*. Gospel-ordinances are the usual chariots in which the spirit rides, when he makes his entrance at first, or when he returns into the soul after absence.

5. Study to have *union with Christ* ; for it is upon them that are in Christ, that the Spirit of God and of glory rests. He that is joined to the Lord is one spirit with him. The *oil of gladness* that was poured upon the head of our exalted *Aaron runs down upon the skirts of his garments*, upon every member of his mystical body.

The Groines of Believers under their Burdens.

Being a SERMON preached in the *Talbooth Church* upon a Fast before the Sacrament of our Lord's Supper, *October 27. 1720.*

By the Rev. Mr. EBENEZER ERSKINE.

2 COR. V. 4.

We that are in this tabernacle do groine, being burdenced.

IN the first verse of this chapter, the Apostle gives a reason why he and others of the saints in his day did endure persecution for the cause of Christ, with such an unshaken constancy and holy magnanimity. He tells us, that they had the prospect of better things, the solid and well-grounded hope of a happy immortality to follow upon the dissolution of this clay-tabernacle of the body. Ye need not wonder, as if he would have said, tho' we cheerfully and willingly undergo the sharpest trials for religion : For *we know, that if the earthly house of this tabernacle were dissolved, we have a building of God, an house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens*. When the poor believer can say, with *David*, *I shall dwell in the house of the Lord for ever*, he will be ready to join issue with the same holy man, *Tho' I walk thro' the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil*. Yea, so far is the apostle from being damped or discouraged at the thro'ts of death, that he rather invites it to do its office, by striking down the clay-tabernacle, that his soul may be at liberty to ascend to these mansions of glory, that his blessed friend and elder brother hath prepared for him above, v. 2. *In this we groine earnestly, desiring to be clothed upon with our house which is from heaven.*

heaven. He knew very well, that when he should be strip'd of this mortal body, he should not be found naked, as it is, *ψ. 3. but clothed with a robe of glory and immortality.* And, in the verse read, he gives a reason why he was so desirous to change his quarters; and 'tis drawn from the uneasiness and inconveniency of his present-lodging, while cooped up in this clay-tabernacle, *We that are in this tabernacle,* says he, *do grone, being burdened.*

In which words, we may briefly notice the believer's present lodging or habitation; he is in a *tabernacle.* 2. His melancholly disposition; he is *groning.* 3. The cause or reason of his grones; *being burdened.*

1. I say, we have an account of the believer's present lodging or habitation; he is *in this tabernacle.* By the tabernacle here, we are to understand the body, so called, because it is a weak, moveable sort of habitation; (as we may hear more fully afterwards) The indweller of this lodging is the noble soul, which is said to be in this tabernacle, while it is in an embodied state; so that the meaning is, *We that are in this tabernacle;* that is, we that are living in the body.

2. We have the melancholly disposition of the poor believer, while in this lodging; he grones. The word in the original,--- rendered, *to grone,* we find taken in a threefold sense in scripture. 1st, It is an expression of grief, *Heb. 13. 17. Obey them that have the rule over you, that they may give their account of you, not with grief;* or, as it may be rendered, *not with grones.* It is the same word that is here used. There is nothing more ordinary, when a person is burdened and pressed in spirit, than to give vent to the heart in sobs and grones; and thus stands the case with the Lord's people many times, while in the tabernacle of the body. 2^{dly}, It is sometimes an expression of displeasure, *Jam. 5. 9. Grudge not one against another.* It is the same word that is here rendered *to grone;* and so it imports that the believer is dissatisfied with, or disaffected to his present quarters; he does not like it, in comparison of the better habitation that he has in view. 3^{dly}, It is sometimes taken as an expression of ardent, passionate and earnest desire: Thus the word is taken in the 2^d verse of this chapter, *In this we grone earnestly, desiring to be clothed upon with our house which is from heaven.* I shall not exclude any of these senses from the apostle's scope in these words.

3. In the words we have the cause or reason of the believer's grones, *being burdened.* Many a weary weight and heavy load has the believer hanging about him, while passing thro' this valley of *Baca,* which made him to go many times with a bowed-down back.

back. What these weights and burdens are, ye may hear more fully afterward.

The observation I offer from the words, is this, *That believers are many times burdened, even unto groining, while in the clay-tabernacle of the body*; we that are in this tabernacle do groine being burdened.

The method I shall observe in handling this doctrine, is, 1. To give you some account of the believer's present lodging; he is in a tabernacle. 2. Of the believer's burdens in this tabernacle. 3. Of his groines under these burdens. 4. Conclude with some improvement of the whole.

1. The *first* thing is, To give you some account of the believer's present lodging while in the body; and there are these two or three things that I remark about it, which I find in the text and context.

1. Then, I find it is called a *house* in the first verse of this chapter; and it is fitly so called, because of its rare and curious structure and workmanship, Psal. 139. 14, 15. *I will praise thee, for I am fearfully and wonderfully made; marvellous are thy works, and that my soul knoweth right well. My substance was not hid from thee, when I was made in secret, and curiously wrought in the lower parts of the earth.* The body of man is a wonderful piece of architecture, the skill and wisdom of the great Creator is wonderfully discovered therein; it is set up, as it were, by line and rule, in such exact order, that the most curious piles and edifices in the world are but a chaos or mass of confusion, when compared therewith. Take a clod of dust, and compare it with the flesh of man, unless we were instructed of it before hand, we would not imagine it to be one and the same matter, considering the beauty and excellency of the one above the other; which evidently proclaims the being, power and wisdom of the great Creator, who made us and not we ourselves, and who can sublimate matter above its first original.

2. I remark, concerning the believer's present lodging, that however curious its structure be, yet it is but a house of earth; therefore called in the first verse, *an earthly house*: And it is so, especially in a threefold respect; 1. In respect of its original, it is made of earth. It is true, all the elements meet in the body of man, fire, earth, water and air; but earth is the predominant: And therefore, from thence he is said to have his rise, Job 4. 19. *He dwells in houses of clay, and his foundation is in the dust.* Whatever be the beauty, strength, structure or high pedigree of men; yet as to their bodies, they claim no higher extract than the dust of the earth. 2. It is a house of clay, in respect of the means that support

support it; it stands upon pillars of dust: For the corn, wine and oil, wherewith the body of man is maintained, do all spring out of the earth. *Hof. 2. 21, 22.* God is said to hear *the heavens, the heavens to bear the earth, the earth to bear the corn, wine and oil, and these to bear Jezreel.* And, if these props be withdrawn, how soon will the clay-tabernacle fall to the ground, and return to its original.

3. It is a house of earth in respect of its end; it returns thither at its dissolution: Accordingly see that of God to *Adam, Gen. 3. 17. Dust thou art, and unto dust thou shalt return.* Perhaps, there may be some allusion unto these three, in that passionate exclamation of the prophet *Jeremiah* to the rebellious *Jews, Jer. 22. 29. O earth, earth, earth! hear the word of the Lord.* They were earth in their original, they were earth as to their support, and they would return unto earth in the end.

3. I remark, concerning the believer's present lodging, that it is but at best a tabernacle; so it is called, verse first, *If the earthly house of this tabernacle were dissolved;* and again here, *We that are in this tabernacle do groan, being burdened.* Now, a tabernacle or a tent is a moveable or portable kind of habitation, and is peculiar especially to two sorts of men: 1. Unto travellers or wayfaring men. 2. To soldiers or warfaring men. 1st, I say tabernacles or tents, they are peculiar to strangers or wayfaring men. Strangers, especially in the eastern countries, used to carry these portable houses about with them, because of the inconveniencies which they were exposed to: Hence, *Heb. 11. 9.* it is said of *Abraham*, that *by faith he sojourned in the land of promise, as in a strange country, dwelling in tabernacles, with Isaac and Jacob, heirs of the same promise.* They dwelt in tabernacles, because they had no present inheritance; they were but strangers and passengers in the country. To this the apostle probably alludes here; and so this intimates to us, that the saints of God, while in the body, are pilgrims and strangers, not as yet arrived at their own country; *I am a stranger in the earth,* says the Psalmist, *Psal. 119. 19.* And it is said of the scripture worthies, *Heb. 11. 13.* that they *confessed that they were strangers on earth; they desired a better country, that is, an heavenly.* O believer, thou art not a residenter, but only a passenger through this valley of *Baca*; and therefore study a disposition of soul suitable to thy present condition. 2. Tabernacles, as they were used by strangers, and wayfaring men, so by soldiers and warfaring men, who are obliged frequently to move their camps from one place to another: Believers, while they are in the tabernacle of the body, must act the part of soldiers, and fight their way to promised land, through the very armies of hell. *We wrestle not* (says the apostle)

apostle) *with flesh & blood, but with principalities & powers, and rulers of the darkness of this world, with spiritual wickednesses in high places,* Eph. 6. 12. And therefore, as the apostle exhorts, it concerns us to put on the whole armour of God, the shield of faith, the helmet of salvation, the breast-plate of righteousness, the girdle of truth, and to be frequently accustoming ourselves to a holy dexterity in wielding and managing the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God, that so we may be able to make a courageous stand in the day of battle, and at last come off the field in a victorious manner, when Christ the captain of salvation shall sound the retreat at death. Thus the believer's lodging in a tabernacle, shews him to be both a traveller and a soldier.

4. Another thing that I remark concerning the believer's lodging, is, that it is but a tottering and crazy house, that is shortly to be taken down; for, says the apostle, *ver. 1. The earthly house of this tabernacle is to be dissolved. What man is he (says the Psalmist) that liveth, and shall not see death? Shall he deliver his soul from the hand of the grave?* Psal. 89. 49. The king of terrors has erected his trophies of victory over all that ever sprung of Adam; the greatest *Cesars* and *Alexanders*, who made the world to tremble with their sword, were all forced at last to yield themselves captives unto this grim messenger of the Lord of hosts: There is no discharge of this warfare; the tabernacle of the body must dissolve. However, it may be ground of encouragement to the believer, that death is not a destruction or annihilation; no, as the apostle tells, it is only a dissolving, or taking down of the tent or tabernacle; for God designs to set up this tabernacle again at the resurrection, more glorious than ever. It was the faith of this that comforted and encouraged *Job* under his affliction, *Job 19. 25, 26. I know that my Redeemer liveth, and that he shall stand at the latter day upon the earth. And tho' worms destroy this body, and tho' my reins be consumed within me (says he) yet in my flesh shall I see God.* So much for the first thing in the method.

The second thing proposed was, To speak a little of the believer's burdens while in this tabernacle. This earthly house lies under many servitudes, and the believer (as one says) pays a dear rent for his quarters. For,

1. The clay-tabernacle itself is many times a very heavy burden to him; the crazy cottage of the body is liable to innumerable pains and distempers, which make it ly like a dead weight upon the soul, whereby its vivacity and activity is exceedingly marred. When the poor soul would mount up, as upon eagles wings, the body will not bear part with it: So that the believer feels the truth

of Christ's apology verified in his sad experience, *The spirit is willing, but the flesh is weak.*

2. Not only is he burdened with a burden of clay, but also with a burden of sin ; I mean, indwelling corruption, the secret atheism, enmity, unbelief, ignorance, pride, hypocrisy, and other abominations of his heart. O but this be a heavy burden, which many times is like to dispirit the poor believer, and press him through the very ground. *David* (tho' a man according to God's own heart) yet cries out, under this burden, *Who can understand his errors? cleanse thou me from secret faults,* Psal. 19. 12. And the apostle *Paul* never complained so much of any burden as of this, *Rom. 7. 24. O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of sin?* To be rid of this burden, the poor believer many times would be content that this *clay-tabernacle* were broken into shivers.

3. He is burdened many times with a sense of much actual guilt, which he has contracted through the untenderness of his way and walk. Conscience, that deputy of the Lord of hosts (being supported by the authority of the law) frequently brings in a heavy indictment against the poor soul, and tells it, thus and thus thou hast sinned, and trampled upon the authority of God the great lawgiver. In this case, the believer cannot but take with the charge, and own, with *David,* *Mine iniquities are gone over mine head, they are as a burden too heavy for me to bear,* Psal. 38. 4. And *Psa'. 40. 12. Innumerable evils have compassed me about, mine iniquities have taken hold on me, so that I am not able to look up: they are more than the hairs of my head, therefore my heart faileth me.*

4. He is sometimes sadly burdened with the temptations of Satan. The devil, that cunning archer, shoots at him, and fore wounds and grieves him ; sometimes whole showers of fiery darts dipt in hell are made to fly about his ears. God, for holy and wise ends, suffers the believer to be winnowed, sifted and buffeted by this enemy : And O but the believer is sore burdened in this case ! Sometimes he is ready to conclude, with *David,* one day or other I shall fall by this roring lion, that goes about seeking to devour me. Sometimes he is brought to distraction, saying, with *Jehoshaphat* in great extremity, when surrounded by enemies, *I know not what to do, but mine eyes are towards thee.* But let not the believer think strange of this, seeing Christ himself was not exempted from the molestations of this enemy.

5. Sometimes the believer is burdened with the burden of ill company. The society of the wicked, which perhaps is unavoidable, is a great incumbrance to him, and tends mightily to mar and hinder him in his work and warfare. Hence *David* utters that
mournful

mournful and melancholy complaint, *Pfal. 120. 5, 6. Wo is me that I sojourn in Mesech, and dwell in the tents of Kedar.* The believer is of *Jacob's* disposition, with reference to the wicked, *Gen. 49. 5, 6. O my soul, come not thou into their secret; unto their assembly, mine honour, be not thou united.* And truly, sirs, if the company and society of the wicked be not your burden, it is a sign ye are of their society.

6. Sometimes the believer is sadly burdened, not only with his own sins, but with the abounding sins and abominations of the day and place wherein he lives. *I beheld transgressors, says David, and was grieved. Rivers of waters run down mine eyes, because of the wicked, who break thy law, Psal. 119. 136, 158.* O what a heart-breaking thing is it to the poor soul, to see sinners dashing themselves to pieces upon the thick bosses of God's buckler; and, as it were upon the rock of salvation, runing headlong to their own everlasting ruin, without ever reflecting upon their ways! His very bowels yern with pity towards them, who will not pity themselves. Upon this account, believers are frequently called the mourners in *Zion*: *They sigh and cry for the abominations that are done in the midst of Jerusalem, Ezek. 9. 4.*

7. The believer is many times, while in this tabernacle, burdened with the publick concerns of Christ; he is a person of a very grateful and public spirit. Christ took a list of them, while he was in a low state; and therefore he cannot but be concerned for the concerns of his kingdom and glory, especially when he sees them suffering in the world. When he beholds the boar out of the wood, or the wild beast of the forest, open and avowed enemies, wasting and devouring the church of God; when he sees the foxes spoiling the tender vines, and the watchmen wounding, smiting, or taking away the vail of the spouse of Christ, *Song 5. 7.* When he sees the privileges of the Church of Christ invaded, her doctrine and worship corrupted, her ordinary meals retrenched by the stewards of the house; these things, I say, are sinking and oppressing to his spirit; he then hangs his harp upon the willows, when he remembers *Zion*. In this case, he is *sorrowful for the solemn assembly, and the reproach of it is his burden, Zeph. 3. 18.*

8. The poor believer has many times the burden of great crosses and afflictions lying upon him, and these both of a bodily and spiritual nature, and *deep* many times: *calletth unto deep*; the deep of external trouble calls to the deep of inward distress; and these, like two seas meeting together, do break upon him with such violence, that *the waters are like to come in unto his very soul.* Sometimes, I say, he has a burden of outward troubles upon him; per-

haps a burden of sickness and pain upon his body, whereby the crazy tabernacle of clay is sore shattered: *There is no soundness in my flesh*, says *David*, because of my sin, Psal. 38. 3. Sometimes he is burdened with poverty, and want of the external necessaries of life, which is no strange thing, considering that the Son of God, the heir of all things, became poor; and so poor, that, as he himself declares, *The foxes have holes, and the birds of the air have nests, but the Son of man hath not where to lay his head*. Sometimes he is burdened with infamy and reproach; malice and envy striking at his reputation, and wounding his name. *False witnesses*, says *David*, *rose up against me, and laid to my charge things that I knew not*, Psal. 35. 11. Sometimes he is burdened in his relations, as by their miscarriages. It was a grief of heart to *Rebecca*, when *Esau* married the daughter of *Beer* the *Hittite*, Gen. 26. 34, 35. And no doubt *David* had many a sad heart for the miscarriages of his children, particularly of *Amnon* and *Absalom*. Sometimes he is burdened with the death of near relations: It is grievous to him when the Lord takes away the desire of his eyes with a stroke. I might here tell you also of many trials and distresses of a more spiritual nature, that the believer is exercised with, besides these already named. Sometimes he has the burden of much weighty work lying on his hand, and his heart is like to faint at the prospect of it, through the sense of his own utter inability to manage it, either to God's glory, or his own comfort, or the edification of others; such as the work of his station, relation and generation, and the great work of his salvation: This lies heavy upon him, till the Lord say to him, as he said to *Paul* in another case, *My grace is sufficient for thee*. Sometimes the believer in this tabernacle is under the burden of much darkness. Sometimes he is in darkness as to his state; he walks in darkness, and has no light, in so much that he is ready to raze the foundation, and to cry, *I am cast out of thy sight; the Lord hath forsaken me, and my God hath forgotten me*, Isa. 49. 14. Sometimes he is in darkness as to his duty, whether he should do or forbear. Many a perplexing thought rolls in his breast, till the Lord by his Word and Spirit say to him, *This is the way, walk ye in it*, Isa. 30. 21. Sometimes he is burdened with distance from his God, who seems to have withdrawn from him behind the mountains; and, in this case, he cries, with the church, *For these things mine eye weeps, and runs down with water, because the Comforter which should relieve my soul is far from me*, Lam. 1. 16. And sometimes it is a burden to him to think that he is at such a distance from his own country and inheritance; and, in this case, he longs to be over *Jordan*, at the promised land, saying, *I desire*

desire to be dissolved, and to be with Christ, which is best of all, *Phil.* 1. 23. Sometimes again he is under the burden of fear, particularly the fear of death. *Heb.* 2. 15. we read of some who are held in bondage all their life, through fear of death; and yet, glory to God, such have had a safe landing at last.

Thus I have told you of some of these things wherewith the believer is burdened, while in the tabernacle of this body.

The *Third* thing in the method was, To speak of the believer's groaning under his burden: For, says the apostle, *We that are in this tabernacle do groan, being burdened.* Upon this head I shall only suggest two or three considerations.

1. Consider, That the working of the believer's heart, under the pressures of these burdens, vents itself variously. Sometimes he is said to be in heaviness, *1 Pet.* 1. 6. *If need be, ye are in heaviness through manifold temptations.* Sometimes he is said to sigh under his burdens, and to sigh to the breaking of his loins: He is said to fetch his sighs from the bottom of his heart; *My sighing comes before I eat,* says *Job.* Sometimes his burdens make him to cry: Sometimes he cries to his God, *Psal.* 130. 1. *Out of the depths have I cried to thee, O Lord.* Sometimes he cries to bystanders and spectators, as *Job* did to his friends, *Have pity on me, O ye my friends; for the hand of the Lord hath touched me,* *Job.* 19. 21. Or with the church, *Lam.* 1. 12. *Is it nothing to you, all ye that pass by? Behold and see, if there be any sorrow like unto my sorrow, wherewith the Lord hath afflicted me in the day of his fierce anger.* Sometimes, he is said to rore under his burden; *My roarings,* says *Job,* *are poured out like water.* *I have rored all the day long,* says *David,* *because of the disquietness of my heart.* Sometimes he is at the very point of fainting under his burden; *I had fainted, unless I had believed to see the goodness of the Lord in the land of the living.* Sometimes his spirits are quite overset and overwhelmed, *Psal.* 61. 2. *From the ends of the earth will I cry unto thee, when my heart is overwhelmed: Lead me to the rock that is higher than I.* Sometimes again he is, as it were, distracted, distracted and put out of his wits, through the weight of his burdens, especially when under the weight of divine terrors: Thus it was with holy *Heman,* *Psal.* 88. 15. *While I suffer thy terrors I am distracted.* Yea, sometimes the matter is carried so far, that it goes to the drinking up of the very spirits, and a drying and withering of the bones; as ye see in the case of *Job,* *The arrows of the Almighty are within me, the poison wherewith drinketh up my spirits.* O the heavy tossings of the believer's heart under his burdens! The apostle here expresses it by a groaning; *We that are in this tabernacle do groan, being burdened.*

2. For clearing this, ye should understand, that there are three sorts of grones that we read of in scripture. 1. Of grones of nature. 2. Of grones of reason. 3. Of grones of grace.

1st, I say, we read of grones of nature, *Rom. 8. 22. We know,* says the apostle, *that the whole creation groveth, and travaileth in pain together until now.* Man, by his sin, brought a curse upon the good creatures of God, *Cursed is the ground for thy sake,* Gen. 2. 17. And the very earth upon which we tread grones, like a woman in travail, under the weight of that curse and vanity that it is subjected unto, thro' the sin of man; and it longs, as it were, to be delivered from *the bondage of corruption, and to share of the glorious liberty of the sons of God, at the day of their manifestation.*

2^{dly}, We read of grones of reason, or of the reasonable creatures under their affliction. Thus we are told, that the children of *Israel* grovned under the weight of their affliction in *Egypt*, by reason of the heavy tasks that were imposed upon them, *Exod. 6. 2. I have heard,* says the Lord, *the grones of the children of Israel, whom the Egyptians keep in bondage.*

3^{dly}, We read of grones of grace, or of spiritual grones, *Rom. 8. 26. The spirit helpeth our infirmities, and maketh intercession for us with grones which cannot be uttered.* And of this kind, we conceive, are these grones which the Apostle speaks of in our text; they are not natural, neither are they merely rational grones, (tho' even these are not to be excluded) but they are gracious and supernatural, being the fruit of some saving work of the spirit of God upon the soul. And therefore,

A 3^d remark I offer is this, that these grones of the gracious soul, here spoken of, seem to imply, as was hinted at in the explication of the words, 1. A great deal of grief and sorrow of spirit on the account of sin, and the sad and melancholy effects of it on the believer, while in this imbodyed state. 2. It implies a displeasure, or dissatisfaction in the believer, with his present burdened estate; he cannot find rest for the sole of his foot here below: He finds, that this is not his resting-place. And, 3. It implies a breathing and panting of soul after a better state, even the immediate enjoyment of God in glory, *ψ. 1. He grovnes with an earnest desire to be clothed upon with his house which is from heaven.*

But I proceed to the 4th thing in the method, which was the application of the doctrine; and the first use shall be of *information.*

1. Hence we may see the vast difference between heaven and earth. O what vast odds is there between the present and future state of the believer, between his present earthly lodging, and his heavenly mansion! This world is but at best a weary land; but there

there is no wearying in heaven: No, *They shall serve him day and night in his holy temple.* This world is a land of darkness, where thou goest many a time *mourning without the sun*: But, when once thou comest to thine own country, *The Lord shall be thine everlasting light, and thy God thy glory.* This world is a land of distance; but in heaven thou shalt be at home; when absent from the body, thou shalt be present with the Lord. This world is a *den of lions, and a mountain of leopards*; but there is no lion or leopard there; *they shall not hurt nor destroy in all God's holy mountain above.* This world is a land of thorns: Many pricking briers of affliction grow here below; but no pricking brier or grieving thorn is to be found in all that country above. This world is a polluted land, it is defiled with sin; but *there can in no wise enter into the land of glory, any thing that defileth, or worketh abomination, or maketh a lie.* In a word, there is nothing but matter of groaning for the most part here; but all ground of groaning ceaseth for ever there.

2. See hence a consideration that may contribute to stay or allay our griefs, sobs and groans from the death of godly relations; for while in this tabernacle they groan, being burdened: But now their groans are turned into songs, and their mourning into *hallelujahs*; for *the ransomed of the Lord, when they return, or come to Zion, at death or the resurrection, it is with songs, and everlasting joy upon their heads: They obtain joy and gladness, and sorrow and mourning flee away,* Isa. 35. 10. And therefore, *Let us not sorrow, as them that have no hope.* If our godly friends, that are departed, could entertain converse with us, they would be ready to say to us, as Christ said to the daughters of *Jerusalem, O! weep not for us, but weep for yourselves*; for we would not exchange conditions with you for ten thousand worlds: Ye are yet groaning in your clay tabernacle, oppressed with your many burdens; but, as for us, the day of our complete redemption is come, our heads are lifted up above all our burdens, under which, once in a day, we groaned while we were with you.

3. See hence, that they are not always the happiest folk that have the merriest life of it in the world. Indeed, if we look only to things present, the wicked would seem to have the best of it; for, instead of groaning, *they take the timbrel and the harp, they rejoice at the sound of the organ; they spend their days in wealth and ease,* Job. 21. 12, 13. But, O sirs, remember, that it is the evening that crowns the day; *The triumphing of the wicked is but short, and the joy of the hypocrite is but for a moment*: Whereas the groanings of the righteous are but short, and their jubilee and triumph shall be everlasting. *Mark the perfect man, says David, and behold the up-*

right: for the end of that man is peace. But the transgressors shall be destroyed together, the end of the wicked is to be cut off, Psal. 37. 37. I will read you a passage, that will shew the vast difference betwixt the godly and the wicked, and discover the strange alteration of the scene betwixt them in the life to come, Isa. 65. 13, 14. Thus saith the Lord God, Behold my servants shall eat, but ye shall be hungry: Behold, my servants shall drink, but ye shall be thirsty: Behold, my servants shall rejoice, but ye shall be ashamed: Behold, my servants shall sing for joy of heart, but ye shall cry for sorrow of heart, and shall howl for vexation of spirit.

4. See hence, that death needs not be a terror to the believer. Why? Because, by taking down this tabernacle, it takes off all his burdens, and puts a final period to all his groines. Death, to a believer, is like the fiery chariot to *Elijah*; it makes him drop the mantle of his body with all its filthiness, but it transports his soul, his better part, into the mansions of glory, *the house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens*.

The second use of the doctrine may be of *reproof* unto two sorts of persons. 1. It reproveth these who are at home, while in this tabernacle. Their great concern is about this clay tabernacle, how to gratify it, how to beautify and adorn it. Their language is, *Who will shew us any good? What shall we eat? What shall we drink? Wherewith shall we be clothed?* But they have no thought or concern about the immortal soul which inhabits the tabernacle, which must be happy or miserable for ever. O sirs! remember, that whatever care ye take about this clay-tabernacle, it will drop down to dust ere long, and the noisome grave will be its habitation, where worms and corruption will prey upon the fairest face and purest complexion. Where will be your beauty, strength, or fine attire, when the curtains of the grave are drawn about you?

2. This doctrine serves to reprove those who add to the burdens and groines of the Lord's people, as if they were not burdened enough already. Remember, that it is a dreadful thing to vex or occasion the grief of these whom the Lord has wounded. They that do so, counteract the commission of Christ from the Father, who was sent to comfort them that mourn in Zion, to give them the oil of joy for mourning, the garments of praise for the spirit of heaviness. But, on the contrary, they study to give a heavy spirit, and to strip and rob them of their garments of praise. Remember that Christ is very tender of his burdened saints; and if any offer to lay a load above their burden, by grieving or offending them, the Lord Jesus will not pass it without a severe resentment; and it were better for such, that a millstone were hanged about their neck, and they cast into the midst of the sea.

A third use, shall be of *lamentation* and humiliation. Let us lament, that the Lord's saints & people should have so much matter of groning at this day & time wherein we live. And here I will tell you of several things that are a burden unto the spirits of the Lord's people, & help on their groning, and make them sad hearts.

1. The abounding profanity and immorality of all sorts that are to be found among us: O how rampant is atheism, and profanity, and impiety, like an impetuous torrent, carrying all before it! It is become fashionable among some to be impious and profane. Religion, which is the ornament of a nation, is sac'd down by bold and petulant wits: It is reckoned, by some, a genteel accomplishment, to break a jest upon the bible, and to play upon things religious and sacred. O what cursing and swearing! O what lying and cheating! What abominable drunkenness, murders and uncleanness! What perjury and blasphemy is the land defiled with: We may apply that word, *Hos. 4. 2. For these things the land mourns.* The land groines at this day, under these and the like abominations: And therefore, no wonder that the hearts of those that regard the glory of God do groine under them also, and cry with the prophet, *Jer. 9. 1, 2. O that my head were waters, and mine eyes fountains of tears, that I might weep day and night for the slain of the daughter of my people! O that I had in the wilderness a lodging-place of wayfaring men, that I might go far from them! For they be all adulterers, an assembly of treacherous men.*

2. The universal barrenness that is to be found among us at this day, is matter of groning unto the Lord's people. God has been at great pains with us, both by ordinances and providences; he has planted us in a fruitful soil; he has given us a standing under the means of grace; he has given us *line upon line, precept upon precept*; and yet, alas, may not the Lord say of us, as he said of his vineyard, *Isa. 5. 4. I looked that they should bring forth grapes, and behold, they have brought forth wild grapes.* And, as for the fruit of providences, alas! where is it? Mercies are lost on us: For when God feeds us to the full, when he gives peace and plenty, then, *Jesurun* like, we wax fat, and kick against him, *Deut. 32. 15.* And as mercies, so rods and afflictions are lost upon us likewise. *God has stricken us, but we have not grieved; he has consumed us, but we have refused to receive correction,* *Jer. 5. 3.*

3. The lamentable divisions that are in our *Reuben* occasion great thoughts of heart, and heaviness to the Lord's people at this day. Court and country, church and state are divided; ministers divided from their people, and people from their ministers; and both ministers and people divided among themselves; and every party

party and faction turning over the blame from themselves; than which there cannot be a greater evidence of God's anger, or of approaching ruin and desolation: For *a city or kingdom divided against itself cannot stand.* Mat. 12. 25.

4. The innumerable defections and backslidings of our day are a great burden to the Lord's people, and make their hearts to grone within them. The charge which the Lord advanceth against the church of *Ephesus*, may too justly be laid to our door, that we are fallen from our first love, There is but little love to God or his people, little zeal for his way and work to be found among us; the power of godliness, and life of religion, is dwindled away unto an empty form with the most part.

I might here take occasion to tell you of many publick defections and backslidings, that we stand guilty of before the Lord; particularly, of the breach of our solemn national engagement. It was once the glory of our land to be married unto the Lord, by solemn covenant in a national capacity; but, to our eternal infamy and reproach, it has been both broken and burnt by publick authority in this very city. Perhaps, indeed, some may ridicule me for making mention of the breach of our solemn engagements; but I must blow the trumpet, as God's herald, *whether ye will hear, or forbear*: And ye who ridicule these things now, will perhaps laugh at leisure, if God shall send a bloody sword, or raging pestilence, to avenge the quarrel of his covenant.

But some may say, Ye talk of breach of solemn national engagements; but wherein does the truth of such a charge appear?

For answer, I shall instance in a few particulars: It is fit, that we not only know, wherein our fathers have broken this covenant; but wherein ourselves, this present *generation*, stands guilty.

1. Then in our national covenant, we swear, that we will endeavour to be humbled for our own sins, and for the sins of the kingdom; but, alas, publick days of fasting and humiliation for the sins of the land are but rare, and thin sown at this day! Where are the mourners of our *Zion*? How few are they whose hearts are bleeding for the abounding wickedness of the day! If God shall give a commission to *the men with the slaughter-weapons to go through Scotland, and slay utterly old and young*, only come not near any that sigh and cry; O what a depopulate country would it be! how few inhabitants would be left in the land!

2. In that covenant we are bound to go before one another in the example of a real reformation; but, alas, who makes conscience of this part of the oath of God? how little personal reformation is there! how little care to have the heart purified from
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lusts and uncleannesse! So that the Lord may well say unto us, as he said to *Jerusalem*, *O Jerusalem, wash thine heart from wickedness; how long shall vain thoughts lodge within thee!* How little reformation of life! what a scandalous latitude do many professors of religion take to themselves, in cursing, swearing, lying, drinking, cheating, and over-reaching others in their dealings, whereby the way of religion comes to be evil spoken of!

3. By the covenant we engage, not only to reform ourselves, but our families: But, alas, how little of this is to be found? Little care is taken by many parents and masters to have their children and servants (after the example of *Abraham*) instructed in the good ways of the Lord! Every head of a family should be a priest in his family, for maintaining the worship of God in it; but, alas, how many are there that either scoff over the duty in a superficial manner, or else live in the total neglect of it! Go thro' many noblemen and gentlemen's families in the kingdom, and ye shall find as little of the worship of God in them, as if they were turks and pagans; and, perhaps less: Yea atheism is become so rife among people of higher rank, that, with some, he is not reckoned a man of any spirit, that will bow a knee to God in his family.

4. In our national covenant we swear to endeavour the reformation of *England* and *Ireland* from the remains of the *Roman* hierarchy, and ceremonies of man's invention in the worship of God: But how is this article performed, when by solemn treaty, the representatives of the nation, in a parliamentary capacity, have consented that episcopacy should continue as the form of worship and government in our neighbour nation? Again, by the covenant we swear to endeavour the extirpation of popery; and yet, how many masses are kept openly in the land, particularly in the northern parts of the kingdom? How many trafficking priests and jesuites are swarming among us? And how many protestants are there who have of late shewn their good will to sacrifice a protestant interest unto the will of a popish pretender? Again, in our national covenant, we abjure prelacy and tyranny in our church-government; but tho' prelatick tyranny be not established, yet there is too much of a prelatick spirit venting it self among us at this day, while many are laying claim to a negative voice, in radical judicatories, over these whose offices gives them equal interest in the government of the church with themselves: And there is but too much tyranny exercised over the Lord's people by many judicatories of the church, while men are thrust in upon them, to take the charge of their souls, contrary to their
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own free choice and election. Christ's little ones are but too little regarded, if the world's great ones be gratified: On which account many of the Lord's people are crying at this day, with the church, *Cant. 5. 7. The watchmen that went about the city, found me, they shot me, they took away my veil from me.* Again, in our covenant, we abjure superstition in worship; and yet, to the scandal of our holy religion, it is not only tolerate by publick authority, but greedily gone after by many in our land. Heresy and error is abjured by the covenant, every doctrine inconsistent with the word of God, and our confession of faith; and yet all sorts of errors are tolerate, except rank popery, and blasphemy against the trinity. 'Tis true, the standard of our doctrine (blessed be God) remains pure; but it is to be lamented, there is not so much zeal discovered in curbing error, as our covenant-vows do engage us to. Again, in our covenant, we abjure malignants, that is to say, *enemies* to a covenanted work of reformation, as being *no members* of our church, and consequently, as having no right to the privileges thereof; & yet malignant lords & lairds are the men who are generally gratified in the affair of planting churches, in opposition to them that fear God, and who, on all occasions, discover their love and regard for a covenanted work of reformation. Again, in the covenant, we swear against a detestable neutrality and indifferency in the cause of God and religion; and yet, how many *Gallio's* are there among us, who are indifferent whether the interest of Christ sink or swim? And does it not discover too much of a lamentable lukewarmness and indifferency of spirit about the way and work of God, when we are beginning to abridge the ordinary number of our sermons at our solemn gospel-festivals, and to diminish the solemnity thereof, which has been so remarkably owned of God? What else is this, but a *snuffing at his ordinances?* and saying practically, *What a weariness is it?* Mal. I. 13. Sirs, whatever some may think of the matter, yet I know that the hearts of many of the Lord's people are sorrowful, even unto groaning, for the solemn assembly. I shall not say, that what is now transacted of late, with relation to this matter, is a breach of our national covenant; but I say, it seems to be a sad evidence of the lukewarmness of our spirits about the way and work of God. And I find, that a changing of the ordinances, and a breaking of the everlasting covenant, go together in scripture, *Isa. 24. 5.*

I might have told you of many other things, that break and burden the spirit of the Lord's people at this day; particularly, of the removing of the righteous by death, which, as it is a great and heavy judgment in itself, so it is an ordinary forerunner of some

some heavy calamity approaching, *Isa. 57. 1. None considering that the righteous are taken away from the evil to come.* And, I suppose, there may be many hearing me, whose hearts are inwardly groaning to this day, for the removal of that eminent light *, which shined with such a refreshing lustre from this pulpit among you so many years; it prognosticates ill to our *Zion*, when such watchmen are called off from her walls, as on all occasions, were ready to blow the trumpet upon the approach of any danger from earth or hell. But I pass this use, and go on to

A 4th use of the doctrine, which shall be in a word to two sorts of persons.

1. A word to you who are not burdened in this tabernacle. Ye never knew what it was to groan, either for your own sins, or for the sins of the land wherein you live, or the tokens of God's anger which are to be found among us; these are things of no account with them, they can go very lightly and easily under them: All I shall say to you, shall be comprised in these two or three words.

1. It seems the adamant and nether millstone ye carry in your breast was never to this day broken by the power of regenerating grace: And therefore, I may say to you, as *Peter* said to *Simon Magus*, *Ye are yet in the gall of bitterness, and in the bond of iniquity,* *Acts 8. 23.* Ye are under the slavery of *Satan*, and the curse of the law, and wrath of God; and these are heavy burdens, whether ye feel them or not.

2. Know it for a certainty, that except mercy and repentance interpose, your groaning time is coming. However ye make light of sin now, and of things serious and sacred, yet ye will find them to be sad and weighty things, when death is sitting down upon your eye-lids; when your eye-strings are breaking, and your souls taking their flight into another world. *O what will you do in the day of visitation? Whither will you flee for help? And where will you leave your glory?* *Isa. 10. 3.* When ye are standing trembling pannels before the awful bar of the great *Jehovah*, will ye make light of sin then? Or, will ye make light of it, when, with *Dives*, ye are weltring among the flames of hell? *O consider this, ye who forget God, lest he tear you in pieces, when none shall be able to deliver you out of his hands! Be afflicted, weep and mourn; let your laughter be turned into weeping, and your joy into heaviness.* Whether do ye think it is better to groan a while in this tabernacle, under the burden of sin, or to groan forever under the weight of God's vengeance, while an endless eternity endures?

A 2d sort I would speak a word unto, are poor, broken and burdened believers, who are groaning under the weight of these bur-

* Mr. James Wolfe.

dens I mentioned. I only offer two or three things for your encouragement, with which I shall close: For we are to comfort them that mourn in Zion.

1st. Know for thy comfort, poor believer, that thy tender-hearted father is privy to all thy secret grones; tho' the world know nothing about them, he hears them. *Lord, says David, all my desire is before thee: And my groning are not hid from thee: Psal. 38. 9.* As he puts thy tears in his bottle, so he marks down thy grones in the book of his remembrance.

2dly, As the Lord hears thy grones, so he grones with thee under all the burdens: For *he is touched with the feeling of our infirmities; and in all our afflictions he is afflicted.* He has the bowels of a father unto his children, *Psal. 103. 13. As a father pitieth his children: So the Lord pitieth them that fear him.* Yea, his heart is so tender toward thee, that it is compared to the tender affection of a mother to her sucking child. And therefore,

3dly, Know for thy encouragement, that thou art not alone under thy burdens. No; *The eternal God is thy refuge, and underneath are the everlasting arms.* He bears thee and thy burdens both: And therefore, *Tho' thou mayst pass thro' the fire and water, yet the fire shall not burn thee, the waters of adversity shall not overwhelm thee.*

4thly, Know, for thy comfort, that whatever be thy burden, and however heavy thy gronings are, there is abundant consolation provided for thee in God's covenant. And here I might go thro' the several burdens of the Lord's people, and offer a word of encouragement to you under each. I shall only touch them.

1. Art thou burdened with the body of clay? Perhaps thy clay cottage is always like to drop down every day, & this fills thee with heaviness. Well, believer, know for thy comfort, that, *if the earthly house of this tabernacle were dissolved, thou hast a building of God, a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens.* There are mansions of glory prepared for thee there, where thou shalt be forever with the Lord.

2. Art thou burdened with a load of sin, crying, *O wretched man that I am, who will deliver me?* Well, here is comfort, believer; *thy old man is crucified with Christ, that the body of sin might be destroyed.* Ere long he will present thee to his Father, without spot or wrinkle, or any such thing.

3. Art thou burdened with the sense of much actual guilt? Art thou crying, with David, *Mine iniquities have gone over mine head, as a heavy burden, they are too heavy for me?* Well, but consider, believer, *God is faithful to forgive thee:* For he has said, *I will be merciful*

merciful to their unrighteousness ; their sins and their Iniquities I will remember no more.

4. Art thou burdened with the temptations and fiery darts of Satan ? Well, but consider, believer, Christ thy glorious head, the true *seed of the woman*, has bruised the head of the old Serpent ; *thro' death he hath destroyed him that had the power of death, that is, the Devil.* And, as he overcame him in his own person, so he will make thee to overcome him in thy person, ere long ; *The God of peace shall tread Satan under thy feet shortly.*

5. Is the society of the wicked thy burden ? Art thou crying, *Who is me that I sojourn in Mesech ?* Why ? Consider, thou shalt get other company ere long. When thou puttest off this clay-tabernacle, thou shalt enter in among *the spirits of just men made perfect.* Only stand thy ground, and *be not conformed to this world.*

6. Art thou burdened with the abounding sins and backslidings of the day and generation wherein thou livest ? Well, be comforted, God's mark is upon thee as one of the *mourners in Zion* ; and, in the day when *the man with the slaughter-weapon shall go thro'*, God will give a charge not to come near any upon whom his mark is found ; *Thou shalt be hid in the day of the Lord's anger.*

7. Art thou burdened with the concerns of Christ, with the interests of his kingdom and glory ? Is thy heart, with *Eli's*, *trembling for fear of the ark of the Lord*, lest it get a wrong touch ? Know, for thy encouragement, that *the Lord shall reign for ever, even thy God, O Zion, unto all generations ; and that, tho' clouds and darkness be round about him, yet righteousness and judgment are the habitation of his throne, and mercy and truth shall go before his face. Tho' his way be in the whirl-wind, and his steps in the deep waters, yet he carries on the designs of his glory, and his church's good : And as for thee, that art sorrowful for the solemn assemblies, to whom the reproach of it is a burden,* God will gather thee unto himself, he will gather thee unto the *general assembly, and church of the first-born.*

8. Art thou burdened with manifold afflictions, in thy body, in thy estate, in thy name, in thy relations ? Know, for thy comfort, God is carrying on a design of love to thee in all these things ; *Thy light afflictions, which are but for a moment, will work for thee a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory.* See a sweet prophecy for thy comfort, *Isa. 54. 11, 12.*

9. Art thou burdened with much weighty work ? Perhaps thou knowest not how to manage this and the other duty, how to adventure to a communion-table, or the like. Well, for thy encouragement, poor soul, the Lord *sends none a warfare upon their own charges* : And therefore look to him, that he may bear thy charges

charges out of the flock that is in thy elder brother's hand ; and go in his strength, making mention of his righteousness.

10. Art thou under the burden of much darkness, crying with *Job*, *Behold, I go forward and backward, and cannot see him ?* &c. *Job* 23. 8. Well, be comforted : For unto the upright, light shall arise in darkness. Unto you that fear my name, shall the sun of righteousness arise, with healing in his wings. And therefore say thou, with the church, *Mic.* 7. 9. *He will bring me forth to the light, and I shall behold his righteousness.* Again,

11. Art thou burdened with the Lord's distance from thy soul, *Because the Comforter that should relieve thy soul is far from thee ?* *Lam.* 1. 16. Well, be comforted, *He will not contend for ever*, he has promised to return, *Isai.* 54. 7, 8. The Lord cannot keep up himself long from the poor soul that is weeping and groaning after him ; as we see in *Ephraim*, *Jer.* 31. 19. Again,

12. Art thou burdened with the fear of death ? Know, for thy comfort, the sting of death is gone, and it cannot hurt thee, *Hos.* 13. 14. *I will ransom them from the power of the grave, I will redeem them from death. O death, I will be thy plague ! O grave, I will be thy destruction !*

Lastly, Art thou burdened with the death of the righteous ? particularly with the loss of faithful ministers ? Well, be encouraged, that, tho' the Lord taketh away an *Elijah*, yet the Lord God of *Elijah* lives, and *the residue of the Spirit is still with him.* And therefore take up *David's* song, and sing, *The Lord liveth, blessed be my rock.* And let the God of my salvation be exalted.

Law-death, Gospel-life: Or the Death of Legal-righteousness, the Life of Gospel-holiness

Being the Substance of several SERMONS preached upon a Thanksgiving-Day, after the Administration of the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper, at *Carnock*; and enlarged upon afterward, upon an Occasion of the same Nature, at *Orwell.*

By the Rev. Mr. RALPH ERSKINE.

GAL. II. 19.

I through the law am dead to the law, that I might live unto God.

A Godly life is what we are all obliged to live, especially if we have been at the Lord's table ; but it is a mystery that very few understand in their experience, if they will judge their experiences

experiences by comparing them with this of *Paul* in our text, *I through the law, &c.*

Our apostle in this epistle, is vindicating himself from the base aspersions cast upon him by the false apostles, with respect to his calling, as if he had been no apostle, and with respect to his *doctrine*, as if it had been *false* and *erroneous*. From the beginning of this chapter to *v. 11*. he tells us what he did at *Jerusalem*, how strenuously he opposed the false brethren, that he might maintain the truth of the gospel, which they sought to overturn. From the *11th* verse to the *17*, the apostle tells us what he did at *Antioch*, how zealously he opposed and reproved even *Peter* himself, for his *dissimulation*, in compelling the Gentiles to judaize; giving thereby such offence, that the *Jews* were confirmed in their *Judaism*, *ver. 12*. Other *Jews* dissimulated with him, and *Barnabas* also was carried away with their dissimulation; and hereby occasion was given both to *Jews* and *Gentiles*, to desert Christ, to deny grace, to return to the law, and seek justification by the works thereof. So that we may see here, that *great* and *good* men may dissimulate, and do much ill by their dissimulation, both among ministers and people. We have here a wonderful example of it in the greatest of men, and such as were pillars of the church; but it would seem that *Peter* and *Barnabas*, and other *Jews* here, did not see their fault and sin, but tho't they did right enough; but *Paul* saw it, *v. 14*. *When I saw that they walked not uprightly, according to the truth of the gospel.* This might seem a very bold and impudent attempt for *Paul*, the youngest of all the apostles, (I mean, of whom Christ was last seen, as of *one born out of due time*) for him to take upon him to accuse and condemn *Peter*, as well as *Barnabas* and the *Jews*, for their practical error, not walking *according to the truth of the gospel*. But we see, that as people may have the gospel, but not the truth of the gospel; so these that have the truth of the gospel, may be guilty of not walking according to the truth of it, even as *Peter*, *Barnabas*, and others here, whose dissimulation did not consist with the *truth of the gospel*, which they preached, but tended to *establish the law*, and so to overturn the gospel. But God hath sometimes very few witnesses to stand up for the truth of the gospel. Here *Paul* was alone, *Peter* was against him; and *Barnabas*, his own intimate associate, was drawn away with the dissimulation; *Jews* & *Gentiles* were infected; and therefore *Paul* alone must fight against them all, for the cause of Christ, and the doctrine of the gospel, which was endangered. *I said unto Peter before them all, &c.* *Peter* did not err, by teaching any erroneous doctrine; for that is a principle we maintain, that the *apostles* never *erred* in teaching,

or in their *doctrine* delivered to the church; but his error was in practice, compelling the *Gentiles* to judaize, whereby he gave them occasion to think, that the observation of the law was necessary for justification: Whereas he adds, *We that are Jews by nature*, *ψ. 15, 16.* We apostles (might he say) tho' *Jews* by nature, yet we seek not justification by the works of the law; and therefore we ought not to drive the *Gentiles* to the observation of the law, that they may seek righteousness and justification thereby. Why? Because, (1.) We know that a man cannot be justified by the works of the law, but by the faith of Christ. (2.) Because therefore, having renounced the law in point of justification, we have embraced Christ by faith, that thro' him we may be justified. (3.) Because *by the deeds of the law no flesh can be justified.* Now, from *ψ. 17.* and downward, the apostle returns to the *Galatians*: Having told how he reprov'd *Peter*, and what he said to him concerning justification without the works of the law, he now comes to shew this doctrine to be nowise opposite to the doctrine of sanctification, but of absolute necessity to true holiness, *ver. 17, 18. q. d.* If we *Jews*, who lived formerly under the law, and now seek righteousness in Christ alone, are thus accounted as sinners, when we followed the law; it would seem that Christ did disapprove the law, and approve sin: *God forbid*, says the apostle. This he denies and rejects with abhorrence. To object thus, might he say, against the doctrine of free justification, were egregious blasphemy against the Son of God, as if he were the minister of sin, who came to destroy sin, and to destroy the works of the Devil. And by this gospel which I preach (might he say) Christ is held out as the *Lamb of God that taketh away the sins of the world*; not to take away righteousness, truly so called, unless it be that false vizard of legal self-righteousness, with which we formerly covered and masked ourselves: Nay, he came to bring in everlasting righteousness, a true and perfect righteousness for justification; he came to make an end of sin by the sacrifice of himself, & thereby to purchase the Spirit, as a Spirit of holiness and sanctification, to destroy the power of sin and corruption; and therefore it is a base calumny to say, that this gospel-doctrine opens the door to sin and licentiousness. This he proves by two arguments: 1. Because the faith of Christ does not destroy itself, *ψ. 18.* Sin is like an old house, which I have razed and destroyed by my doctrine of free justification by faith, and not by the works of the law; for by this doctrine I preached freedom from sin through Christ; and therefore, if I should build up these old wastes of sin again, it is not Christ, but I that would be the sinner, or minister of sin; nay, I would

would be a mad-man, to build with one hand what I destroyed with the other. 2. Because liberty to sin is contrary to the very scope of the gospel, and to the design of this doctrine of justification by faith without the works of the law; *For I through the law am dead to the law, that I might live unto God.*

This is a very strange and wonderful text, that flesh and blood can hardly bear, without suspecting, that it favours too much of a new scheme of doctrine: And if it were not the divinely inspired words of our apostle *Paul*, it would hardly escape being taxed as an *Antinomian* paradox. I remember *Luther* upon the text says, the false apostles taught, unless you live to the law, you cannot live to God; and therefore here *Paul* must be the most heretical of all hereticks. His heresy is unheard of heresy, reason and human wisdom cannot receive it, that if we will live to God, we must be dead wholly to the law: Yet so it is here, he declares it of himself *and in the name* of all believers in Christ, yea, as the very doctrine of faith, *I through the law, &c.* In which words you may notice two remarkably different things, *death and life*, mortification and vivification. 1. A wonderful death, *I through the law am dead to the law.* 2. A remarkable life proceeding out of that death, *that I might live unto God.* 1. You have a wonderful death, or *Paul's* strange mortification; *I through the law am dead to the law*; and of this mortification we have here three things, (1.) The general nature of it, it is called a *death, I am dead.* (2.) The object of it, *the law.* (3.) The means of it, *the law*; *I through the law am dead to the law*; all very odd things to carnal reason. (1.) The general nature of it; it is called a *death, I am dead.* There are several sorts of death commonly spoken of, temporal, spiritual and eternal; but this is none of them. *Temporal* death is a separation betwixt *soul and body*, but this death takes place where there is no such separation. *Paul* was thus alive, when he said here, *I am dead.* *Spiritual* death is a separation betwixt *God and the soul*, but this death is a mean of joining God and the soul together. *Eternal* death is an *eternal* separation betwixt *God and the soul*; but the death here spoken of, makes way for eternal communion with God. This is a strange death, a strange mortification; especially if you consider, (2.) The object of it, the *LAW, I am dead to the law*; not only the *ceremonial* law, but even the *moral* law itself as under the form of *a covenant of works*, and as *a condition of life.* I renounce, might he say, the righteousness of the law, seeking no salvation in the works thereof; nay, in this respect, it is dead to me, and I to it; it cannot save me, and I cannot expect salvation by it; nay, *I am dead to the law.* To be

dead to sin, is a mortification that people may think they can easily understand; but the mystery of it, in being dead to sin, by this means of being dead to the law, cannot be well understood; for one would think that to die to the law, were to live in sin: Nay, says the apostle, it is quite otherwise; that I may die to sin, I am dead to the law. (3.) You have the *means* of this death, which is as strange, namely, the law; *I through the law am dead to the law*. As to this means of death to the law, to wit, the law, I find some divines understand it a different law from the other; as if the apostle should say, I by the law of Christ am freed from the law of *Moses*; or, I by the law of faith am freed from *the law of works*. But I encline to join with the current of sound divines, who understand both of the same law. *q. d. I am dead to the law through the law*; the law hath taught me that I am a sinner, that cannot be justified by the law, which curses and condemns sinners: *By the law is the knowledge of sin*; and having thus by the law known my self to be a sinful guilty wretch, I am dead to all expectation of righteousness by the law. The law then, having thus killed me, and all my hope of life by it, hath been a blest means of drawing me out of my self, and all my legal righteousness, to seek life and justification in Christ, and his righteousness received by faith: Thus you have a wonderful death here spoken of. 2. You have a remarkable *life* proceeding out of that *death*; you may call it *Paul's* vivification, which was not peculiar to him, but is common to all believers: *That I might live unto God*. Where again you may notice three things, (1.) The *general nature* of this vivification, it is called by the name of *life*. While a man is alive to the law, he continues dead; but whenever he is dead to the law, then he is alive, the *breath of life is breathed into his nostrils*, and he becomes a *living soul*; for the Spirit of God, *the Spirit of life enters into him*. (2.) The *object* of this life, or vivification, it is God; *a living unto God*, that is a new life, a holy life, a divine life, a living to God, to God's honour, to God's glory. Before this, the man lived *to himself* as his *end*, as well as *from himself* as his *principle*; but now he lives from God as his principle, and to God as his end, which only is a holy life, and wherein true sanctification lies. (3.) You have the *influence* that this death hath upon this life, or this mortification hath upon this vivification; or, the influence that justification by faith alone, and not by the deeds of the law, hath upon sanctification of heart and life, or living to God, in the particle *that*: I am dead to the law, *that* I might live unto God. Now, might the apostle say, how falsely do you charge my doctrine, as opening a window to licentiousness, while I in the name

of all believers declare, that this doctrine of justification by faith alone, or our being dead to the law in point of justification, does open the door to true holiness; for none can live unto God, till they be dead to the law. *I through the law am dead to the law, that I might live unto God.* But I shall endeavour further to explain the words upon the following observation.

DOCTRINE. *That to be dead to the law in the point of justification, is necessary in order to living unto God, in point of sanctification.* I through the law, &c.

Now, upon this doctrine, I shall endeavour, thro' grace, to explain the several branches of the text; and the general method shall be, 1. To clear and confirm the doctrine. 2. To speak of the believer's death or mortification here intended; *I thro' the law am dead to the law.* 3. To speak of the believer's life or vivification, his living unto God. 4. Of the necessity of this death in order to this life, or the influence that our being dead to the law hath upon our living unto God. 5. Make some application.

FIRST HEAD.

First, to clear and confirm the doctrine; *at the mouth of two or three witnesses, every word shall be established.* But, to shew that we are not strained to find out witnesses to attest the truth of this doctrine, I shall produce more than two or three. 1st witness that I cite, is that, *Rom. 7. 4, 5, 6.* where you see, that to be dead to the law, and married to Christ, is necessary in order to living unto God, and bringing forth fruit to him, and serving him in newness of spirit. 2d. Witness I cite, is very like to this, *Isa. 54. 1, 5.* compared. *Sing O barren--- for more are the children of the desolate, Gentiles, than the children of the married wife: Why, &c. 5. Thy Maker is thy husband.* Being dead to the law, and divorced from it, and married to Christ, the barren woman becomes a fruitful bride. And lest you should think I put a wrong gloss upon this text, and mistake the meaning of it, you may compare it with a 3d witness that I cite, whereby this very gloss that I give it is confirmed, *Gal. 4. 27.* *For it is written, rejoice thou barren.* Now, we would consider what is the subject here spoken of: The apostle is setting forth believers freedom from the law by the gospel, or their justification by faith without the works of the law; and he confirms it by an allegory, shewing, that our liberty from the law was prefigured in the family of *Abraham*, that *we are not children of the bond-woman, or bond-men to the law, but children of the promise, as Isaac:* And the apostle explains the prophet, and shews his allegory to be founded, not only on the former historical, but also on this prophetic scripture. The gospel-church, including all believers among

Jews and Gentiles, is called the *bride, the lamb's wife*: And as this bride in general, being divorced from the law, and married to Christ, is a fruitful bride, bearing many children, many sons and daughters to Christ, and more under the new dispensation of the covenant of grace, than under the old legal administration thereof before Christ's coming; so every particular believer, being dead to the law, and married to Christ, is by this means fruitful in bringing forth the fruits of holiness and righteousness, to the glory of God; as the apostle, in prosecuting this discourse, further shews, *ψ. 30. Cast out the bond-woman and her son*. Strange; that the law should be called a *bond-woman*, and then cast out the bond-woman; this was strange language: *Nay, but in the case of justification, Moses and his tables must give place to Christ*, as *Luther* says; *Yea, he adds in this sense, I will say to thee, O law, Be gone; and if it will not be gone, thrust it out by force; cast out the bond-woman*. Further, the apostle adds, *Chap. 5. 1. Stand fast therefore, &c.* read *ψ. 4, 5, 6.* where you see, that the believer being free from the law, and having the spirit of life, and the spirit of faith, *bringeth forth fruit unto God*; of which fruits of the spirit of Christ, in opposition to the fruits of the flesh, you read, *ψ. 16, 17.* and downward. 4th witness that I cite, is *Col. 2. 13, 14. You being dead in your sins-----bath he quickned----* Now, by what means does this quickning, or being made alive to God, come about? It is by the *blotting out of the hand-writing---nailing it to his cross*; intimating, that there is no living unto God, without being dead to the law, and having the law dead to us, by viewing it crucified with Christ, and nailed to his cross. 5th witness is, *Col. 3. 3. For ye are dead*, that is, dead to the law, as he had cleared before, and so dead to sin, self, and the world, *and your life is hid with Christ in God; and when Christ, who is your life, shall appear, &c. Mortify therefore your members which are upon the earth*. The believer is said to be dead with Christ, *ψ. 20.* of the preceeding chapter, and so dead to the law, which was nailed to the cross of Christ. And *ψ. 1.* of this chapter, the believer is said to be risen with Christ, and so he sits together with Christ in heavenly places. But tho' his best part is above, even his glorious head, whom he will follow; yet he hath members on earth, which he is called to mortify; which mortification of sin is, you see, the native fruit of his being dead with Christ, and risen with him. 6th witness that I cite, is, *Rom. 3. 28, 31. We conclude that a man is justified by faith, without the deeds of the law*, and so he is dead to the law. Now, does this doctrine, destroy our living to God? *Nay, Do we make void the law thro' faith? God forbid; yea, we establish the law; we establish it as a covenant of works, while we believe*

believe in Christ for righteousness, to be imputed for our justification; and we establish it as a *rule of life*, and holiness, while we believe in Christ for strength, to be imparted for our sanctification; and so being dead to the law in point of justification, we live unto God in sanctification. 7th witness that I cite, is, Rom. 6. 14. *Sin shall not have dominion over you, for you are not, &c.* Where you see, that a man's being under grace, and not under the law, is the very means by which he comes to be delivered, and freed from the dominion of sin, and so lives unto God. Here is the privilege, deliverance from the dominion of sin; and the means of it is, by the grace of God in Christ Jesus, by which we are delivered from the law: For as the motions of sin, Rom. 7. 5. are said to be by the law, so the law being dead to us, and we by grace being married to another husband, we bring forth fruit unto God; *The grace of God, that bringeth salvation, teaching us to deny ungodliness,* Titus 2. 11. While the law hath power over a man, he cannot but be bringing forth fruit unto death, Rom. 7. 5. There was never yet an effectual course taken for the mortifying of sin; but by the gospel and the grace of Christ, which yet some ignorantly think leads to licentiousness, as they thought in Paul's days, ψ. 15. Nay, while we are under the law, we are the servants of sin; but now, ψ. 22. being made free from sin, *and become servants to God, ye have your fruit unto holiness, and the end everlasting life.* 8th witness that I cite, is, Rom. 8. 2, 3. *For the law of the spirit of life in Christ Jesus, hath made me free from the law of sin and death. Why? how comes that about? ver. 3. For what the law could not do, in that it was weak thro' the flesh.* Where ye see the quality of every believer, he is one that lives to God, and walks not after the flesh, but after the spirit. And now, what is the foundation of this? even freedom from the law, which thro' our weakness could not justify us; but our help was laid upon one that is mighty, who having come under the law, did, by a sacrifice for sin, condemn sin in the flesh, that the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us, both in point of justification and sanctification. 9th witness is, 2 Cor. 5. 15. read also ver. 14. *For the love of Christ constrains us, --- that he died for all, that they which live, should not henceforth live to themselves, but to him that died for them.* There is true sanctification, and living unto God; but how came it about? The means thereof is the death of Christ, which we have been celebrating in the sacrament of the Lord's supper; this is both the means and the motive thereof. What stronger motive than this, to live to him that died for us, and by his death, redeemed us from the law? For we are dead to the law by the body of Christ, Rom. 7. 4. that is, by the death of Christ,

the sacrifice of his human nature; and hence comes true spiritual life, or living to him. 10th witness that I cite, is, 1 Cor. 15. 56, 57. *The sting of death is sin, the strength of sin is the law*: Where the law is called the strength of sin, not only because by the law is the knowledge of sin, and sin would not have power to condemn us, but by virtue of the law which discharges sin; but also because sin gets strength from the law, sin taking occasion by the commandment, wrought in me all manner of concupiscence, *Rom. 7. 8. For without the law sin was dead.* Sin and corruption is so irritated by the law, that thereby the sinner comes to be more sinful: Which is not the fault of the law, for it prohibits, reproveth and condemns sin; but the fault of corrupt nature, which, the more a thing is forbidden, the more impetuously it follows it; like a mad horse, the more he is checkt with the bridle, the more mad and furious he is. Now, the strength of sin is the law; but thanks be to God, which gives us the victory thro' Jesus Christ our Lord; victory over the law, which is the strength of sin; and so, being freed from the law, or dead to it, in this way I am freed from sin, and put in case to live unto God. These are ten witnesses, instead of twenty that might be adduced for the confirmaton of this doctrine, that to be dead to the law in point of justification, &c. Receive this truth then in the love of it.

SECOND HEAD.

The *second* thing proposed was, to speak of this strange death of the believer, *I thro' the law am dead to the law*. Now here four things are to be touched at. 1. What the law is, that the believer is dead to. 2. What it is in the law, that he is dead to. 3. What is it to be *dead to the law*. 4. The means of this, that *thro' the law he is dead to the law*.

1st. What the law is, that the believer is dead to. I know, I need to be cautious in what I say in this captious age, especially upon such a subject as this; but it is in the fear of God, to whom I am accountable, and without regard to any man, that I desire to deliver the truths of the gospel. What is the law, to which *Paul* says he was dead? I shall not trouble you with the several acceptations of the *law*, nor the distinctions of it into *judicial*, *ceremonial* and *moral*. But here, tho' the apostle speaks sometimes of the *ceremonial*, and sometimes of the *moral* law in this epistle; yet in this text, I suppose, with the current of sound divines, that he understands especially the *moral law*, or the law of the ten commandments, considered under the form of a covenant of works. The law is to be taken two ways. 1. Materially, for its mere preceptive and directive part. Or, 2. The law may be taken formally,

mally, as it is a covenant, whether of works or grace. Now the law, materially taken, is still the same, whatever form it be cast into, and it is the transcript of the divine image, after which man was created at first; so that long before the law was written in tables of stone, it was written in the tables of man's heart; and man was obliged to obedience to this law, as a creature to his Creator, tho' there had never been any covenant made with him; and this obligation to obedience is eternal, and everlasting, and unchangeable: But this law was afterwards cast into two different forms, namely, that of the covenant of works, and afterwards that of the covenant of grace. Now, here, I say, it is meant of the law or covenant of works, in which law there were three things, a *precept*, a *promise*, and a *penalty*. 1. The *precept*, which is perfect and personal obedience, by our own strength, and in the old covenant form, *do*. 2. The *Promise*, which is life eternal, *do and live*. 3. The *penalty*, which is death temporal, spiritual and eternal; if you *do not*, you shall *die*, *Gen. 2. 17*. The covenant of works commands good, and forbids evil, with a promise of life in case of obedience, and a threatening of death in case of disobedience; and so this law of works hath a twofold power, a power to justify, and a power to condemn; to justify, if we obey; and to condemn, if we disobey. The command of the law, abstractly and materially considered, is, as I said, eternally binding upon all rational creatures, so long as they continue to be creatures, and God the Creator: But the command of the law, formally considered, or under the form of a covenant of works particularly, binds no longer than that form continues. Now, the commanding power of the law, as a covenant of works, is a power calling us to obey (or enjoining us to do) by our own strength, to obey as a condition of life and to obey under pain of damnation.

As to the *second* thing here, what it is in the law, to which the believer is dead. Here it must be observed, that it is only the believer that is dead to the law, all others are alive to it; and the believer's being dead to the law, imports, that he is wholly set free from it; or, as the words of our CONFESSION bear, *They are not under the law as a covenant of works, to be thereby either justified or condemned*. Thus they are dead to the law. The law is compared in our text to a hard and cruel master, and we compared to slaves and bond-men, who, so long as they are alive, are under dominion, and at the command of their masters; but when they are dead they are free from that bondage, and their masters have no more to do with them. Here then, to be dead to the law, is to be free from the *dominion* and *power* of the law. Now, I think the power
of

of the law may be considered, either as accidental, or essential. It hath an accidental *power* or *strength*: For example, by reason of our sinful, corrupt and depraved state, the *believer* is freed even from an *irritating power*, whereby, as an *occasion*, it provokes and stirs up the corruption of the heart in the unregenerate, *Rom. 7. 8.* so far as he is *dead to the law*. But next, there is a *power* that the law hath, that may be called *essential* to it, as a *covenant of works*, and i. e. a *justifying* and *condemning power*, as I said before; a *power* to *justify* the *obedient*, and a *power* to *condemn* the *disobedient*: Now believers are *dead to the law*, so as they are not under it, to be justified or condemned thereby; they are wholly, and altogether *free* from the law, as it is a covenant of life and death, upon doing or not doing. But, for the further clearing of this, I told you upon that question, what law is here meant? That in the law, as a covenant of works, there are three things, 1. The *precept* of obedience. 2. The *promise* of life. 3. The *threatening* or *penalty* of death; all which the believer is dead to. 1st, The *precept* of obedience as a condition of life, is one part of the covenant of works, *do and live*; or, *if thou wilt enter into life, keep the commandments*; this the believer is delivered from, and so dead to the precept of the law, as a covenant or condition of life. Take heed to what I say here;* I say not, that the believer is delivered from the precept of the law simply, but only as a condition of life: For the command of perfect obedience, is not the covenant of works; nay, man was obliged to perfect obedience, and is eternally bound to obey the law, tho' there had never been a covenant: But the form of the precept or command in the covenant of works, is perfect obedience as a condition of life. Now, it is the commanding power of the law, as a covenant of works, that the believer is freed from; and it hath no commanding power but in this strain, namely, to command perfect obedience as the condition of life; and, under pain of the curse, obey and thou shalt live; otherwise thou shalt die. Now the ground of the believer's freedom from the precept of the law as a covenant of works, or condition of life, is Christ's perfect obedience to the law, in his room, in his stead, which is the true and proper *condition* of our *eternal life* and happiness, *Rom. 5.* close. *By the obedience of one, shall many be made righteous; that as sin hath reigned unto death, even so grace might reign thro' righteousness to eternal life.* There is an eternal truth in this, that life is not to be obtained, unless all be done that the law requires, *Do this and live*; and that is still true, *If thou wilt enter into life, keep the commandments.* They must be kept by us, or our surety: Now, the surety's obedience being imputed to the believer, as the condition of eternal life,

life, the believer is not obliged to obedience to the law as a condition of life : The precept of the law properly is, *do* ; but the precept of the law, as a covenant of works, is under this conditional form, *do and live*. Now, if any say then, the believer is delivered from obligation to do, or to obey the law, I deny that, for this *do* is eternally binding ; but the precept of the law, as a covenant of works, is not simply *do*, but *do and live* ; and this conditional form, which is properly the precept and command of the covenant of works, he is indeed delivered from ; for Christ as surety came under the law as a covenant of works, or as it stood in this conditional *do, and live* : For he yielded perfect obedience to it, to procure life by it ; and so the believer is wholly delivered from obedience to it, that is, to obtain life by it, or to procure everlasting life by his obedience. The precept, thus formed as the condition of life, by virtue of the annexing of the promise of life to the obedience of it, is the precept of the covenant of works ; and from this precept he is freed, and so is dead to the law in respect of the precept of it, in and thro' Jesus Christ his surety. 2dly, The *promise* of life is another thing in the covenant of works ; and this runs in the same line with the former, being so connected with it. The promise of life in the law, or covenant of works, was just the promise of eternal life, upon condition of perfect obedience : Now the believer's freedom from the law, in this respect, flows from his *freedom* from it in the former respect : For if he be freed from the *do*, or obedience, as required in that old covenant-form, then he is not to expect eternal life, as it is promised in that covenant : Nay, the law is divested of its promise of life to the believer ; that is to say, his obedience to the law hath not the promise of eternal life, as the legal ground and title upon which he is to obtain it ; he holds his title to eternal life in Jesus Christ, his surety, in whom he hath a perfect obedience, to which eternal life is promised ; and which is now the alone sure ground upon which it is to be procured. The believer's own obedience to the law, or his gospel obedience, and conformity to the law, wrought in him, and done by him, thro' the help of the spirit of grace ; even this obedience of his, I say, hath not the legal promise of eternal life, as if it were the legal condition of his obtaining eternal life : No, his gospel obedience hath indeed a gospel promise, connecting it with eternal life, as it is an evidence of his union to Christ, in whom *all the promises are yea and amen* ; and as it is a walking in the way to heaven, without which none shall ever come to the end, *For without holiness it is impossible to see God*. But the legal promise of eternal life made to obedience,

obedience, and which makes our personal obedience to be the end and matter of our justification, and as the proper condition of salvation and eternal life, this is the promise of the law, or covenant of works; and this promise it is now wholly divested of, as to the believer in Jesus Christ, who hath taken his law-room, and yielded that perfect obedience, to which the promise of eternal life is now made. And the reason why I say, the promise of eternal life is *now* made to Christ's perfect obedience in our room and stead, is, because the law or covenant of works made no promise of life properly, but to man's own personal obedience; it made no mention of a surety: But now, in sovereign mercy, this law-rigour is abated, and the surety is accepted, to whose obedience life is promised. 3dly, The *threatening* of death, in case of disobedience, is another thing in the covenant of works; death, and wrath, and the curse, is the penalty of the law; death is the reward of sin & disobedience to the law, *In the day thou sinnest thou shalt die*; and this the believer is also freed from by the death of Christ, who *died for our sins*. The law saith, *Cursed is every one that continueth not*, &c. but the gospel saith, *Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us*, Gal. 3. 10, 13. As the law then to the believer is divested of its promise of life, so as it cannot justify him for his obedience; so 'tis divested of its threatening of death, and cannot condemn him for his disobedience to it as a covenant, that covenant form of it being done away in Christ Jesus, with respect to the believer. I think some will, it may be, object, and say, that the believer is delivered from the curse of the law; but still we cannot understand how he is dead to the command of the law. That he is dead to the condemning power of the law is plain; but how is he dead to the preceptive, mandatory commanding power of the law? I answer to you again, he is dead to, and delivered from the preceptive part of the law, not materially, but formally; for the command of it *materially*, is, *do*, or yield obedience; this he can never be delivered from, so long as he is a creature, and God his Creator. But the command *formally*, or under the form of the covenant of works, is, *do and live*; *do* by your own strength, *do* as the condition of your eternal life, and *do* under the pain of eternal death and damnation; thus, I say, which is the commanding part of the law formerly considered, as it is a covenant of works, he is wholly and altogether delivered from. To preach the mandatory part of the law as a covenant of works, is to preach the moral law, not merely as a rule of life, but as the condition of life eternal, in which sense the believer is not at all bound to acknowledge it; and to say

say, that the believer is delivered from the law, that is, only from the curse of the law, would make some very strange glosses upon many scriptures; for example, Gal. 3. 10. *As many as are of the works of the law, are under the curse*; the meaning of it then would be, as many as are under the curse, are under the curse. It must therefore be meant of the precept of the law, as many as are under the precept, are under the penalty thereof. The believer then is dead to, and delivered from the law in its commanding and condemning power, and that in, and through Christ: And I am not afraid, nor ashamed to say it, in the words of the famous doctor Owen, *that the whole power and sanction of the first covenant was conferred upon Christ, and in him fulfilled and ended*: And I think I say no more than what the apostle, a greater than he, saith, Rom. 10. 4. *Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth*. Thus you see what it is in the law, the believer is dead to, more generally.

Third thing here proposed, was, what it is to be dead to the law, more particularly as it comes under the notion of death. And here, 1. I shall shew the import of this death. 2. Some of the qualities of it.

FIRST, to shew the import of this death. The notion of death may here help us to the right understanding of it: For, (1.) As in death there is no relation takes place, it dissolves the relation betwixt master and servant, husband and wife, Job 3. 19. So here, *the man being dead to the law*, the relation betwixt him and it is dissolved, Rom. 7. 1, 2, 3, 4. *He is now married to Christ, divorced from the law*. While *the man is alive to the law*, the relation stands. See Gal. 5. 3. (2.) In death there is no care or thoughtfulness, Eccl. 9. 10. *There is no work, nor device, nor knowledge, nor wisdom in the grave, whither thou goest*; intimating to us, that in death there is no care nor thoughtfulness, nor concern about doing any thing; so the man that is dead to the law, hath no more care nor concern about the works of the law in point of JUSTIFICATION, than a dead corps about the work in which it was occupied while living. While the man is alive to the law, all his care and concern is about the works of the law, *Do, and live*. (3.) In death there is no hope. *The land of the living is the land of hope*, Eccl. 9. 4. Even so the man that is dead to the law, hath no hope nor expectation from the law, or from his obedience thereto. The man that is alive to the law hath hope, that God will pardon him, and pity him. Why? Because he does so and so; he is a good neighbour, he wrongs nobody, he is just in his dealings, and careful in his duties, *and touching the law, he is blameless*; he

he hath a good heart towards God, and he hath a good life too; and therefore he hopes to be *justified* and *saved* of God, for Christ's sake. For he hath learned, it may be, to make so much use of Christ, as to think he cannot be saved without him; but still his hope and expectation is founded upon the law: But now the man dead to the law, hath no hope from the law, nay, he despairs of salvation by the *deeds* of the law, as he sees he cannot do any thing without grace and strength from above; so even when he does any thing by-the help of grace, he sees it so lame and imperfect, that God cannot justify or save him to the honour and credit of his justice; unless he hath a perfect righteousness. He hath no hope by the law. (4.) In death there is no *toil*, no turbulent passion nor affection: Natural death puts an end to natural affections, which take place in man's life-time, such as the weary pursuit of what we love, and the wearisom flight from what we hate, or fear: There is no such thing in the grave, *There the weary are at rest*, Job 3. 17. They that are alive to the law, and *find the life of their hands*, they weary themselves in the greatness of their way, as it is expressed, *Isa. 57. 10.* Many a weary night and day they may have in pursuing after their lovers, in establishing their darling self-righteousness. The law gives them a wearisom task, to make brick without affording straw; and loads them with heavy burdens of curses, in case the task be not performed. But when a man is dead to the law, then *the weary is at rest*. Christ is the rest, *Come to me, all ye that are weary and heavy laden, and I will give you rest*: Then the man gets rest to his conscience, in the blood and righteousness of Christ, the end of the law; rest to his *passions and affections*; he rests from his fears, legal fears of hell, and wrath threatned in the law. The believer indeed may be filled with them, but so far as he is dead to the law, so far is he at rest from these legal slavish fears. He rests from his love and delight; the law affords its votaries much pleasure, sometimes in the performance of their duty in a legal way; but now the believer takes no delight in that way of justification; he is out of conceit with himself, and his duties, because they are vile; yea, tho' they were not so vile as they are, but perfect, yet he is out of conceit with that way of life, and beholding the glory of the new covenant and way of salvation, joins issue with *Job, Chap. 9. 15. 21.* In a word, he rests from all his legal griefs and sorrows, because he rests from all his legal labours. As it is said of the dead in Christ, in another sense, *Rev. 14. 13.* *Blessed are the dead that die in the Lord, they rest from their labours, and their souls follow them*; so I may say in this case, blessed are the dead that are dead to the law, they rest from their labours, their

toilsom,

toilſom, troubleſom, wearifom, legal works, and yet their works do follow them: *They are now created in Chriſt Jeſus unto good works.* But, (5.) In death there is no ſenſe: A dead man does not ſee, nor hear, nor taſte, nor feel, nor ſmell, nor exert any natural ſenſe; ſo they that are dead to the law, ſo far as they are dead to it, they do not now *ſee* the lightnings of *Sinai* all in a flame, as formerly they did; they do not *hear* the thunders thereof; they do not *ſmell* the ſulphur of the burning mountain; they do not *feel* the terror of vindictive vengeance, the tempeſt that ſurrounded the mount; they do not *taſte* the gall, the bitterneſs of the wrath threatned in the law; *the bitterneſs of death is over with them*, ſo far as they ſee that Chriſt drank the gall for them; yea, ſo far as they are dead to the law, they are dead to all *Sinai* wrath: For, *Heb. 12. 18. They are not come to the mount that might be touched, and that burned with fire, nor unto blackneſs and darkneſs, and tempeſt, and the ſound of a trumpet, but they are come unto mount Sion, &c.* But what? Have the godly no ſenſe of law-wrath? Yea, ſo far as they are legal, and under the law (for they are never wholly freed from a legal temper while here) the dead gholt of the law may riſe up and fright them; but ſo far as they are dead to the law, it is not law-wrath, but fatherly-wrath that affects them. Indeed thro' unbelief they may fear hell, but they cannot do ſo by faith, ſeeing there is no foundation for either that faith or fear, in the bible, that a believer ſhall be caſt into hell, *ſince there is no condemnation to them, &c.* (6.) In death there is no motion; vital motion ceases when death takes place: Thus ſo far as a man is dead to the law, ſo far the motions of ſin are killed; for the motions of ſin are by the law; *Rom. 7. 5.* By the law occaſionally and accidentally men running the more into ſin, by how much the more they are forbidden to commit ſin. Hence *Muſculus* compares the law, in this reſpect, to a chaſt matron in a brothel-houſe, which by her good advice does prove an occaſion to ſome impudent whores to be more bold, and impudent in their impiety. *Sin taking occaſion by the law, or commandment, ſays the apoſtle, wrought in me all manner of concupiſcence.* But now, ſo far as a man is dead to the law, ſo far are the motions of ſin killed, and the ſoul quickned to live unto God. Of which more afterwards.

2dly, To ſhew ſome of the qualities of this death to the law. 1. It is an *univerſal* death. I do not mean that it is common to all the children of men. Tho' it be a common death to the children of God, and to every one of them; yet it is a rare death among the children of men. *The whole world lies in wickedneſs, and are dead in ſins and treſpaſſes*; but few are dead in this ſenſe. But what I mean by

by its being universal, is, that the man that is dead to the law in point of justification, is dead to every part of the law in its old covenant form, to the *precept* of it, and to the *penalty* of it, so as he is not to be justified by the one, nor condemned by the other. He is dead to every legal form of the law; his gospel obedience thereto, is no part of his righteousness for justification before God. If he should endeavour to make his gospel obedience to the law as a rule of life in the hand of a mediator, any part of his righteousness for justification, he so far turns the covenant of grace, and the duties required therein, into a covenant of works, and so he seeks to live to that, to which he is, and should be dead. It is true, the form of the law in the gospel-covenant does not require obedience for justification; but yet this corrupt nature is prone to turn to the old byass, and abuse the proper form of it, by turning the rule of *obedience* into a rule of *acceptance*. If a man make faith itself, or any act or fruit of it, the matter of his justification, he turns it to a covenant of works: The believer is dead to faith itself in this respect; yea, faith renounces itself, and all things else, but the righteousness of Christ, for justification. In this sense, he is dead to repentance, love, and other graces; he is dead to every obedience to the law, as a covenant of works; to his natural legal obedience before his conversion, and to his spiritual gospel-obedience after conversion: which tho' it be a righteousness that God works, and is the author of; yet, because it is the believer that is the subject, and made the actor thereof, it is called his own righteousness, or conformity to the law: All which he renounceth in the matter of justification, desiring *to be found in Christ, not having his own righteousness, that is after the law, but the righteousness which is of God by faith*, Phil. 3. 9. So that I say, it is an *universal* death. 2. It is a *lingring* death. It is not easy to get the law killed, something of a legal disposition remains even in the believer while he is in this world: Many a stroke does self and self-righteousness get, but still it revives again. If he were wholly dead to the law, he would be wholly dead to sin; but so far as the law lives, sin lives. They that think they know the gospel well enough, bewray their ignorance; no man can be too evangelical, it will take all his lifetime to get a legal temper destroyed. Tho' the believer be delivered wholly from the law, in its commanding and condemning power and authority, or in its rightful power that it hath over all that are under it; yet he is not delivered wholly from its usurped power and authority, which takes place many times upon him, while here, thro' remaining unbelief. 3. It is a *painful* death it is like the *cutting off the right-hand, and plucking*

ing out the right-eye: No will hath the man to part with the law. It is as natural for him to expect God's favour upon his *doing so* and so, and to expect life and salvation by his own obedience, or doing as well as he can, as it is natural for him to draw his breath. *If we do our best, God will accept of us*, is the natural language of every one, who is wedded to the *do and live* of the first covenant. And O what a *pain* is it to be bro't off from that way! *To die to the law*, is most unnatural, strange doctrine; and legal pangs, and pains of conviction & humiliation must be born, before a right tho't about *dying to the law* can be bro't forth. 4. It is a *pleasant* death; it is *painful* at first, but *pleasant* at last: O how pleasant is it, to see self abased, and grace exalted, self-righteousness cried down, and Christ's Righteousness cried up in the soul! *Wisdom's ways are pleasantness*, and this way particularly, wherein *no flesh does glory in his presence; but he that glorieth, glorieth only in the Lord; he rejoiceth in Christ Jesus, and hath no confidence in the flesh; he does joy in God through Jesus Christ, by whom he receives the atonement, and grace reigning through righteousness, to eternal life by Jesus Christ our Lord, Rom. 5. 11, 21.* This death is a pleasant parting, when the man is brought to a parting with all his own rags for a glorious robe. 5. It is an *honourable* death. *To be dead to the law*, is a death that brings honour to God, to Christ, to the law, and to the believer. It brings honour to God's *holiness*, which is now satisfied by Christ's doing; and honour to God's *justice*, which is now satisfied by Christ's dying. It brings honour to Christ; for now the man values the righteousness of Christ, as being indeed the righteousness of God, and a full, sufficient, perfect righteousness. It brings honour to the law, when, instead of our imperfect obedience, we bring to it an obedience better than men or angels in their best estate could give it, even the lawgiver's obedience; which indeed *doth magnify the law, and make it honourable*. It brings honour also to the believer himself; he is honoured and beautified with a law-biding righteousness, truly meritorious, and every way glorious; *this is the honour of all the saints*. 6. It is a *profitable* death; it is a happy death, and a holy death; profitable both for happiness and holiness, profitable both for justification and sanctification. Our legal righteousness is unprofitable, *If. 1. 57. 12. I will declare thy righteousness, and thy works, for they shall not profit thee*. It is unprofitable for justification; for *by the deeds of the law no flesh living can be justified*: It is unprofitable for sanctification; for his filthy rags do rather pollute him than purify him. But the righteousness of Christ is profitable every way; they are happy that have it, *for they are justified from all things, from which they could*

not be justified by the law of Moses: They are holy that have it, as will appear in the sequel of our discourse. *Being dead to the law, is the way to live unto God.*

Fourth thing here proposed, is the means of this death, I through the law am dead to the law: The mean of death to the law, is the law. *Question, How can this be, seeing the law is the cause of no good thing in us, and is the ministration of death, and condemnation?* 2 Cor. 3. 7, 8, 9. *Answer,* tho' the law is not the cause of this death to the law, and so of death to sin; yet it is an occasion thereof, for it accuses, terrifies, and condemns us, and thereby occasions and urgeth us to flee to Christ, who is the true cause that we die to the law, and to sin: As the needle goes before, and draws the thread which sews the cloth; so the needle of the law goes before, and makes way for the grace of the gospel, that it may follow after, and take place in the heart. *To be dead to the law, and married to Christ,* is all one in scripture sense. Now to be dead to the law by the law, is, by means of the law, to be led to Christ for justification by faith in him, *without the deeds of the law,* Gal. 3. 24. *The law was our schoolmaster to lead us to Christ, that we might be justified by faith;* where the law may be taken either for the *ceremonial* or *moral* law. If we take it for the *ceremonial* law, then it is true that the *ceremonial* law pointed out Christ to us truly: But then the *ceremonial* law was gospel in the substance of it, tho' veiled over with types and shadows, which were to continue till the body was come. But if we take it for the *moral* law, then it brings us to Christ only occasionally; for to bring us to Christ, is no proper work of the law, only it is the occasion thereof, insomuch as it drives us from itself, and makes us to see that by it there is no hope of life; so it curses all sinners, and gives hope of life to none: It is the gospel only that shews us the salvation to be had in Christ. Now the law, by the severity of it, is an occasion to us of seeking life, where it is to be found; like a child knowing the tendernefs of his father's love, and finding his schoolmaster to be very severe and sharp, runs from the severity of the master, to hide himself under his father's wings; yet not his master's teaching, but his severity is the occasion of it; even so it is through the law and its severity, that the believer is dead to the law: It is then by a law-work, in some measure, a work of legal conviction and humiliation, that a man comes to be dead to the law.

Here I'll name to you a few pieces of law-work, which are the occasion of the man's being dead to the law, when the spirit of God makes use of the law for that end. I. Through the law a man's gets the conviction of the holiness of God, and of the holiness

ness, spirituality and extent of the law it self ; the spirit of God enlightens the mind, to see the conformity of the command unto the will of God, & to the holy nature of God : This is called *the coming of the commandment*, Rom. 7. 9. *For I was alive without the law once. I tho't I was holy enough, I found the life of my hand, while I was, touching the law, blameless ; but when the commandment came, sin revived, and I died.* When I saw the holiness and spirituality of God's law, *sin revived, and I died* ; I saw that I was a sinner indeed, & I *died to the law*, and to all *conceit* of my own works, and obedience to the law. This conviction makes a man have a doctrinal, approbation of *the law as holy, just and good*, holy in its precepts, just in its threatenings, and good in its promises ; *I consent to the law, that it is good.* By this conviction, a man sees not only the holiness and spirituality, but the extent of the law : *thy commandment is exceeding broad*, it is extended to all my thoughts, words and actions ; to all my affections, designs, desires, and inclinations. Now, when a man sees this, it kills his confidence, and makes him see he hath no righteousness conformable to the law. 2. Through the law, the man gets the conviction of sin. *By the law is the knowledge of sin*, Rom. 3. 20. Conviction of sin is the conscience of our transgressing of this holy law. This conviction makes a man see sin in its nature, *that it is the transgression of the law*, 1 John 3. 4. and so a contrariety to the holy nature and will of God. This conviction makes a man see the *kinds* of sin. It may be, the spirit of God begins with some actual, grievous sin. *Actual sin* is the swerving of our actions, either in thought, word or deed, from the law of God, either by omission or commission. From thence the conviction goes to *original sin*, letting the man see, that not only is his nature destitute of all righteousness, and conformity to the law, but that it is wholly corrupt, that he is just a hell of sin and enmity against God ; and from thence the spirit of God by the law convinces the man of the *originating sin*, even of *Adam's sin*, and says to him, as in Isa. 43. 27. *Thy first father hath sinned, and thou in him.* This conviction makes the man see also the *aggravations* of sin, how much light, and how many mercies he hath sinned against ; and also the *power and dominion* of sin, what a slave he is thereto, and that the law is so far from freeing him therefrom, that it but exasperates corruption, & so is the strength of sin. Now, when the man comes thus to see sin in its nature, kinds, aggravations, and dominion, what can more tend to kill his conceit of righteousness by the law ? 3. Through the law the man gets conviction of guilt as well as sin, that he is bound over to punishment according to the law ; for guilt is properly an obligation to punishment. As by the pre-

cept of the law, the man comes to get the knowledge of the intrinsic evil of sin in its nature; so by the penalty of the law, he comes to get the knowledge of the consequential evil of sin, as binding him over to hell, death and damnation; that the curse of God, the wrath of God, the vengeance of God is the retinue and train of attendants that accompany sin; and so the man is put in fear of hell and damnation. It may be, when he goes to bed, he fears he shall never rise again: when he goes out, he thinks he shall never come in again; he is afraid his meat choak him, or the house fall above his head, or the earth open and swallow him up: Sense of wrath haunts him like a ghost; the man is put in prison, and concluded under sin, Gal. 3. 22. Sin is the prison, the sinner is the prisoner, God is the judge, and the curse of the law is the bond by which the prisoner is tied neck and heel; and from this prison there is no escape, without the mercy of God in Christ, who can command this prisoner to come forth? The law cannot do it, *it is weak through the flesh*; man cannot do it, he is by nature *without strength*: Only he whom God hath given to be a covenant to the people, Isa. 49. 9. can say to the prisoner, *Go forth*. Now, when the man is thus convinced of guilt and wrath by the law, this hath a tendency to make him dead to the law, and to kill his confidence in any legal righteousness of his own. O is there any poor prisoner here, that finds himself shut up in prison, under the power of sin, and under the guilt of sin, and wrath of God? O let this give you some comfort for the present, 'till God loose your bands, that this is the way God is taking to make you dead to the law, that you may live to God. 4. Thro' the law, a man gets the conviction of God's equity, and righteousness, tho' he should punish, and execute law-vengeance; and so is made to justify God, though he should send him to hell. I do not say that the sinner is made content to be damned; no, that, in some respect, were to be content to be an enemy to God, and to sin against him for ever; for the state of the damned includes everlasting enmity and sin, and so it can never be the thing he is made content with; but the man is brought to a conviction of God's equity and righteousness, tho' he should send him to hell, as an everlasting punishment. *To justify God*, says an eminent divine, *is to acknowledge, on the one hand, that he does no wrong to the sinner in the execution of the curse; and on the other hand, that he does no wrong to himself, or to his own justice, when he executes the judgment threatened against sin, but that he does that which is right*. O, says the sinner, in this case, God does me no wrong, tho' he should destroy me; and he does not wrong his own justice, but is a just God in so doing:

doing: Yea, I cannot see how the credit of his justice should be saved, and how he should be glorified in his justice, if he did not execute judgment upon me, either in myself, or in a surety for me, because I have offended such an infinitely glorious Being. *Against thee, thee only have I sinned, that thou mightest be justified when thou speakest, and clear when thou judgest,* Psal. 51. 4. *Is God unrighteous, that takes vengeance? God forbid.* Rom. 3. 5, 6. The offence done against the greatest of Beings, deserves the greatest of punishments, even the eternal destruction of the creature. It is true, God delights not in the death of a sinner, *As I live, I have no pleasure in the death of a sinner,* Ezek. 18. that is, as it is a destruction of the creature, tho' he delights in it, as it is the execution of justice; even so the sinner convinced by the law, tho' he cannot take pleasure in this, to think of being destroyed, yet there is some secret kind of justifying that which God takes pleasure in, namely, the execution of justice. O how fit is it, that God's justice be glorified! And how just is God, in executing infinite judgment upon such an infinite evil as sin is! And indeed the sinner would not see salvation to be free, if he did not see damnation to be just; but the sight of this, in the glass of the law, and in the light of the spirit, tends in a manner to reconcile the man with the device of salvation through Christ, whose bloody sacrifice gives justice full satisfaction. He is now content that God's justice be glorified by a satisfaction, more glorious than that which the damned in hell can give; and so it tends to make him dead to the law, and to all other legal penances and sham satisfactions, which those, who are ignorant of God's equity and righteousness, are ready foolishly to invent. 5. Thro' the law a man gets the conviction of his own inexcusableness, which is that effect of a legal work of the spirit, whereby the soul is left without excuse of, or defence for itself, Rom. 3. 19. *Whatsoever things the law saith, it saith to them that are under it, that every mouth may be stopt, and all the world may become guilty before God.* Now the whole soul of man cries out, *guilty, guilty*; his fig-leaves of excuses are blown away; his former shifts and cavils in defence of himself, do now vanish; he hath not a word to speak in favour of himself. What said he formerly? Why, it may be, his heart said, if not his mouth, O I hope there will be no fear of me, *Adam's sin was not mine*; original sin is what I could not help, it came with me to the world; as for my actual sins, I see others guilty of greater; as for my omission of duties and commission of trespasses, I see none but have their faults; and God is a merciful God, and I hope he will not be so unjust as to damn his own creatures. These and the like shifts and excuses formerly,

took place: but now he becomes speechless, his mouth is stopt. They see they will but deceive themselves by these miserable shifts, and that they are guilty, guilty, sinful wretches, blacker than the very devil, and have not a mouth to open for themselves; and so they die to all conceit of themselves, and their own righteousness. 6. Thro' the law the man comes thus to get a conviction of his absolute need of the gospel, or of the Saviour revealed thereby, being convinced of his sinful and miserable state by nature, and humbled under the serious consideration and view of his sin and misery, fearing the wrath of God due to him for sin, beholding the equity of God, tho' he should cast him into hell; having his mouth stopt, and despairing of getting out of this condition by his own power, or the help of any other creature. He is now convinced of the need of the Saviour: O I perish, I perish for ever, unless the law-giver provide a righteousness for me that will answer the demands of the law. Now the soul is ready to cry out, not in *Rachel's* sense, *Give me children, or else I die*; but in her phrase, *O give me Christ, or else I die*; give me a surety, or else I die. Now he is content to be forever indebted to the righteousness of another; and thus the law is the occasion of bringing a man to Christ. And so you see how it is, that *thro' the law they are dead to the law, that they may live unto God.*

THIRD HEAD.

The *third* thing is, to speak of the believer's life, which is the fruit of this death; it is a living unto God. And now, in speaking hereto, I shall, 1. Enquire what kind of life it is? 2. What are the scriptural designations of it? 3. What is imported in its being called a *living* in general? 4. What is imported in its being called a *living to God* in particular?

Ist, What kind of life is it? And, (1.) It is not a *natural* life, either in a physical or moral sense. Natural life, in a physical sense, is that which we received from *Adam* by generation, and is the function of natural faculties, in living, moving, using of sense and reason; that is, a life common to all men, who yet may be dead: Neither is it a natural life in a moral sense, such as heathens may have. The heathens may have common notions of God, and of good and evil, so as to render them inexcusable in their unnatural immoralities, *Rom* 1. 19, 20. They have a book of nature, both internal, in the remainders of the law in their heart, so as they *do by nature the things contained in the law*, *Rom*. 2. 14, 15. And external, in God's works of creation and general providence; *The heavens declare the glory of the Lord*, &c. Now, this natural life cannot be the *living to God* here spoken of, because this natural life
flows

flows only from a natural state, which is a state of death: By nature *we are dead*, legally dead under condemnation, spiritually *dead* in sins, wholly corrupt; and the tree being bad, the fruit must be bad also; *a filthy fountain can bring forth nothing but filthy streams*. This natural life does proceed from natural principles, and these are corrupt; such as *the desires of the flesh and of the mind, the lusts of the flesh, the lust of the eye, and the pride of life*. At best their natural life flows from self-love, or love to its own honour, praises, profits or pleasures; all nature's works are selfish, however heroic they may be. This natural life is directed by a natural rule, such as the light of nature inward, or outward, accompanied with the counsels and examples of naturalists; neither does it ever come up to that same rule of nature's light, which therefore does condemn them as guilty. This natural life hath only natural designs and ends; the natural man acts from *self* as his principle, and to *self* as his end, ascribing the glory of all his actions thereunto: Thus *Herod gave not God the glory* of his fine oration, but took the praise to himself; but he was immediately *smitten of an angel, and eaten up of worms*. This natural way of living is in a natural manner, *after the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air*, Eph. 2. 2. which is nothing but *a walking in the lusts of the flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind*: Yea, in this natural life, nothing of Christ, or of his gospel, is either in the state, practice, rule, end or manner of it; nay, they who thus live, *are without Christ, being aliens from the common-wealth of Israel, and strangers to the covenant of promise, having no hope, and without God, or atheists, in the world*, Eph. 2. 12. (2) It is not a legal life, either of *Jewish* conformity to the ceremonial law, or of perfect conformity to the moral law: It is not that legal life of *Jewish* conformity to the ceremonial law, or according to the old testament dispensation, for that ceremonial law is abrogated in Christ the substance of all the old shadows; and so that *Jewish* life is unprofitable and vain, yea, it is damnable, and prohibited under the highest penalties, Col. 2. 20, 21. And therefore says the apostle, Gal. 5. 2. *If ye be circumcised, or live according to the ceremonial law, or any other law of works, so as to expect justification thereby, Christ shall profit you nothing*. Neither is this living to God that perfect life of conformity to the moral law, according to the old covenant of works, which required perfect, personal, and perpetual obedience, as the condition of life; and threatned death upon the least failure: I say, it is not this life neither; for man hath become guilty, and forfeited life, and incurred death by *Adam's* first transgression, Rom. 5. 18. *By one man sin entred into the world,*

and death by sin, &c. Thus we are for ever incapable of that life, which *Adam* was capable of before the fall. It is also impracticable, because *man is by nature without strength*, *Rom. 5. 6.* We have no strength to give that obedience which the covenant of works requires, because *we must be redeemed from the curse thereof*, and restored to the righteousness thereof, before we can be capable to do what it requires. And though *Adam's* sin and transgression were not imputed to us, as indeed it is, yet seeing every adult person at least *hath sinned after the similitude of Adam's transgression*, for *no man liveth and sinneth not*; therefore he can never perform the perfect obedience therein required, and *by the deeds of the law no flesh can be justified*. Besides, there is no article of that covenant of works, which provided for a remedy in case of a breach; but all that the covenant of works does, is, to promise life to perfect obedience in man's own strength, and threatens death in case of failure, and so leaves the transgressor thereof under its curse. In a word, the life according to that covenant, cannot be the life here meant, because that covenant speaks nothing of Christ, or of his gospel, by whom, and by which only we can now come to this living unto God; and because this living unto God presupposes a being *dead to the law*, or dead to that covenant, otherwise we can never live unto God. 3. It is not a *pharisaical* life of external, legal, imperfect conformity to the law, whereby we endeavour *to establish a righteousness of our own*, as the *Jews*, *Rom. 9. 31, 32.* and *Rom. 10. 3.* Many reckon an outward moral conversation to be this living unto God, whether in performing the natural duties of civility and moral honesty, or in an external performance of religious duties, such as prayer, praise, reading and hearing, waiting upon divine worship. The Church of *Laodicea* was self-conceited; *they tho't they were rich and increased with goods*: But behold the testimony that Christ gave them, that they were neither *cold nor hot*, such as God would spue out of his mouth; yea, that they were *wretched, miserable, blind and naked*: That is all the testimony that he gave them, who look'd upon themselves as rich in legal righteousness and good works. This pharisaical life may be accompanied with a glorious profession; they may profess soundness in the faith, and disown all these legal and unsound principles, which others may have as their stated opinion; they may profess, *that righteousness and justification is not by the works of the law, but by the faith of Christ*; or *by the works of Christ received by faith alone*; they may have a *sound head*, but *no sound heart*, nor a *good conscience*, nor *faith unfeigned*; for *the end of the commandment is love proceeding from these*, *1 Tim. 1. 5.* Persons may be like the toad,

toad, that hath a precious stone in his head, but his belly is full of poison; they may have a head full of knowlege, and a heart full of enmity; a filthy mud-wall may be garnished with fine tapestry; a rotten sepulchre may be whitened: They may have much of the matter and external form of godliness, and yet want the power and internal form thereof; *a name to live, and be dead.* Yea, this pharisaical life may be accompanied with many excellent gifts and common graces, and high attainments, as well as all visible church privileges) as we find some apostates may have, *Heb. 6. 4, 5, 6.* Their *Understanding* may be so far enlightened that they may attain to great discoveries of Christ. *Balaam* was called a man *whose eyes were opened*, and that *saw the visions of the Almighty*, *Num. 24.* Their *wills* may be so far renewed, as to have a great many good purposes, like these who *resolved to serve the Lord with all their heart*, *Deut. 5. 27, 29.* *Josh. 24. 18, 21.* They may be almost *persuaded to be Christians*; their affections may be greatly raised and enlarged; they may be raised to some sorrow for sin, like *Judas*, and like *Esau, who sought the blessing with tears*; to some joy, like the stony-ground hearers, who *received the word with joy and pleasure, yet had no root*; to some delight, like the *Jews*, of whom it is said, *Isa. 58. 2. That they sought him daily, and delighted to know his ways*; yea, to some fear and reverence, like these enemies that are said to *submit themselves*, *Psal. 66. 3.* and even to some extraordinary raptures, like these who are said to *taste of the heavenly gift, and to be partakers of the Holy Ghost*; hereupon their *life and conversation* may be changed in part. Thus many, *through the knowledge of God, and of Christ, have escaped the pollutions of the world.* *2 Pet. 2. 20, 21, 22.* The common gifts and graces of the Spirit may warm, smooth, and wash their outward conversation; all this will not amount to this *living unto God* in the text. *What kind of life then is this? I answer, 4.* It is a spiritual life, being the action, motion, and gracious saving operation of the Spirit of God in us, and *causing us to walk in his statutes*, *Ezek. 37. 27.* It is the life of a spiritual man. It is impossible for one to have a godly life, whatever to the world he may seem to have, till he be a godly person, or in a spiritual state. A man must have a state of union to Christ by the faith of God's operation, so as, being married with this husband, he may *bring forth fruit unto God.* The branch of the old *Adam cannot bear good fruit*; it is only the *true branch*, planted in Christ by the Spirit of faith, that bears good fruit, *Joh. 15. 4, 5.* A man must be in a state of reconciliation with God, justified, pardoned, and indemnified, before God accept of any service off his hand; *for two cannot walk together, or live together, unless they be agreed.*

agreed. God accepts no action from an enemy, but his returning to him by faith in Christ, and then begins all personal acceptance. Men must be in a state of adoption, before it is possible that they can be *followers of God as dear children*; in a state of renovation, *renewed by the Holy Ghost in the spirit of our mind*. The godly man, who is in case for a godly life, is just a new creation, *even the workmanship of God created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God before ordained that he should walk in them*. If the heart be not right with God, a man cannot have a right life, or *live unto God*.

But I shall go on to inquire, *2dly*, Into the scriptural designations of this life. To give all the names that it comes under in scripture, were too large a task: I shall only single out some of the most notable names it gets in scripture. It is sometimes designed from God, sometimes from Christ, sometimes from the Spirit, and sometimes from these names that import the other special qualities and properties of it. 1. Sometimes designed from God, and it is called *the life of God*, *Eph. 4. 18*. from which all natural men are *alienated*: This is a wonderful name that it gets, *the life of God*. Who can tell what this life of God is? God lives in himself, and the believer lives in God, *his life is hid with Christ in God*, *Col. 3. 3*. The best we can say of it is, that it begins in grace, & ends in glory, and is wholly of God, and in him. 2. Sometimes it is designed from Christ, and so it is called *a living by faith on the Son of God*, *Gal. 2. 20*. immediately following our text; where, when the apostle would explain what he understands by his *being dead to the law*, he says, *I am crucified with Christ*; and when he would explain what he understands by his *living unto God*, he says, *Never the less I live, yet not I, but Christ liveth in me*. Christ (might he say) is the *Alpha* and *Omega* of my life, the beginning and the end of it; the *author* and *finisher* of it; Christ is the principle of my life, from whom I live; Christ is the end of my life, to whom I live; Christ is the pattern of my life, according to whose example I live; Christ is the giver of my life, the maintainer of my life, the restorer of my life; after decays, *he restores my soul, and makes me to walk in the paths of righteousness for his name's sake*. Christ is the food of my life; I would die, if he did not *feed me with his flesh and blood*, which is *living bread and water* to me: Christ is the medicine of my life; it is by renewed touches of the hem of his garment, and renewed applications to him, that my soul is healed; for there *is healing under the wings of this fan of righteousness*. Christ is the All of my life; *for to me to live is Christ*; he is my light, my strength, my righteousness: It is the glory of the believer, to acknowledge Christ the *Alpha* and the *Omega*, and the

ALL of his spiritual life. 3. Sometimes it is designed from the Spirit, and so it is called a *living in the Spirit*, Gal. 5. 25. *If we live in the Spirit, let us also walk in the Spirit.* It is a living in the light, and leading of the Spirit, *Thy Spirit is good, lead me to the land of uprightness.* It is a living in the graces and fruits of the Spirit, which are described, Gal. 5. 22. and a bringing forth *these fruits of the Spirit.* It is a living in the strength and power of the Spirit, which is therefore called a law, *The law of the Spirit of Life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death.* The power of the Spirit hath the force of a law within the man, inasmuch that when he walks in the Spirit, he does not fulfil the lusts of the flesh; he sets the power of the Spirit against the power of sin. It is a living in the comforts of the Spirit, and joys of the Holy Ghost; and when he thus lives, *the joy of the Lord is his strength.* It is a walking in the liberty of the Spirit; and *where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty*: When a man hath this life, then he hath liberty to hear, read, pray, believe, mourn, and liberty to serve the Lord; *Truly I am thy servant, thou hast loosed my bonds.* In a word, it is a *living in the love of the Spirit*, and in a constant dependance on the Spirit.

4. Sometimes it is designed from these names that signify other special qualities and properties of it: And here, I might bring in a multitude of scriptures. It is called a *holy life*, *Be ye holy as I am holy*: It is called a *humble life*, *walk humbly with thy God*; a *heavenly life*, *our conversation is in heaven*; the man is heavenly in his thoughts, and spiritually minded; heavenly in his speech, desiring to edify those that are about him; heavenly in his affections, which are set upon things above, his desire and delight being set upon heavenly things; heavenly in his hope, *Looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God*; heavenly in his trade, trading daily to the heavenly country, by faith, prayer, and drawing bills of exchange upon Christ, as it were, for all that he stands in need of. It is called an *upright life*, *No good thing will he withhold from him that walketh uprightly.* A *well-ordered life*, *To him that orders his conversation, &c.* It is called a *circumspect life*, *See that ye walk circumspectly.* It is called a *gospel life*, *Let your conversation be as it becometh the gospel*, that is, as it becomes a gospel-state, gospel-principles, gospel-rules, and gospel-patterns, gospel-motives, and gospel-ends; and under the influence of gospel-grace, adorning the doctrine of God our Saviour. But, omitting all these, I only instance in one scripture, wherein this living unto God is described in such a manner as includes all other properties of it, yea, and comprehends all the duties of obedience we are called to, Tit. 2. 11, 12. *The grace of God hath appeared unto all men, teaching us, that denying*

denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly in this present world; where you see, this living unto God comprehends all these duties of piety towards God, sobriety towards our selves, and righteousness towards our neighbour, which we are obliged to by the law, as a rule of life & holiness, and all under the influence of the grace of God, revealed in the gospel, teaching us these things efficaciously: For the law teacheth them only preceptively; but it is the gospel that teacheth them effectively, working in us both to will and to do. O that we knew this life more than we do.

The third thing here was, What is imported in its being called a life in general? Indeed this living to God, is the only life that deserves the name of life. In vegetative life, the trees of the field do excel men; for, from little plants, they turn to stately oaks. In sensitive life, the beasts of the field do excel man, for they go beyond him in these natural faculties; as the dog in smelling, the eagle in seeing, the hart in hearing, and other creatures in other senses. In rational life, many heathen philosophers may excel the Christian. So that it is not the vegetative life, whereby plants excel us; nor the sensitive life, whereby beasts excel us; nor the rational life, which reprobates have as well as we; but the SPIRITUAL, divine life, that deserves the name, without which, our life is but a death. However, this spiritual life, or living to God, may be called life, because it hath all these things in it spiritually, which natural life hath in it naturally; as, 1. Life hath motion in it; and so here, this spiritual life imports motion; wherever the spirit of life comes, there is a motion among the dry bones. Now, there are some duties he moves in, such as prayer, Behold he prayeth, who never prayed to purpose before; he moves in the duties of hearing, reading, examination, and mortification. Now, there are some graces that move in him: Faith begins to move, saying, I believe, Lord help my unbelief: Hope begins to move, He is begotten to a new and lively hope: Love begins to move, perhaps in sighs and groans for want of love. Now he moves, and the term he moves from, is sin, Satan, and the world, and self, and self-righteousness; and the term he moves to, is God and Christ, and heaven, and heavenly things. So far as this divine life takes place, so far all the faculties of the soul move towards God; the understanding to see him, the will to serve him, the affections to embrace him, and all the members of the body to be employed for him. The eye is lift up to heaven in prayer and supplication; the ear is open to receive instruction; the mouth enlarged to sing his praises; the tongue will be no more the trumpeter of idle communication; the hand

hand and heart will be instruments of devotion ; the knees will be bowed to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ ; the feet will delight to carry the man to the house of the Lord ; all is in motion for God, so far as this life takes place. You may here see, by the way, whether you have or want this life, which is a living to God. Tho' I see an image lively representing a man, having eyes, ears, mouth, nose, hands and feet, yet I know it hath no life in it, because it hath no motion ; so, if we see a professor without practice, we may say he is an idol, he is no Christian, but the image of a Christian. It is true, a hypocrite may have all these external motions, like a painted puppet, that may by some engine be made to dance, and move up and down, but from no vital principle of life.

2. Life hath *breath* in it, *Jam. 2. last. The body without breath is dead*, as it may be rendred ; so in this life there is breath. If a man's breath be held in a little while, the person cannot live ; so the believer would die, if he had not breath in a spiritual sense. What is the air he breathes in ? It is just the Spirit of God ; *Awake, O north-wind, and come thou south, &c.* What is the breath that is put within him ? It is the Spirit of God ; the Holy Ghost is that to the believer, which breath is to the body, yea, which the soul is to the body. God breathed into *Adam* the breath of life ; and he breathes on the believer, saying, *Receive ye the Holy Ghost ; I will put my Spirit within you.* What lungs does he breathe with ? It is faith, *We receive the promise of the Spirit by faith.* And what things does he breathe after ? Indeed the earthly man breathes after earthly things, saying, *Who will shew us any good ?* But the heavenly man breatheth after heavenly things, *Lord, lift thou up the light of thy countenance upon me.* Many people have a stinking breath ; it hath the smell of earth, yea, the smell of hell ; some breathe out blasphemies and oaths, some breathe out cruelty and wrath ; but the man that hath this life, and lives unto God, his breath is a sweet breath ; so far as he lives unto God, his breath smells of heaven, and of God and Christ. But, 3. Life hath usually *growth* ; even so this life is a growing life, this *well of water springs up to everlasting life.* Let a painter draw the figure of grapes ever so artificially, yet they may be seen and discerned from natural grapes, because they grow not : Thus the painted hypocrite may look well, but never grows. A man that hath his divine life, is usually growing ; if not upwardly in holiness, yet downward in humility ; if not sensibly in outward fruitfulness, yet insensibly in inward sighs and sobs, because of his unfruitfulness, and in pantings of soul towards perfection ; he that hath clean hands waxeth stronger and stronger. Indeed a winter-time may

put the believer far back, & interrupt the growth, but a summer-reviving will make up all again. 4. Life hath *appetite and sense*; even so this life imports spiritual *appetite* & spiritual *sense*. There is appetite after spiritual food: Many pamper their bodies and starve their souls; but he that thus lives, hath a hunger and thirst after righteousness, *and like new born babes, desires, &c.* The doctrine of the gospel is his life; *For a man liveth not by bread alone, but by every word, &c.* He hath an appetite after these words of grace, and *draws water out of these wells of salvation with joy.* Many are the secret longings and pantings of the living soul after the living God, who is his life: And as life seeks its own preservation continually, so does the living soul in the living God, in whom only his life is hid. There is *sense* also; here life is sensible of whatsoever is an enemy to it, and resists it; the more life, the more sense; and the more sense, the more resistance: Even so they that live this life unto God, they feel corruption, and they fight against it, *For the spirit lusts against the flesh, and the flesh against the spirit*; they groan under the weight of corruption, which they feel, and reckon themselves wretched on the account thereof; *O wretched man that I am, &c.* They that have no feeling of sin, no fighting against it, do not look like these that have this life. They who have spiritual senses, at least who have them exercised, have the seeing eye; they see the evil of sin, they see the beauty of holiness, they see the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ; they see God in his ordinances; they see an internal glory in the external administration of ordinances, which others not seeing, they think very little of these things; also they see God in his providences, in judgments they see a just God, and in mercies they see a merciful God, and themselves less than the least of all his mercies. They have the hearing ear; they hear the voice of God in the word, and rod; they smell the favour of his name, which is as ointment poured forth; they taste his goodness, and feel his power: And thus you see what may be imported in its being called a *life* in general.

FOURTHLY, What is imported in its being called a *living unto God*; what is this living unto God? I have said several things about it already; but this living unto God, more particularly, may import these four things following, 1. The believer's living unto God, imports his living suitably to the relations that God stands in to him, and he unto God, as being his God in Christ Jesus; and so it is a living to him as our *redeemer*, both by price and power, as these that *are not our own, but bought with a price*; and therefore *glorifying the Lord in our souls and bodies which are his.* It is

is a living to God as our *head*: God in Christ is the believer's head; and so to live to him as our head, is to live as members of such a head, drawing spiritual virtue, light, life, and comfort from him as the head. It is a living to God as our *husband*, *Thy maker is thy husband*; and so live to him in this relation, is to live reverently, lovingly, affectionately, with submission and subjection to our husband, as becomes the spouse of such a glorious husband. It is a living to God as our heavenly *father*, depending on him as children on their father; *Wilt thou not from this time call me, My father, thou art the guide of my youth?* Jer. 3. 4. It is a living to God as our *Judge, Law-giver and King*; and so it is a living as those that are accountable to, and as we shall answer at the tribunal of this *Judge*. It is a sitting at the feet, and receiving the law from the mouth of this *law-giver*; and it is a yielding the tribute of praise, obedience and subjection to this *King*. In a word, it is a living to God as the object of our worship and adoration, *loving him as the Lord our God with all our heart, soul, mind, and strength*. Thus, I say, to live to God, is to live suitably to all these relations he stands in to us. 2. The believer's living unto God, imports his living suitably to these *privileges* and favours that he receives from God. Hath he enlightened us in the knowledge of himself? Then, to live to him, is to *walk as children of light*, and not as those that are yet in darkness and ignorance. Hath he called us effectually? Then, to live to him, is to *walk worthy of the vocation wherewith we are called*. Hath he given us grace? Then, to live to him, is to live, not as graceless, but as gracious persons; not as those that are in a state of nature, but in a state of grace. Hath he pardoned our sins, justified our persons, and brought us into peace with himself? Then, to live to him, is to *stand fast in the liberty wherewith he hath made us free*. Hath he renewed and sanctified us? Then, to live to him, is to live as renewed and sanctified persons, whose lusts are mortified, and whose souls are *transformed into the image of God*. Hath he poured in the promise into our hearts by the spirit? Then, to live to him suitably thereto, is, *having these promises, to cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and of the spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God*. Hath he made us heirs of glory? Then to live to him, is to live as candidates for heaven, *as pilgrims and strangers, abstaining from fleshly lusts, travelling to the other world, having our affections and conversation in heaven*. 3. The believer's living unto God, imports his living in communion with him, and comfortable enjoyment of him: In communion with him, in the constant contemplation of him, *sanctifying the Lord in our hearts*; in a constant affection to him, having his love *shed abroad*

in our hearts by the holy ghost; and in a constant dependance on him, receiving all from him by faith, and returning all to him in duty and gratitude. It is a living in the comfortable enjoyment of him, as all our portion and happiness, all our salvation and desire, renouncing all things in heaven and earth as our portion, but a God in Christ alone, saying, *Whom have I in heaven but thee?* &c.

4. The believer's living unto God, imports his living in conformity to God; and indeed, so far as we enjoy God, so far will we be conform to him. As it will be in glory, *we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is*; so it is in grace here, the more the soul sees and enjoys him, the more is he like unto him; *beholding his glory, we are changed into the same Image, &c.* And so this living unto God, is a living in conformity to God's nature, *being holy as he is holy, perfect as our heavenly Father is perfect.* Is he a perfect God? Then to live to him, is to *go on to perfection*, Heb. 6. 1. It is a living in conformity to his way of living. God's way of living is a holy, just, good, faithful, merciful way, having a general good-will to all, and a special good will to some; and so ought our way to be. It is a living in conformity to God's ends: God's great end, which he sets before him, is the glory of his name, the honour of his Son, the advancement of Christ's kingdom, the ruin of Satan's kingdom, and in all, the praise of his rich and free grace; and surely we live to God, when we have these ends also which are God's ends. It is a living in conformity to his law as a rule, which is the transcript of his communicable nature, for our practice; *If ye love me, keep my commandments*: We do not love him, if we do not so. These then that live to him, they do, from love as well as conscience, obey him. These things might be greatly enlarged; however thus you see in short, what it is to live unto God. We are telling, and you are hearing, what this life is; but O that we could live this life, as well as speak and hear of it! Look to the Lord, that he may make you know it to your experience. It is called a living to God, 1. Because it hath the *spirit* of God for the principle of it. 2. Because it hath the *word* of God for the rule of it. 3. Because it hath the *love* of God for the motive of it. And, 4. Because it hath the *glory* of God for the ultimate end of it.

FOURTH HEAD.

The *fourth* thing proposed, was, to shew the influence that this being *dead to the law*, hath upon *living to God*; or the necessity of this death, in order to this life. Here I might shew, 1. That it is necessary. 2. Whence it is necessary.

First, That it is necessary that we die to the law in point of justification, before we can live to God in point of sanctification. Besides

sides what was said upon the *first* head, for the confirmation of the doctrine, these following considerations, or remarks, may discover the necessity of being dead to the law, in order to our living to God. 1. *Remark*, That a man that is under the law, can *perform* no holy act; he may do some things that are materially good, but nothing can he do that is formally good, or holy; and his work, instead of sanctifying him, does still more and more pollute him, *Tit. 1. 15. To the pure all things are pure; but unto them that are defiled and unbelieving, is nothing pure; but even their mind and conscience is defiled.* He then that is alive to the law, and under the covenant of works, his works can never make him holy, but rather more and more unholy. 2. *Remark*, The man that is under the law, hath no *promise* of holiness or sanctification by that law. The law only promises life upon perfect obedience in our own person; and if true sanctification may be in one that is under the covenant of works, then we must change the articles of the covenant, and promises of the covenant of grace, and make sanctification no promise of it; we must blot out these promises, *I'll put a new spirit within you*, and, *I'll write my law in your hearts*, and all other promises of the like nature must be razed out of the covenant of grace; if one under the covenant of works may attain to sanctification by his own works, there is no need of this promise. 3. *Remark*, that the man that is under the law, hath no *principle* of holiness. The grand principle of true holiness, is the spirit dwelling in the man. Now, how does one receive the spirit of sanctification? Is it *by the works of the law*? No, *but by the bearing of faith*, *Gal. 3. 2.* It is the doctrine of grace, not of works, that makes us partakers of this spirit. It is the new testament, or new covenant, that is *the ministration of the spirit*, *2 Cor. 3. 6.* Thereby the spirit is ministred, or conveyed to us, but not by the law. It is the gospel that calls us effectually to sanctification, *2 Thess. 2. 14.* We received the promise of the spirit *through faith*, and not *by the works of the law*, *Gal. 3. 14.* 4. *Remark*, that the man that is under the law, is without Christ, in whom sanctification only is. They that are saints, are saints in Christ Jesus, as the apostle designs them, and sanctified in Christ: And our implantation into Christ, is only from grace, and not from the works of the law; and so is our sanctification only from grace, and only in Christ, *who gave himself for his church, that he might sanctify it*, *Eph. 5. 25.* 5. *Remark*, The man that is under the law, is *without strength*, and cannot perform obedience to the law; *the law is weak through the flesh*, and cannot justify him, neither can it sanctify him. In order to sanctification, a new creation is necessary: *The clean heart must be created*, and

the man *created unto good works*: Creating power must be put forth, and creation is a work of God. We must therefore make a God of our works, and deify them, and endow them with a creating power, if we think by the works of the law to be sanctified, or ascribe such efficacy to them, as to work true sanctification in us. No man then, that is under the law or covenant of works, by giving himself to holy duties and actions, and exercising himself in them, can come to attain true holiness, or to be truly sanctified.

6. *Remark*, That the man that is under the power of the law, is under the power of sin. Whence is it, that the believer is freed from the power and dominion of sin? It is because *he is under grace, and not under the law*, Rom. 6. 14. Shewing us, that these that are under the law, are under the power and dominion of sin. How so? Even upon the account of all the reasons already assigned; and not only so, but because *the law is the strength of sin*, 1 Cor. 15. 56. Particularly as it irritates corruption, strengthening and stirring it up; *Sin taking occasion by the commandment, wrought in me all manner of concupiscence*. Sin, by occasion of the resisting command, brake out the more fiercely. Hence the law is only the occasion, and sin dwelling in us is the cause; as the shining of the sun is the occasion, why a dunghill sends forth its filthy savour, but it is the corruption and putrefaction therein that is the cause; so here, the light of the law shining, and discovering sin and duty, is the occasion of sin's irritation and increase, but corruption itself is the cause. Well, so it is, that a man being under the law, is under the power of sin: How then can he live unto God, while under the law? Or, how can sanctification take place *while he is alive to the law*, or not *dead thereto*? These things may make it evident: I think that it is necessary that a man be dead to the law, and bro't from under it, before he can have true sanctification, or live unto God.

Secondly, Whence it is necessary, that a man be dead to the law in point of justification, in order to his living to God in point of sanctification: These particulars already mentioned, afford so many reasons of the necessity thereof: Yet some things more may be said, for the further clearing of this point, namely, the influence that dying to the law hath upon our living to God. Here two questions occur, 1. What influence living to the law hath upon a man's living in sin. 2. What influence a man's dying to the law hath upon his dying to sin, and living unto God.

First, What influence a man's living to the law, or being alive to the law, hath upon his living in sin. This is a strange doctrine, some may think; but it is as true as strange, that the law, and our
works

works of obedience to the law, while we are under it, is the cause of destruction, instead of salvation, *Rom. 9. 32.* There you see it destroyed the whole *Jewish* nation; *Israel* missed righteousness, because *they sought it by the works of the law.* Now, a man's being alive to the law, hath influence upon his living in sin, and so upon his destruction, in the following ways, 1. Because hereby he becomes more hardened in sin and security, while he thinks he hath some good work to bear him out, *Prov. 7. 14.* What made the filthy whore, there, impudent and hardened in her sins? Why? *I have peace-offerings with me, this day I have paid my vows.* Thus the *Pharisees* for a pretence made long prayers, and hereupon were hardened in their sinful courses, fearless of wrath: Why? I have done so and so. 2. Hereby they are kept from Christ, who only saves from sin. The works of the law step in betwixt them and Christ, and the man takes Christ's bargain off his hand, promising the same that Christ promised, even obedience to the law. *I delight to do thy will,* says Christ; nay, I'll do it my self, says the man that is under the law; he makes himself his own saviour: What! Will not God accept of my good and honest endeavours? Here is what he sets up on Christ's throne; but if Christ be pulled down from his throne, will it be sufficient that we set up an honest pretence in his room? They have some things to say for themselves, which, they hope, will bring them off before God. Thus they reject *Christ the lamb of God, that takes away the sin of the world;* and how then can they but live unto sin, whatever they may think of themselves? 3. Hereby their pride and boasting is cherished, *Rom. 4. 4.* *To him that worketh, is the reward not reckoned of grace, but of debt;* and the man expects his due for his work which he glories in; for *boasting is not excluded by the law of works, Rom. 3. 27.* and therefore the man is loath to part with his own righteousness, which is by the law; because of his pride, he will not stoop to live upon another, while he can shift for himself. Self-love will not suffer a man to think the worst of himself, so long as he is alive to the law; nay, I hope I have a good heart to God, and I'll do something that will please God; and so it is no little thing will bring him to *submit to the righteousness of God, Rom. 10. 3.* Thus the law cherishes his pride; and sure the proud man was never a holy man. But, 4. Hereby sin is strengthened and encreased, as I said before: The motions of sin are by the law, *Rom. 7. 5.* *The law entred, that sin might abound, Rom. 5. 20.* Not only as to the knowledge of it, which is by the law, but as to the actual out-breaking of it from the heart; like a river being bounded and damm'd up by the law, it swells and breaks out the more violently. The wicked nature of man, being

reproved, swells and rises like a snake brought to the fire. 5. Hereby the man becomes desperate, for the law says, there is no hope without a perfect obedience; and the man having wearied himself in doing nothing answerable to what the law requires, comes at last, perhaps, to see there is no hope, and so he dies in despair; I mean, he dies in sin, saying: *There is no hope, and therefore after idols I will go*: He flees away from God, as *Adam* did. 6. Hereby he becomes slavish also; the fear, torment and wrath, which the law brings along with it, when the penalty of it is seen, weakens the man's hands; and these lying like heavy loads upon the soul, it is thereby fettered and bound in prison, hence said to be *held in the law*; that being dead wherein we were held, says the apostle. The man is held, and shut up in the prison of the law, and so out of case for service while his bands are not loosed, or at best his service is *slavish*, and not *free*; the law holds him in prison, he cannot serve God freely. The free spirit of the gospel is what the world cannot receive, while under the law. Thus you may see what influence living to the law may have upon men's living in sin, so as they cannot *live unto God*.

Secondly, What influence a man's dying to the law hath upon his living unto God, or upon holiness and sanctification? *Ans.* It hath especially a twofold influence both a physical and a moral influence. And,

1. It hath a physical influence upon a man's sanctification, in regard that *a man that is dead to the law, is married to Christ*, Rom. 7. 4. and so necessarily the man must be holy, being disjoined from the law, and joined to the Lord Jesus, who hath satisfied the precept of the law by his obedience, and the penalty of the law by his death; and in him, not only have they thus a full discharge of all the demands and commands of the law; but also, by the implantation and inhabitation of his spirit, are created to a conformity to the image of God; and they cannot but live unto God. For, 1. In Christ they have life: Tho,' while *under the law, they were dead in sins and trespasses*, now in Christ they have life, and have it more abundantly; they are quickned by virtue of their union to this everlasting head; because he lives, they live also. A dead person can produce no living action, but Christ is the life of his people. *He that hath the Son, hath life*; and then, and never till then, is he in case for spiritual action and living unto God. *He that hath not the son of God, hath not life*: Vain men fancy within themselves, that they have not lost their life, and so they think they can do something that will please God, and profit themselves for justification and sanctification, even before ever they think of coming

coming to Christ; but we may as well expect, that a dead corps will rise of itself, and do the natural actions of life as to expect that you should rise, and act spiritually, before you be in Christ. That natural conscience indeed may be roused a little, and prevailed with to set about this and that duty; but there is no living unto God, till you get Christ: In him the believer hath life, even in his head; as a man cannot live without his head; but, being joined to this new head, and disjoined from the law, he cannot but live.

2. In Christ his new head and husband, he hath *light* as well as *Life*; as you know the eye is in the head, so the believer's eye is in Christ his light, whereby he sees sin and duty, sees to work, so as he may live to God. The man that is under the law, is in the dark, and cannot see to work the works of holiness, which is a living unto God. He is blinded with self-conceit; he sees not the vanity of his old covenant obedience, and he sees not the way of the new-covenant gospel-obedience, 'till he get the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of Christ, who is the light of the world, a light to lighten the Gentiles; by whose light the believer sees how to walk in a way well-pleasing to God.

3. In Christ his new head he hath *strength*: The man that is under the law, joined to it as his head, hath no *strength* for his work, & the law gives him none, and so he cannot live to God; but the believer can say, *In the Lord have I righteousness and strength*; whereas others have no strength to produce spiritual actions; sin domineers over them, and they have no power to shake off the yoke of sin, their strength being but weakness. The believer hath *strength* in his head; *all things are possible to them that believe, they can do all things thro' Christ strengthening them; they can overleap a wall, and break bows of steel in pieces*, O believer, *be strong in the grace that is in Christ!* O it is strange, the grace that is in him, is in thee, as the life that is in the heart is in the toe, the foot, the utmost members! There is a communication of vital strength and influences from the heart and head to all the members; the believer's grace is in Christ and the grace that is in Christ is in the believer. Here is a mystery to the world, but yet this mystery lies wrapt up in that word, *Be strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus*. If the grace that is in Christ, were not in the believer also, according to the measure of the communication, how could he be strong in the grace that is in Christ? *My grace shall be sufficient for thee, &c.*

4. In Christ his new head he hath liberty. Under the law the man is under bondage, and severe bondage to the command of perfect obedience, upon pain of death and damnation, and so under bondage to the curse of the law, and the fear of God's everlasting wrath; and so he can do nothing, he

hath no heart nor hand to serve God, he is bound neck and heel : But in Christ he hath liberty, *If the Son make you free, you are free indeed* ; free for service ; *Truly I am thy servant, thou hast loosed my bands*. Now he walks at liberty, yea, runs the way of God's commandments, when he does enlarge his heart. This is the glorious liberty of the children of God begun in time, whereby they are put in case to live unto God. Now he is at liberty to serve *cheerfully, being delivered from the hands of all his enemies, to serve him without fear, in holiness and righteousness before God all the days of his life*. Now he is at liberty to serve *spiritually, the spirit of Christ being put within him, and causing him to walk in God's statutes* ; and now he is at liberty to serve *hopefully, knowing that his labour shall not be in vain in the Lord* ; tho' while under the law, his labour was but vain labour. Now he is at liberty to serve *acceptably, being accepted in the beloved*, Eph. 1. 6. that is, not only for his sake, for there is much more in it, he being our head, and we members of his body, and he as our head having performed perfect obedience to the *precept* of the law, and complete satisfaction to the *penalty* of the law, the head having done it, the whole is reputed as having done it, and so we are accepted in him : His *doing* is ours, because we are in him, as our head, *accepted in the beloved* ; our persons are accepted in him, and next our performances and duties. O what sweet liberty is here ! what a sweet foundation for spiritual and acceptable service and living unto God ! But this leads me next to shew,

2. That it hath a moral influence upon sanctification. A man's being dead to the law, disjoined from it, and joined to Christ, hath not only a *physical*, but also a *moral* influence, in regard that hereby he is constrain'd sweetly to live unto God, 2 Cor. 5. 14, 15. *The love of Christ constraineth us*. If we have not love at the root of our actions, love to a God in Christ, *we are but empty vines, that bring forth fruit to ourselves* ; it is but *self-love*, which is not fruit unto God, or living unto him. The *natural* way of man's thinking is, we should serve God, that he may save us ; but the *gospel* way is, he saves us, that we may serve him. What made Paul say, *Being dead to the law, I live unto God* ? Why ? in the next *verse* he enlarges on it, *I live to him, who loved me, and gave himself for me*. Be all of you persuaded of this ; or else, as the Lord lives, you will die in a delusion ; that if you have not love to God, you have not a spark of holiness, tho' you should pray all your days, and work ever to hard. *I will circumcise their hearts to love me*, is the promise ; and this love is the heart and life of religious duties. Now, you cannot have love, unless you see somewhat more or less of his love

to you: We are naturally *enemies to God*, tho' we cannot get one of a thousand that will take with it. They think they have a love to God. God forbid, say they, that we should be enemies. Nay, but I tell you in the name of God, whether you will hear it or not, that as you are enemies by nature, and born with a dagger of enmity in your heart and hand against God; so, till you get somewhat of *the knowledge of God as in Christ, reconciling the world to himself*, this enmity will never be killed. Now, I say, it is the believer in Christ, *who being dead to the law*, and joined to the Lord, hath this love; and this *love constrains him*, so as he brings forth fruit unto God, and lives unto him, *Rom. 7. 4.* Being dead to the law, & married to Christ, he brings forth fruit unto God. The believer hath sufficient encouragement to make him live unto God; he sees Christ hath satisfied divine justice, *fulfilled all the righteousness of the law*, that he hath done that which is imprestible by us; & when by faith he beholds this, he is encouraged to serve God. Hence, says the Psalmist, *There is mercy with thee, that thou mayest be feared.* Might he not have said, *there is majesty with thee, that thou mayest be feared?* The matter is, the *majesty* of God would make the sinner flee from God, as *Adam* did, when he heard his voice in the garden; but his *mercy* makes us fear and love him, serve & obey him; *Then they shall fear the Lord and his goodness*, says the prophet, *Hos. 3. 5.* If a man hath no faith at all of God's goodness, no hope of his favour in Christ, where is his purity and holiness? Nay, it is he that hath this hope, that purifies himself as he is pure. I know not what experience you have, sirs, but some of us know, that when our souls are most comforted and enlarged with the faith of God's favour thro' Christ, and with the hope of his goodness, then we have most heart to duties; and when thro' unbelief we have harsh tho'ts of God, as an angry Judge, then we have no heart to duties and religious exercises; and I persuade myself, this is the experience of the saints in all ages.

But, that this moral influence, which dying to the law, or covenant of works, hath upon living to God, or holiness and sanctification, may be further evident: Let us consider, how the law to the believer, having now lost its legal or old covenant-form, and being put into a gospel-form, and changed from the law of works into a covenant of grace, or the law in the hand of Christ; every part of it now constrains the believer to obedience and sanctification, in a most loving manner. The gospel-law, or the law of grace, which he is now under, is a chariot paved with love. The law, in the hand of Christ, hath now another face, even a smiling face, in all the commands, promises, threatenings, and in the whole form thereof.

First, The *commands* of the law, in the hand of Christ, have lost their old covenant form, and are full of love. The command of the law of works, is, *do, and live*; but in the hand of Christ, it is, *live, and do*: The command of the law of works, is, *do, or else be damned*; but the law in the hand of Christ is, *I have delivered thee from hell and damnation, therefore do*: The command of the law of works is, *do in thy own strength*; but the law in the hand of Christ is, *I am thy strength*, my strength shall be perfected in thy weakness, therefore *do*. The command is *materially* the same, but the *form* is different. The command of the law of works is, *do perfectly*, that you may have eternal life; but now, in the hand of Christ, the *form* is, *I have given thee eternal life, in me, and by my doing*; and therefore do as perfectly as you can, thro' my grace, till you come to a state of perfection. The command, I say, is the same *materially*; for I do not join with these who insinuate, as if here less obedience were required than under the law of works: Tho' less be accepted in these who have a perfect obedience in their head, yet no less is required, tho' not in the old covenant form. And as the command is *materially* the same, so the authority enjoining obedience is *originally* the same, yet vastly distinct, in that the command of the law is the command of God out of Christ, an absolute God and Judge; but now, under grace, it is the command of a God in Christ, a Father in him. And sure I am, that the authority of a commanding God is not lessened, or lost, that the command is now in the hand of Christ. Christ is God, co-equal and co-essential with the Father: And as God's authority to judge is not lost or lessened, in that all judgment is committed to the Son; so his authority to command is not lost or lessened, in that the law is in the hand of Christ. Nay, it is not lessened, but it is sweetened and made amiable, lovely and desirable to the believer, constraining him to obedience, in that the law is in the hand of his head, his Lord, and his God. The end that he hath in commanding, and that they should have in obeying, is now distinct, and different from what took place under the law of works. The end that he hath in commanding, is not to lay a heavy yoke of duties on their necks, to be born by their own strength; nor, tho' performed by his strength, to be a righteousness for their justification, or a condition of life; but only to shew his holy nature, that will not have a lawless people; to shew his great grace, that condescends to seek our service; to grace and beautify his people, their chief happiness consisting in a conformity to his will; that his people may get good, which is necessarily joined to duties, and connected thereto by the promises; that he may have something to commend

mend his people for; and that he may without a complement have ground to say, *Well done, good and faithful servants*; that by them he may have matter of condemnation against the rest of the world, who walk not in his commandments. In a word, he commands, that his sovereignty may be kept up, and the sense thereof, in the hearts of his people; and that, by his word of command, he may (as many times he doth) convey strength to do what he calls to; and, in case of shortcoming, to drive them out of themselves, under a sense of weakness and sinfulness, in to Jesus Christ, *the end of the law*, for strength to sanctify, *as well as for righteousness* to justify: For these, & such like ends, does the Lord command. And then the end that they should have in obeying, is not to satisfy conscience, nor to satisfy justice, to purchase heaven, or the like; but to *glorify God, to edify our neighbour, and to testify our gratitude to God & Christ*, that hath delivered us from the law, as a covenant. 2. The promises of the law, in the hand of Christ, have lost their old covenant-form, and are full of love. The law of works promises eternal life, as a reward of our doing, or obedience; and here the reward is a reward of debt: But the law, in the hand of Christ, promises a reward of grace to gospel obedience, especially as it is an evidence of union to him, in whom all the promises are yea and amen. Eternal life was promised in the covenant of redemption to Christ, upon his perfect obedience, who paid that debt, when he came under the law of works for us; and now, eternal life being won to the believer in Christ, as the reward of Christ's obedience to the death, there is no other reward of debt that now takes place. Rewards of grace are now come in fashion, and this heartens the believer to live unto God, that in the way of gospel-obedience, there is a gracious promise of sweet communion and fellowship with God; *He that loves me and keeps my commandments, I will love him and manifest myself to him, and my Father will love him*, Joh. 14. 21. Here there is a fatherly promise of God's favour, and familiarity with him; yea, there is a promise of heaven itself, in the way of gospel-obedience, and sanctification: A right to heaven is purchased by the blood of Christ, and the believer is the young heir of glory; but his possession of heaven is suspended till he be fit for it, till he do some business for his Father, and be made meet for the inheritance of the saints in light. Here is sweet encouragement he hath, to live unto God. 3. The threatenings of the law, in the hand of Christ, have lost their old covenant form, quality and nature, and are now turned to threatenings, out of love: There is no such threatening now to the believer, If thou do not, thou shalt die. The penalty of

of the law of works is condemnation and eternal death, which the believer hath no cause to fear, being dead to the law, any more than a living wife needs to fear the threatening of her dead husband: *There is no condemnation to them that are in Christ.* He that believes in him, shall never die. Believers are under no threatening of eternal wrath, because under grace. It is a high expression that blessed RUTHERFORD hath to this purpose, *The gospel, says he, forbids nothing under pain of damnation to a justified believer, more than to Jesus Christ.* Tho' the sins of believers deserve hell, and the intrinick demerit of sin is still the same, yea, I think the sins of believers, being against so much love and so many mercies, deserve a thousand hells, where others deserve one; yet being dead to the law, he hath no vindictive wrath to fear, the blood of Christ having quenched the fire of God's wrath, *Rom. 5. 9. While we were sinners, Christ died for us; and much more now being justified by his blood, we are saved from wrath thro' him.* And sure he is not to fear that which God calls him to believe he is saved from. His slavish fear therefore is from unbelief, which weakens his hands in duties. But now the law in the hand of Christ hath threatenings and punishments, but they are fatherly and loving. A short view of them you may read, *Psal. 89. 30. 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 transgression with the rod, and their iniquities with stripes. Nevertheless, my loving kindness will not utterly take from him, nor suffer my faithfulness to fail: My covenant will I not break: Once have I sworn &c. q. d.* Tho' I will not send them to hell, nor deprive them of heaven, no more than I will break my great oath to my eternal Son; yet, like a father, I'll chastise them, I'll correct them for their faults, I'll squeeze them in the mortar of affliction, and press out the corrupt juice of old Adam that is in them; yea, I'll hide my face, I'll deny them that communion and fellowship with me which sometimes they had, and give them terror instead of comfort, and bitterness instead of sweetness: And filial fear of these fatherly chastisements will do more to influence the believer to holiness, and obedience, than all the unbelieving fears of hell and wrath can do. Fear lest he want that sweetness of God's presence, which sometimes he hath had, will make him say to his sins and lusts, as the fig-tree in *Jotham's* parable, Shall I leave my sweetness, and be king over you? O, shall I leave all the sweetness that I have enjoyed with God, and engage with base lusts and idols? And hence, when the believer hath gone aside and backslid, what is it that brings him back to God? He finds the Lord breaking him many ways, and he reflects thro'

thro' grace upon this sometimes, O how I am now deprived of these sweet blinks that once I enjoyed? Therefore I'll go and return to my first husband, for then it was better with me than now. Yea, his freedom from law-threatnings, and being only under fatherly correction, when he sees this, it breaks his heart, and melts it more than all the fire of hell could do. The slavish fear of vindictive wrath discourages him, and weakens his hands in duties, and makes him run away from God; but the filial fear of fatherly wrath, which is kindly, is a motive of love that encourages him to his duty. Which of these motives think you will work up the believer to most obedience, *viz.* This legal one, O my wrathful judge will send me to hell, if I do so and so; or this gospel one? O my God and Father in Christ Jesus will be angry at me, and deny me his love-tokens? I am sure the former works upon enmity, and raises it, but this works upon love, and inflames it. *Quest.* Ought not the believer to live unto God, even without respect to the threatning of fatherly chastisement and punishment? *Ans.* No doubt the more perfect his obedience is, the better and the more like to the obedience of the saints in heaven, where no chastisement is feared; but while he is here, he carries a body of sin about him, and needs to be stirred up by fatherly correction: He should indeed serve God purely out of love and respect to the command itself, and because he commands it; but thus the matter stands, that as on the one hand, being perfect in his head Christ Jesus, it is not his duty to have respect to what the law of works either promises or threatens; so on the other hand, being imperfect in himself while here, it is his duty to have respect to what the law in the hand of Christ promises and threatens, which indeed is a loving respect, tending to advance holiness.

4. The whole form of the law, as a covenant of works, being thus altered, the law in the hand of Christ, is all love, all grace, and so influences the man to sanctification. The man that is under the covenant of grace, hath a principle of grace within him, striving against sin; he hath the spirit of grace within him, causing him to *walk in God's statutes*; he hath the promise of *grace to be sufficient for him*; if sin prevail, & pollute him, he hath daily access to the *fountain open for sin and uncleanness*, to which he runs; if his backslidings encrease, he hath Christ engaged by promise to *heal his backslidings*: Which, when he views by faith, it does not encourage him to sin, if he be in his wits, but draws him to his duty, like a cord of love, and brings him back to his kind Lord. In a word, being dead to the law, he is married to Christ, who is like a green fir-tree, from whom all his fruit is found. Thus you see what influence

fluence a man's being dead to the law, hath upon his living unto God. And thus much for the 4th head I propos'd.

FIFTH HEAD.

The *Fifth* thing in the method, was the application. Is it so, that being dead to the law in point of justification, is necessary in order to living unto God in point of sanctification? Then, for *information*, hence we may see,

I. That the doctrine of the gospel is not a doctrine of licentiousness, or carnal liberty, however it be reproach'd in the world; and if the preachers thereof, who would bring off people from the law of works, and from their self-righteousness, be reproach'd, as if they were enemies to holiness, I'll venture to say it with confidence, in a place where falshood should be an abomination, that it is a vile slander: For whatever sinful weakness and imperfection may cleave to the preaching or practice of these, who desire to publish this gospel doctrine, yet the Lord God of gods is witness, yea, the Lord God of gods knows, and all *Israel* may know, and all whose eyes God enlightens shall know, that this doctrine of dying to the law in point of justification, is a doctrine according to godliness, and the very means of holiness itself, and of living unto God. If this be *Antinomianism*, I am content to be called an *Antinomian*. But we see who are indeed *Antinomians*, and enemies to the law and to holiness, even all these who oppose this doctrine, whereby we give the law all the honour imaginable. *Do we make void the law thro' faith? God forbid, yea, we establish the law;* as a covenant we establish it, while we preach Christ as our righteousness for justification; and as a rule of holiness we establish it, while we preach Christ as our strength for sanctification of heart and life. And they that do not thus honour the law, do but disgrace and dishonour it, and are truly *Antinomians, i. e.* Enemies to the law. And if this be call'd a *new scheme* of doctrine, by way of reproach, tho' I confess it is a *new covenant scheme*, in opposition to that of the *old*, yet I'll grant to no man that it is new otherwise; seeing it is not only as old as *Paul* here, but as old as the first publication of the covenant of grace in paradise. So that we see where it is that the reproach of a *new scheme* should be lodged. I would have reproachers to remember what *Paul* says of this doctrine of his, *Gal. 1. 8. If we, or an angel from heaven, preach another gospel, let him be accursed.* Here is the doom of such as preach another gospel, which yet, says the apostle, is not another; but there are some that trouble the Lord's people, and would pervert the gospel of Christ. To be dead to the law, is not to turn a loose *Antinomian*; it is to live unto God.

2. Hence

2. Hence see the reason why the devil opposes the doctrine of grace so much, and cares not tho' the law, as a covenant, be ever so much preached up, because it is the gospel doctrine that tends only to true godliness, while the law and legal doctrine tends to keep men strangers to the life of God. The devil cares not how much you be in duties, providing you keep off from Christ, who is the end of the law for righteousness, for then he knows you would be holy also; but he is an unholy devil, and therefore he opposes the gospel, and its doctrine. The devil knows that he hath a sure hold of you, so long as you have a hold of the law; but that he hath lost you, if once you have got to Christ: For if once you get Christ for justification, as having fulfilled the righteousness of the law for you, then you'll also get him for sanctification, to fulfil the righteousness of the law in you. The devil knows, that tho' in seeming holiness you should be transformed to an angel of light, like himself, yet you lie under the heavy vengeance of God, and curse of the law, and under the power of sin too, so long as you are under the law. Therefore,

3. Hence see the reason why the most part of the world are living to sin, living to self, living to the world, living to the devil; Why? because they are not dead to the law. They only that are dead to the law, do live unto God; and surely then, they that are alive to the law, and not dead to it, are living to the devil. No man that is alive to the law, can be a holy man, or a godly man: Nay, what is the reason of all the ungodliness & unrighteousness, all the profanity and wickedness of this generation? Why? People are strangers to Christ, and are still under the irritating power of the law, which is the strength of sin. The world is crying up *mortality*, as if the preachers of Christ and his righteousness were enemies to the moral law, as a rule of holiness; and behold, in the righteous judgment of God, there was never a generation left to greater *immoralities*; a just punishment of men's despising Christ, and his law-biding righteousness, through the faith whereof only true holiness and conformity to the law can be attained. O when the believer gets to see by faith, that he hath nothing to do with the law as a covenant, this makes him delight in the law of God, as a rule of holiness; when he sees he hath not a farthing of debt to pay, either to the precept or threatening of the law as a covenant, because that debt was paid by Christ's obedience to the death, this makes him find himself under the most grateful obligations to serve the Lord, in obedience to his law, as a rule; yea, under a greater obligation than ever *Adam* was in the state of innocency; but the rest of the world that are utter stran-

gers to this freedom, are in bondage to the law, and so in bondage to their lusts.

4. Hence we may see the necessity of a law-work of conviction and humiliation, and how much of it is necessary, even as much as will render him dead to the law, that he may live unto God. So much conviction is necessary, as will unbottom the man from the covenant of works, and make him disclaim his own righteousness, and cry out, Unclean, unclean, guilty, guilty; that thus his self-confidence may be killed, and he thro' the law may be dead to the law, and may creep under the covert of the blood of the lamb, under the covert of the righteousness of Christ for justification, that being dead to the law, he may live unto God. While men are without this law-work, rendring them dead to the law, they are at best but establishing a righteousness of their own, which will keep them out of heaven, as much as their sins will do. And this makes the gate of heaven to be indeed a strait gate, because *many seek to enter in, in a legal way, and shall not be able, Luke 13. 24.* And this makes the way broad that leads unto hell, so broad, that it lets in all that are out of Christ, both the *openly wicked*, and the *self-righteous*. There is but one way to heaven, and that is *Christ*: But there are many ways to hell; especially these *two*, some walk in a more *cleanly way of self-righteousness*, and others in a more *dirty way of open wickedness*, but both meet together at the end of the way, and that is the *center of damnation*. O what need, then, is there of a law-work, to convince the wicked of their sins, and the self-righteous of their need of a better righteousness, that *being dead to the law, they may live to God!*

5. Hence we may see whence it is that believers live so little to God, and are so untender and unholy: It flows from this, that they are not perfectly dead to the law, nor perfectly freed from it: Much of a legal spirit remains; and the more that takes place, the more unholy they are. Tho' they have shaken off, in conversion, the authority of the covenant of works as a prince, which is a great matter; yet they are many times under the authority hereof as an usurper, by reason of the old legal nature, which is but partly renewed in time: And hence the voice of the law speaks many times in the believer's conscience, and he is terrified, at the voice of it; for it presumes to curse him, and to bid him do, or else be damned; and so it weakens his hands, and makes him think God is a hard master: Whereas the voice of the gospel in his conscience, is the still, calm voice, sweetly intreating, and alluring the heart to its obedience, conveying a secret strength to obey, and making the soul delight in the Lord's way, *Song 1. 4.*

Draw me, we will run. But what should the believer do, when the law comes to chide him, and command him to obey upon *pain of death*, or to curse him for his *disobediencce*? Why, he may even say in the words of *Luther*, who, upon the point of justification, was as found as any since his day, *O LAW, Christ is my righteousness, my treasure and my work; I confess, O law, that I am neither godly nor righteous, but yet this I am sure of, that he is godly and righteous for me.* His obedience answered both the godliness required in the first table of the law, and the righteousness required in the second table. The believer may say to the law, *O law, I am dead to thee, and married to another husband, even Jesus Christ;* and therefore, cannot bring forth any children, any fruit, any acts of obedience to thy threatening commands: But, behold, I run to my sweet husband, who hath suggered and sweetned the law, with a *gospel dress and form;* which giving strength to obey, and shewing the believer's freedom from the *wrath of God*, encourages the believer (as our *confession of faith* speaks) being free from the curse of the moral law, and delivered from everlasting damnation, to yield obedience to God, not out of *slavish fear*, but a *child-like love* and a *willing mind*.

6. Hence see how it is, that *holiness is necessary to salvation.* Why, it is the *very life* of the justified man, *being dead to the law, to live unto God:* He is not *holy* that he may be *justified*, but *justified* that he may be *holy.* I do not here meddle with the question, *whether regeneration or justification be first in order of nature?* For I am speaking mainly, not of habitual holiness, or the first habit of grace, but of *actual holiness*, whether internal in the *exercise* of grace, or external in the *performance* of duty. Thus holiness, I say, is necessary to salvation, as being the native, necessary, and inseparable *fruit of justification*, or dying to the law; it is the justified man's way of living, or walking towards heaven. They that *turn the grace of God into wantonness*, pervert the right end of grace, which teaches us to *deny ungodliness, and worldly lusts;* and they that give up with the law as a *rule of holiness*, because they are, or think they are delivered from the law as a *covenant of works*, pervert the very end of that freedom, which is that *they may live unto God;* and no doubt, many among believers themselves are in danger of this sin: For I know no sin but what a believer is liable to, if he be *left to himself.* And because many of them abuse grace, therefore God keeps the law spur at their side; for it is with many, as with dull lazy horses, so long as the spur is in their side, they ride quickly, but when that is removed, they become dull and heavy, and are ready to stand still: So while the law exacted *rigid obedience*, and

threatned

threatned damnation and hell, they were diligent, and durst not baulk a duty; they were tender in their walk: But now being delivered from this spur that was daily pricking their sides, and seeing that Christ hath satisfied the law, which now can neither justify nor condemn them, they imagine they have no more to fear, and so they sin the more, and *live securely*, instead of *living soberly, righteously, and godly*: This is a *turning the grace of God into wantonness*, and a perverting of the very end of grace. And if any child of God here be guilty, remember your father will not let you pass unpunished; tho' he *pardon your sins*, yet he will take *vengeance on your inventions*. It is to prevent this wantonness in some, that the spur is kept long in their side, and they are held many days and years, perhaps, under many *legal shakings, fears, doubts and tremblings*, attaining to very little of any cheerful gospel-obedience; for the law cannot work that. And this leads me to another inference.

7. Hence, from this doctrine, we may see, that the law can neither justify nor sanctify a sinner; it cannot justify him, for he must be *dead* to it in *point of justification*; it cannot sanctify him, for he never *lives unto God* till he be *dead to the law*. On the one hand, *by the deeds of the law, no flesh living can be justified*. Why? Because you're dead in sin by nature, and can do nothing that the law requires, in the way that it requires it; and tho' you would do any thing, yet your doing is imperfect, but the law requires *perfection*; yea, tho' you could obey the law perfectly for the time to come, that will not make amends for *former faults*, there must be satisfaction; yea, suppose it were possible that you could do all this, and that from your cradle to your grave you never sinned, and were as free of *original sin*, and had as good a nature as ever *Pelagius* tho't any had, and *strength* to keep the law, and did actually keep it *perfectly from your youth up*, yet the *law of works* is broken in *Adam*, in him we *all sinned*, and that one *sin* is enough to *damn the whole world*, and would do so, if Christ did not redeem from the guilt thereof. On the other hand, the law cannot sanctify any, it works wrath, and when *the commandment comes, sin revives*; it is *the ministration of death every way*, as I said before. *Quest.* If it can neither justify nor sanctify, what use is it for? *Ans.* It is for many *noble uses*, both to the *regenerate* and *unregenerate*: To the *unregenerate*, it is of use to convince him of sin, to *break up the fallow ground of the heart*; to be a *schoolmaster to lead to Christ*, by convincing him of his absolute need of a surety, and of his undone state without Christ. And to the *regenerate*, it is of use to make him highly esteem Christ, whose righteouseworks answers the *law* both in its *commands & threatenings*;

nings; and it serves to give him a daily *conviction* of sin; and that the man may more and more prize the *pardon of sin*, and seek daily in to the Lord for pardoning and sanctifying grace: Also to let him see the *intrinsic demerit of sin*, while he sees hell threatned against it in that *covenant*; and thereupon may fear to offend that *God, who is a consuming fire*, so as he may worship him with *reverence and godly fear*; not with a slavish fear, that he shall be sent to hell, which is impossible, that is not his duty: he may have the over-awing fear and apprehension of hell, but should not have a slavish fear of it: This fear of it he should not have, but the faith of it he ought to have, and many times needs to have it, to deter him from sin, which of its own nature leads to destruction; as a man that is bound with a great chain to a stake on the top of a high tower, tho' he cannot but know, that by reason of the chain he is sure enough; yet when he looks over the battlement, and sees the *dreadful precipice*, he is afraid of going near the edge of the *battlement*. It is certain, that believers, when they know not that they are under grace, may unwarrantably apply to themselves the sentence of the law; unwarrantably, I say, because *there is no condemnation to them that are in Christ*; yet God may, for holy ends, suffer his conscience to be troubled with the *fear of condemnation*, that being humbled, he may make the more use of Christ for righteousness and strength. In a word, the *commands* of the law, not *formally* as a covenant, but *materially* as a *rule of life*, serve to be an active *directory* for his walk; and whoever walks according to this rule, *peace be on them, and on all the Israel of God, &c.* Thus it is of manifold use, tho' it can neither *justify* nor *sanctify*, which only the grace of the gospel can do.

8. Hence see what a mystery to the world religion is, and the difference betwixt God's judgment and man's. Man thinks, to be dead to the law, is the way to live in sin; but God's word tells us, *that to be dead to the law, is the way to live unto God*: Why? here is a mystery, a holy riddle. And are we decrying holiness, when we preach in this apostolical strain? God forbid; nay, we declare unto you in the name of God, that the way to be *truly holy*, is to lay aside *your false legal holiness*; the way to be *truly righteous*, is to lay aside *your legal righteousness*: Yea, I tell you, sirs, that even in *point* of sanctification, *Except your righteousness exceed the righteousness of the Scribes and Pharisees, you shall not enter into the kingdom of God*; and you know, they made long prayers, they fasted twice a week, and gave alms of all that they possessed; and some of them were, *touching the law, blameless*, and could say, *All these things have I done from my youth up*; and yet I say, unless your holiness exceed their

holiness, you shall never *enter into the kingdom of God*. And till your unrighteous righteousness, and unholy holiness, be cried down in your heart, and the perfect righteousness of Christ cried up, true holiness you shall never have. Was Christ a friend to publicans and harlots? or, did he approve of their sins; when he said to these *Pharisees, Publicans and harlots go into the kingdom of God before you? Mat. 21. 31*. O beware of such blasphemous tho'ts of a holy Jesus; nay, so far from that, that we may hence gather his abhorrence of their sins; only he would give us to know, that if sin keep them out of heaven, as much and more will self-righteousness keep out the *Pharisee*, who must be rid of his righteousness, as well as his sins, before he gets there. O but religion is a mystery! to be *dead to the law*, in order to *live unto God*.

9. Hence we may see the miserable state of these that are *alive*, and the happy state of these that are *dead to the law*. Their state is miserable that are *alive to the law*; for tho' *they have a name to live, yet they are dead*, legally dead, bound over to the *wrath of God*, and under the *curse of the law*; spiritually dead in sin, having no holiness, no godliness acceptable to God thro' Jesus Christ: If they be any way awakened, and seek life by the law, and the works thereof, what a madness is this to *seek the living among the dead?* or to seek help where it cannot be had? God hath laid all our help upon Christ, and it is impossible to find justification or sanctification any where else. But on the other hand, their state is happy who are *dead to the law*; for tho' they be dead, yet they live; they live a life of justification, and a life of sanctification thereupon; being *dead to the law, they live unto God*. O what a mercy is it, if God hath awakened your consciences, convinced you of sin and self-righteousness, and brought you off from the law! You see your extreme guilt, vileness, baseness, and wickedness, and it may be are groaning under the sense thereof; but God may have a glorious design in this, to bring you more and more off from the law, and from any confidence in the flesh, that you may build upon a better foundation, and be married to a better husband, even to Jesus Christ, that you may *bring forth fruit unto God*.

10. Hence see the malignity of a legal spirit: If we must be *dead to the law, that we may live unto God*, then a legal spirit and temper must be a wicked and ungodly spirit: It is an *ignorant* spirit; if they were not *ignorant of God's righteousness*, they would never *establish a righteousness of their own*; but they are ignorant of the perfection of his law, the terror of his justice, the severity of his tribunal, and of their own natural weakness and wickedness, otherwise they would not dare to make any thing a ground of their

their acceptance with God, except the blood and righteousness of his Son. It is a *proud* spirit, that will not let *grace* be exalted, but puts *self* in the throne of Christ, and his righteousness. It is a *filthy* and *abominable* spirit, and pollutes the man more and more; and God abhors it, as that which contradicts his most glorious design. And it is a *damning* spirit, if he be not removed; *For the wicked shall be turned into hell*: And this man continues wicked still, even under the pretence of holiness; he is wicked and ungodly still, for he lives to himself, but not to God; for is is only these that are *dead to the law, who live unto God*. I proceed to an

USE of Examination. Try your state then, my brethren: You should try *after*, as well as *before* a communion; and there are two things you should try here, 1. Whether you be *dead to the law* in point of justification? 2. Whether you be *living to the law, or living to God* in point of sanctification? Two as necessary points as are in all divinity, and such as are of the utmost concern in time, and through eternity.

1. Try whether you be *dead to the law* in point of justification. I might here tell you *marks* of these that are *alive to the law*, and then *marks* of these that are *dead to the law*; but seeing these will coincide, I join them together. I shall not multiply marks, but you may try by these following, 1. The man that is *dead to the law*, hath got a sight of himself in the glass of the law, and of his natural legal temper. Some think they have a good heart to God, and they can do so and so; but the believer, *dead to the law*, sees his heart the worst piece in or about him, and that he cannot believe, he cannot repent, he cannot mortify sin; corruption is like the giants of *Anak*. The man sees he is vile, with *Job, behold I am vile!* In every duty, in praying, communicating, *behold I am vile!* He sees himself, and he sees his own legal temper. The man that is *alive to the law* never sees his *legal temper*, nor his strong inclination to *self-righteousness*: The believer sees and finds something of this, even after he is made a *gospel-saint*; but the *legalists* never see it. What, say they, would you have us *Papists*? Blessed be God, we are better instructed, we have no *merit*, our righteousness is *rags*; and yet, after all, there is a secret *trusting in their own righteousness*, they never see themselves leaning upon themselves. Hath it ever been one exercise to you, how to be rid of your sins? and another, how to be rid of your righteousness? 2. The man that is *dead to the law*, is tired out of it: May be, he hath been convinced of sin, and thereupon falling to the law, to this and the other duty; O I deserve hell, for my sin is great: Well, he endeavours to make amends, and to find peace: and so he runs to *prayer*,

and *preaching*, thinking he will *get peace*; he *repents*, he *resolves*; and wo to the man that finds all his peace there, without going further. But, behold, the man whom God shews mercy to, he *goes on in these duties*, but finds no peace, no rest, no satisfaction; he is tired out of it, his soul sinks with *discouragement*, and *languishes* and hangs down the head; and God thus unbottoms the man of himself: Whereas, he that is *alive to the law*, he that takes up his rest and comfort in his *duty*, he hath the *fear* of *wrath* to come, and then he runs to *duty*, the duty gives him *ease*, he is relieved, all is well; as a husband comforts his distress'd wife, so obedience to the law comforts him, and the law heals him; it is the law that *throws him down*, and it is the law that *raises him up again*: Whereas, the man that is *dead to the law*, tho' the law *terrify*, yet it is not the law that *satisfies* him again. 3. The man that is *dead to the law*, knows what it is to act from Christ as his *principle*, and to him as his *end*; he knows what it is to perform duty from a *borrowed strength*: The *legalist* may indeed speak soundly, and say, *he can do nothing of himself without Christ*; and yet he *reads, prays, preaches, hears, communicates* and does all, as if he had the power in his own hand. Let a man have ever such an *orthodox head*, if he be not a believer in Christ, he is *Arminian* and *Pelagian* all over, he knows not his own weakness, he looks not up for *immediate influences*: And as self is his *principle*, so to self he acts as his *end*. As he that is joined to Christ brings forth children, or fruit unto Christ; so he that is joined to the law, brings forth children to the law. He does duty, it may be, to hush the *clamours of conscience*, and give it *ease*, to keep himself out of hell, for he hath no will to be damn'd, and for the like ends. The believer being *dead to the law*, cannot perform duty, but by *borrowed strength*; he can do nothing till a *gale of the spirit* come: he cannot bring forth children, till the *spirit of God* beget them in his soul: No, no, every act of grace flows from a *creating power*; and when he acts, the love of Christ especially, and desire of *communion and fellowship with God*, constrain him, and the glory of God in Christ is his great end. 4. The believer that is *dead to the law* hath *vilifying thoughts* of all he does; the *legalist* overvalues his duties. *Wherefore have we fasted, and thou hast not seen? Wherefore have we prayed, and thou hast not heard?* They challenge God as if he were unjust, for not giving them what they merit. *God, I thank thee*, said the *Pharisee*, *I am not as other men*; it was like a proud boasting of what he had done: But let the believer spend days and nights in prayer and that with much *liberty and enlargement*; yet the result of the work is, *O my righteousness is filthy rags, a menstruous cloth*; Wo to me, if I be not found in Christ, for

for my best duties deserve damnation: I find my praying, my worshipping, my communicating full of *atheism, unbelief, formality and hypocrisy*. The legalist over-rates his duties; he thinks more of what he hath done, than of what Christ hath done, and more of his praying on earth than of Christ's pleading in heaven; he thinks more of his *tears* than of *Christ's blood*; he is proud of his humility, and never duly humbled. 5. The believer that is *dead to the law*, so far as he is dead thereto, his complaints and his comforts move in a *gospel channel*. The legalist will complain more for want of holiness, than for want of Christ: Seeing he hath taken up with a self-righteousness, it is his *all*, it is his *happiness*, it is his *husband*, it is his *God*; and when it is wanting, he cannot but be troubled. But the language of the man *dead to the law*, is, *O for Christ! O for a day of power!* O to be wrapt up in the covenant of grace, to get an omnipotent power, determining me to comply with the gospel offer! His comforts move in a gospel channel; whereas the legalist finds comfort in law-works, even in all his *extremities* in time. In the prospect of trouble, what *comforts* him? Even this, that he hath done many *good duties*; he wraps up himself in a garment of his own weaving. Under challenges of conscience, what comforts him, and gives him peace? He even covers himself with the same robe. In the prospect of judgment, what comforts him, and gives him peace? Why, he hopes God will be *merciful* to him, because he hath had a *good profession*, and said many *good prayers*, and done many *good duties*. But, *O sorry peace-maker*; the only thing that gives a believer peace and ease in these cases, is the *law-biding righteousness of Christ*, under which he desires to shroud himself; he flees to the blood of Christ, *O I am undone, unless my soul be wrapt up in the mantle of Christ's perfect righteousness*; I desire to be found in him; upon this righteousness of Jesus do I venture my soul; I have no shift but this. The legalist, I said, comforts himself in all his extremities with the law, till the last extremity come, and then he finds himself *cheated*: And hence, *O what a mercy is it*, that the Lord drains a man of his *legal comfort*, that he may unhinge him *off the law*, and of his *self-confidence*! Oft-times, when God is bringing home his elect, he makes all the common work they had before to disappear. It may be they had a *profession*, were *morally serious*, they had *zeal*, *prayed with life*, *heard with affection*; but behold now all the streams of common influences are dried up; the poor soul finds he cannot *pray*, he cannot *shed a tear*, tho' he should be cast into hell; yea, he cannot think a right thought, tho' it should bring him to heaven; nay, he finds his heart hardened like a devil, and his mind bemisted with the

darkness of hell. Why? this is all in love, to drive him out of himself, and out of the law, to the dear Son of God. 6. The believer that is *dead to the law*, is content to have his righteousness tried, and compared with the perfect law. As Christ is the *Lord his righteousness*, and this he knows is sufficient to answer all the demands and commands of the law, and he is *not ashamed of this righteousness*, but glories in it; so, as to his works of holiness, whatever shortcoming he is sensible of, yet he is content to be tried with the *clearest light*. Let omniscience descend, and make a critical search; *Search me, O God, and see if there be any wicked way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting*; I do not love to die with a lie in my right-hand; let all the inward corners of my heart be laid open before me; I am satisfied to know if I have a lawful husband, or not, if Christ be my husband or not: He is content to be tried. But the legalist, the man that is *alive to the law*, a *searching sermon* is uneasy to him, a *gospel-sermon*, he cannot abide, a narrow trial he cannot endure; he thinks that the minister is too impartial to cast us all to hell; he hath *stolen goods*, and therefore *dreads the light*. Yea, 7. The man that is *dead to the law*, he hath got a *soul-humbling sight* and view of the *glory of Christ's righteousness*, that made him quit with all his legal rags as *lofs and dung*; even as the stars vanish out of sight when the sun arises. O hath Christ's glory ever shined into your heart, my brethren, and made you see thousands of worlds to be nothing to him, thousands of righteousnesses of men and angels to be nothing to his? Have you seen an *utter impossibility* of obtaining *God's favour by any righteousness of yours*? and such a sure ground of obtaining God's favour here, that your soul hath been made to renounce all other ways of acceptance, and to see, admire, and rejoice in the glory of this way, and to approve of it, as a device worthy of God, and suitable to you? And have you found rest here? It is good. The *legalist* is a stranger to such *saving views of the glory of Christ*, and his righteousness, having never got the *spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of Christ*. 8. The man that is *dead to the law*, is in love with the doctrine of the gospel; *how beautiful upon the mountains, to them, are the feet of these that preach the glad tidings of peace*? Whereas, he that is *alive to the law* always suspects the doctrine of the gospel, as if it were leading him away from the law, and away from holiness: Here is a *mark* that will may find out a *pharisaical generation*; they suspect the doctrine of Christ, and his righteousness, as if it were a doctrine tending to *licentiousness, and opposition to the law*; a sign they never felt the power of the gospel upon their hearts, otherwise they would feel
the

the revelation of the righteousness of Christ, from faith to faith, to be the power of God to their salvation; they would find, that never are they so much disposed to holy duties, as when they are under the influences of the Spirit of faith, discovering the glory of Christ, and his righteousness to them: But an ignorant generation, that knows not the power and virtue of the gospel, still suspects it as contrary to the law. This was the false charge against Christ of old, and against Stephen, Acts 6. 18. and against Paul, from which therefore he many times vindicates himself. See Acts 18. 13. 9. The man that is dead to the law, can, in some measure, put a difference betwixt Christ and a frame: Whereas, he that is alive to the law, can never distinguish betwixt Christ in duty, & a frame in duty. I know this is a hard question, How shall we know the difference betwixt Christ in duty and a frame in duty? I'll say in a word, the man that hath only a frame in duty, and not Christ in it, he is only pleased with his frame, his tears, his enlargements; he makes that his righteousness, he is content with that, & exalted with that, and now thinks all is well: But he that hath Christ in duty, and not a frame only, he is ready to cry, O I would have Christ! I would have Christ; None but Christ! none but Christ! Tears will not do; my own heart hath deceived me a thousand times; I find my tears do not wash me, my frame does not sanctify me; this flowing of affection, may be but a natural thing, it will not do; it is Christ I want, nothing but his blood can wash me; nothing but this blood can pacify his conscience; nothing but some views of Christ can give him solid quiet. A sweet frame may indeed be the chariot, in which Christ may ride towards the soul; but the gospel believer is not so much taken up with the chariot, as with the glorious king that rides in it. 10. The man that is dead to the law, is dead to sin; sin hath not dominion over him, because he is not under the law, but under grace. The views of Christ are of a transforming nature; beholding his glory, we are changed. It is true, here the believer fears most of all, because of his shortcoming in point of sanctification, and mortification of sin, because he finds iniquity prevailing against him. And how is it true that sin hath not dominion over him, he not being under the law, but under grace? Why? Sin hath no righteous nor lawful dominion over believers; the first husband is dead, and they are married to Christ the second husband: and therefore they are not debtors to the flesh. Tho' still the flesh craves them to obey it, yet it hath no just power so to do! Sin's just authority is exauctorated; and Christ, by satisfying the law, which is the strength of sin, hath condemned sin in the flesh. Sin hath a sort of right to reign in wicked men, and these that are under the law; but none in the believer, who is delivered from the

law, which is the *strength of sin*: Tho' it actually exercise authority, yet it is but an usurped authority; as sin hath no power nor authority to condemn the soul that is in Christ, so it hath no authority to reign; and sin shall never reign unto death over them, *Rom. 5. last.* And the believer that hath cast off the authority of sin, as being no more his *lawful king* may complain of its unjust oppression, and plead with a righteous God, that the power of sin may be more and more broken, and so it shall be. But the *legalist*, who is *alive to the law*, in regard that he is both under the commanding and condemning power of the law, is also under the commanding and condemning power of sin. The law commands him, and he obeys it as his Lord; and sin commands him also, and he obeys it too, and makes his legal duties a plaister to cure his conscience of his sin, like *Lewis XI. of France*, who would *swear a bloody oath*, and for a *pardon kiss a crucifix*, and swear again, and kiss it again, and so runs the round. However, the believer is delivered from the power of the law, & the power of sin too; having cast off the law as a *covenant*, and finding nothing satisfy and still his conscience, but the *blood and righteousness* of Christ, that satisfies divine justice. As in this way he finds rest from the curse of the law, so also some rest from the rule and dominion of sin; the faith of God's love in Christ purifies the heart, and kills his natural enmity, insomuch that he can attest, to his sweet experience, that the faith of the love of God in Christ is so far from leading him to *licentiousness of life*, or encouraging laziness, that he finds it the *hottest fire* in the world to melt his heart for sin, and the *strongest cord* in the world to bind him to duty, while the love of God is shed abroad upon him. Try by these things if you be *dead to the law*. In a word if you be *dead to the law*, then you will be *living unto God*; *I through the law, am dead to the law*, &c. He is led sweetly to the law as a rule of life.

Quest. How shall I know if I be *living unto God*? This leads me to the other part of the *examination*.

Secondly, Try if you be *living unto God*. Having enlarged so much upon the preceeding head, and having offered several particulars upon this head already in the doctrinal part, which may be improved by way of *trial*; therefore I'll offer you but these two *marks* of this. 1. If you be *living unto God*, then the spirit of God will be the chief principle of your life; *The water that I shall give him (Joh. 4. 14.) shall be in him a well of water springing up to everlasting life.* The man hath not only the water within him, the graces of the spirit; but the well itself, the spirit himself *dwelling in him*. And as we know a spring-well, by seeing the water bubbling up; so a man may know he hath the spirit, by the bubbling

bling up of this water now and then. None have a life unto God, but these that have the *spirit of Christ* in them, causing them to *walk in his statutes*; for where the spirit of life is, he is a spirit of faith, and a spirit of love; a spirit of faith, leading the man to the obedience of faith, which sets him to duty from the *authority of God*, and in a *dependance* upon Christ, both as his *strength for assistance*, and as his *righteousness for acceptance* in the performance thereof: A spirit of love, leading the man to the obedience of love; and this obedience makes a man serve like a son, and not like a slave, and makes the service sweet and pleasant, 1 *Joh. 5. 3. This is the love of God, that we keep his commandments, and his commandments are not grievous.* This makes the believer's obedience, while he lives unto God, a *mystery to the world*, who reckon it a *burden to keep the sabbath*, a *burden to wait on ordinances*, a *burden to perform duties*. Why? on the other hand, when the believer is mounted up in the *chariot of love*, indeed it is a burden to him to leave off duty, it is a burden to him to leave ordinances, it is a burden to him to think of going back to the world again. Why? The matter is, he is about the *obedience of love*, which makes the commands of God not grievous, but delicious. Try your *obedience* and living to God, by this *principle* of it, the spirit of God as a spirit of faith and love, leading to the *obedience of faith and love*. 2. If you be *living unto God*, then the glory of God will be the chief end of your life. *Quest.* How shall I know if the glory of God be my *chief end* in my *obedience*? Indeed it is a material question. I'll offer a thought upon it: If the glory of God be the *chief end* of your life, then you will have a continual conflict with *self*, and how to get self-ends mortified. O I see *self* creeping in upon me, in all my preaching, praying, communicating; how shall I get this enemy killed? Here *the flesh lusts against the spirit, and the spirit against the flesh, and these two are contrary the one to the other.* The believer finds a war here against *self*, as his greatest enemy; and it is his joy, and the triumph of his heart, when he gets *self* dashed to the ground, and debased; when the *loftiness thereof is brought down, and the Lord alone is exalted in him.* The man that hath *God's glory* as his *chief end*, can sometimes trample even his own happiness under his feet, in a manner, when it comes in competition with the glory of God and Christ: The glory of God is of more worth than ten thousand heavens; and therefore the self-denied believer, rather than the divine glory should sink, would venture his all, tho' he had a thousand lives: *Blot me out of thy book*, says *Moses*; *let me be accursed*, says *Paul*; and all was, that

God

God might be glorified, that Christ might be magnified, and have a glorious name in the world. There were some things indeed extraordinary in that measure that *Moses* and *Paul* attained to; but there may be something like it, I think, tho' in a smaller measure, that believers may know in their *experience*. O! whatever should become of me, let thy name be glorified; let Christ have a numerous train to praise him to *eternity*; let me decrease, and him increase; let him be exalted, tho' I should be for ever abased; and if it might contribute to his mounting of the throne, let me be even the footstool on which he may ascend. The man prefers Christ's publick interest before his own private interest: *If I forget thee, O Jerusalem, &c.* In a word, the man that lives to God, as his chief end, acts in duties, because God is thereby honoured and glorified; and he hates sin in himself and others, because God is thereby dishonoured. Finally, if you be living unto God, your life, your obedience will be influenced by the grace of the new covenant, being dead to the law, or to the old covenant: But of this I have spoken at large, on the 4th general head. Thus much for trial.

The 3d use may be for lamentation over, together with reproof of all, both doctrinal and practical legalists. 1. As to doctrinal legalists, we might bewail & refute the legal schemes that take place in the world. I name these two, 1. The popish scheme, denying the imputation of Christ's righteousness. The imputed righteousness of Christ is blasphemed by the church of Rome; they call it an affectitious, imaginary air, a putative righteousness, contrary to the very strain of our apostle in his epistles. They talk of a twofold justification: Their first justification is that, whereby an unjustified man becomes justified, or a wicked man becomes godly; where they confound justification & sanctification. The second is that, whereby a man already righteous, becomes more and more righteous, more and more holy. We know no justification, but one justification by faith, in the day of closing with Christ; laying hold upon the blood of Christ, whom God hath set forth to be the propitiation, &c. It is a compleat righteousness, we have it all at once; and it is not within us, but without us: It is in Christ inherently, & in us imputatively. They tell us, that we are not justified by the works of the ceremonial law, but by the works of the moral law; They tell us, that we are not justified by perfect obedience, but by imperfect; and by an acceptation, it is look'd on by God as perfect. And, in a word, they tell us, that we are justified, not meritoriously, and simply by works done in our own strength, but by works acted and done by the strength and assistance of the spirit of God. This is the Popish scheme. 2. The Baxterian scheme is also opposite to this gospel doctrine: They tell

tell us, that God hath made a *new law* with mankind; and obedience to that *new law*, and to its commands *is our righteousness*; and this obedience gives us a title to heaven, and gives us a title to Christ's blood, and to pardon: And the act of faith is our righteousness, not as it accepts of Christ's righteousness, but as it is an obedience to that *new law*; the very act and work of faith is, according to them, the righteousness itself: And this faith takes in all kind of works, namely, *repentance, love, obedience*, & ten or twelve duties of that sort; and all these together are our righteousness for justification. Really (as one says upon this very head) *If the apostle Paul were alive, he would excommunicate such ministers.*

2. As to *practical legalists*, this generation is full of these. I know not a more reigning sin among *professors*; a *gospel-strain* is almost lost, and a *gospel-method* is almost forgotten. If we would go back to our *reformers*, we should see a *gospel-spirit* among them; but now the *gospel-scheme* is come under reproach, as if it were a *new scheme*; and some preach against it, write against it, reason against it, as if it were *Antinomianism*, and a going off from the law; as the *Papists* accuse the *Protestants* of old: Why? What is the matter? A hellish, unholy, legal spirit reigns in the world. Now in prosecuting of this use, and that we may see how much ground there is to lament over, and bewail a legal temper that takes place, I would here, 1. Shew some *evidences* of a *legal spirit* in the *ungodly* and *unconverted*. 2. Some *evidences* of a *legal temper* in believers themselves. 3. Shew the *cause* of this *legal temper* that is in the world. 4. Shew the *evil* and *danger* of it.

1st. Some *evidences* of a *legal temper*, that is natural to the *ungodly*, who having no *new nature*, have no *gospel spirit* at all. This may be evidenced in these four degrees of self, & *legal pride*. 1. While the man is just in the dead sleep of natural security, having no fight, nor sense of his sin, no conviction of, nor contrition for sin; even then, which is strange, he may imagine many times that he is perfect, that he never breaks all the commandments of God, but *keeps the whole law*: The young pharisee in the gospel is an eminent instance hereof; our Lord gives him an account of the commands of the law, and he had the insolent boldness to say to Christ, *All those things have I kept from my youth up*: And Paul, before his conversion, was stuff'd with the same legal pride, *I was touching the law blameless*. What means he by that? Why, it is as if he had said, *I was such a staunch pharisee, and religious zealot, that, as I never tho't I broke any of the ten commandments, so I tho't I had kept the whole law*. Wonderful arrogance and ignorance, to imagine that a man in his fallen state can have a perfection, and keep the whole
law!

law! And yet the elect of God, before their conversion, have found that they have been filled with such pride & insolent thro'ts as you see in *Paul*: Yea, and many think little less; tho' they say they are sinners, yet they see not sin, and fancy they are conformable to the law: They have a good heart, they wrong no body, they are *just in their dealings*, none can say, *black is their eye*; and here is their righteousness, being *alive to the law*. 2. Degree is, when men come to be convinced of sin and rebellion, and of their lost state, by reason of their having trampled the divine authority under foot, offended his Majesty, violated his law, provoked his anger; then as if Christ were the most needless and useles thing in heaven or earth, they run to their repentance for an *atonement*, as *papists* to their *penances*, and *pagans* to their *sacrifices*, to atone their *offended deities*; as if there were no *days-man*, no *mediator* betwixt God and man, to make atonement: Christ the *propitiation* is altogether slighted; they hope to make atonement, and pacify God, by repenting seriously, and lamenting bitterly; and so they fall to *work, praying, fasting, mourning, confessing*, with an absolute *neglect of Christ*; and upon the back of all their legal fears, confessions and bitter lamentations, their wakened consciences are pleased and pacified: The storm that was raised there, is turned to a calm; a *false peace* takes place, not founded upon Christ, or his *atoning blood*, but upon their *confessions, prayers, tears*, whereby they think to disgorge and vomit up all the sins of their life, and to save themselves from them, and from the wrath that follows them. To this purpose was that saying of *Augustine* (it looks like a harsh saying, but had a good meaning) namely, *that repentance damns more than sins do*. When people are under any fearful apprehension of the wrath to come upon them for their sins, they *flee to their repentance* instead of *flying to Christ*, and that effectually destroys and ruins them. 3. Degree is, when a man not only repents, but amends: He not only takes up *resolutions of amendment of life*, but actually *studies obedience*, reforms his way; he is at pains to get his *life changed*, but not to get his *state changed*: He is not taken up to get a *new heart*, but would have the *old heart* made a little better; he thinks a little amending will do the business; and what is all this, but, as one says, *like the gilding of a rotten post, the post is rotten within, but it is finely gilded over without*? It is but like the whitening of a sepulchre, that, however white it may be without, yet it is *full of dead mens bones within*: It is like the painting of a chimney without, that is all black and sooty within: It is like the adorning of a *dead corps* with *sweet flowers*: The man is *dead in sins and trespasses*, notwithstanding all this. 4. Degree is beyond all this, *gospel-*

pel-light hath shined objectively upon them, & they are more illuminated than to be pleased with this. Why? they hear of Christ, and that there is no *salvation*, no *justification* without him; and therefore, they act faith upon him in a *legal way*; they believe in him, not by a *saving faith*, but a *temporary faith*. As believers do perform *gospel-obedience* to the law, so *unbelievers* may have a legal faith of the gospel, a legal faith upon Christ, believing in their own strength, believing even before he see his inability to believe, before ever he see his unwillingness to believe, before he be humbled under a sense of his absolute need of Christ, and before he see what right and warrant he hath from the word. However, he fancies he hath *closed with Christ*, laid hold on his covenant, and this is the most *subtile part of self-righteousness*; yet, after all, he is the *old man*, still *wedded to the law*: And hence he hath no *sanctification*, no *new nature*, no *new principle of spiritual life*, no *living unto God*.

2dly, Some *evidences* of a *legal temper* that remains in believers themselves. 1. When their *comfort* is still up and down with their *frame*; if their *frame be up*, their *comfort is up*; if their *frame be down*, their *comfort is down*; if their *frame be gone*, their *comfort is gone*, their *joy is withered*: Herein the *legal spirit* discovers itself; whereas a *gospel-temper* of soul would lead the man to rejoice, even when the changeable frame is gone, that the *unchangeable covenant* still remains; and to say, *Tho' the fig tree should not blossom, yet will I rejoice in the Lord*: *Tho' grace be at a low ebb with me, yet the ocean of grace is in Christ*; and herein I rejoice: *Tho' I be in darkness, yet will I rejoice that there is light in him*; *tho' I find nothing but deadness in me, yet will I rejoice that there is life in him*; *tho' I be empty, yet will I rejoice that there is fulness in him*, and this to be communicated in *his time and way*. 2. It is a *legal temper* in the believer, when his *assurance is lost by his challenges*. It may be, the man attained some *sweet measure of assurance*, but behold sin prevails, conscience challenges him, and hereupon he razes all; this is an *evidence of a legal temper*, contrary to that *gospel-spirit* which we may see acting in *David, Psal. 65*. 3. *Iniquity prevails against me*; it is against my heart, against my will, against my prayers, against my secret groans and wrestlings, against my resolutions, against my inclination they prevail. Shal I raze the foundation of my faith upon this account? No, *I flee to the blood of the lamb of God, for cleansing and purging both from the guilt and power of sin*; and therefore I'll maintain my *assurance and confidence* in thee; *As for our iniquities, thou wilt purge them away*. 3. It is a *legal temper*, when *faith is marr'd either by sins or graces*, I mean, either by the *prevalence of sin*,

sin, or the *pride of grace*. On the other hand, when the *exercise of faith* is marr'd by the *prevalence of sin*, when their known *sense and feeling of out-breakings*, either make a man stand at a distance from Christ, or make him run away from him, by *sinking discouragement* or *secret despair*: This evidences much legality. Are you convinced of sin? Why then? You have the more need to *come to Christ*, and *believe in him*, and the less need to stay away from him. Peter had a prayer once, that looked like a set form of the Devil's composing, *Lord depart from me, for I am a sinful man*. If it had run in a gospel form, he would rather said, *Lord come to me, for I am a sinful man*. Yet many believers have learned Peter's form of prayer, *Lord, I am such a sinful man, I dare not come to thee, nor believe that thou wilt come to me*. Why? the more sinful thou art, the more need thou hast to come to him, and to emlore him to come to you, and save you. On the other hand, when the *exercise of faith* is marr'd by the *pride of grace*, this is part of a *legal temper*; when believers trust more to their *graces* than to *Christ, the fountain of all grace*; when they look more to the *strength of gracious habits*, and trust more to them, than to the *grace that is in Christ*, in which they are called to be strong: *Be strong in the grace that is in Christ*: As by meditating on their sins, they are many times led off from *clothing with Christ for pardon and cleansing*; so by meditating on their *graces and gracious habits*, they are many times led off from *depending on Christ*, for constant incomes of actual influences. And hence, when a believer is *lively*, he is ready to think, he will never be *dead again*; when he is *spiritual*, that he will never be *car-nal* again; when he is *up in the mount*, that he will never be *down in the valley* again, saying, *By thy favour my mountain stands strong*; he thinks it like mount *Zion*, that can never be shaken, and that he will never doubt again; but behold, *Thou didst hide thy face, and I was troubled*: My good frame was changed to a bad one; of a sudden was my mount *Zion* turned to a mount *Sinai*, all fears, all frowns, all darknes. Never hath the believer more need to *act faith*, and *close dependence* on the Lord, than when his *graces and frames* are most lively, lest *self-confidence* creep in, and confidence in *created grace*, more than in the *fountain*, out of whose *fullness he is to have grace for grace*. Let your frame be ever so good, your faith ever so strong, your grace ever so lively, at any time, yet look up still for *new influences*; for without *momentary supplies* and *breathings* from heaven, your *gracious habits* cannot act, and will not hold out a moment. 4. It is a *legal temper*, when *peace* is always marr'd by short-comings, short-comings in the *exercise of grace*, short-comings, in the *mortification of sin*, short-comings in

in holiness; when they meditate upon these short-comings, upon the weakness of grace on the one hand, and the strength of corruption on the other, upon such a sin and lust that prevails, upon such a plague and distemper that affects them, insomuch that they cannot let in a word of comfort, they cannot hearken to the joyful sound of the gospel, like Israel, who hearkened not to Moses, because of the anguish of their spirit; they look inward to themselves, and finding nothing there but failings and infirmities and plagues, instead of holiness, their peace is wholly demolished, because they do not, at the same time, look upward to Christ, and his blood and righteousness, and fulness; this is a legal temper. So also, to the same purpose, when a man's peace and comfort leans only and always upon his sanctification, as if there were no other ground of joy but a righteousness inherent: Surely, when the joy of sanctification is greater than the joy of justification, it is an evidence of a legal temper; for the joy of justification is founded upon a law-biding righteousness, the perfect obedience of the glorious head, which is always the same unchangeable ground of joy to believers; whereas his sanctification is imperfect here, & cannot afford such peace & joy, as faith in a perfect obedience will give. The true circumcision rejoice in Christ, and in what they have in him, more than in what they have from him. But behold, even the believer is ready to be more taken up with his sanctification, which is inherent, and so to be lifted up, when he attains a good gale, a great measure of sanctification; corruption may abuse the privilege, and then he is proud and lifted up. It is true, communion with God, is of a humbling nature, and natively makes a man humble, and lively, and watchful; but when the good frame is creeping off, and corruption beginning to work again, if this nick of time be not observed, and the believer be not on his guard, a proud thought may enter in, were it even upon a Paul wrapt up to the third heavens; *Lest I should be exalted above measure, a messenger of Satan was sent, a thorn in the flesh.* Oh how does a legal temper run through every frame! When a man is dead and dull, then he is in danger of murmuring; and when he is active and lively, then he is in danger of swelling. 5. It is a legal temper, when a man's expectation of success is built upon the minister that preaches; if the minister hath a weak gift, O they will not hear that man, at least they expect little good of him: If another hath great gifts, and a taking way, O now they expect heaven will come down; why? This is an evidence of a legal temper; for a gospel temper will expect nothing but in a gospel way, even by the powerful influences of the Spirit promised in the gospel. The gospel in any man's mouth is but a dead letter, without the Holy Ghost. 6. It is a legal temper, when the

believer

believer is under *excessive discouragements*, on whatever ground; it is an evidence he is too much *under the law*, for the law can give *no encouragement, no settlement* to the conscience; it is only Christ can give rest; *Come unto me, all ye that labour, and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.* What is it that discourages a believer, when he is under this *legal temper*? Sometimes he is discouraged when he performs duty, and cannot find that presence, that *sensible help* he would have. Why then? He is quite dispirited. Indeed he hath ground of mourning, when the Lord is away; he should be deeply humbled for the causes of it: But when he is so dispirited, that he *loses his confidence*, and is beaten quite away from his *faith and hope*, questions his state, and gives way to *slavish fear*, that weakens his *hands in duties*, and draws his *heart from duty*, it is a token he is secretly hankering after the law; for the language of the heart of him is, O if I could pray with as *much life*, and hear with as *much attention*, and perform duty with as *much vigour* as I would be at! O then I would have a *good hope*; and so it is not Christ, so much as the law, the old husband, that you desire to place your hope upon, while you are under that *legal frame*. The apostle (*Gal. 4. 21.*) speaks of some believers that desire to be *under the law*. Sometimes their discouragements arise from this, *that they dare not apply the promises*. And why so? Because they think they are not for such as they are; such a *promise* belongs to such & such a *good person*, it is for a *holy man*, but not for one like me: What is this but a *legal temper*, apprehending, that if you had such and such a *legal righteousness*, then God would be some way indebted to give you the promise? But, O is not grace to be glorified in this new and *gospel way*! And therefore, the more of a *gospel spirit* you have, the more cheerfully will you embrace the *promise*, for this end, *that having these promises, you may cleanse your self*, by sucking virtue from the breasts of the promise. 7. It is an evidence of a *legal temper*, when they are always *straitned in duty*. Sometimes they are discouraged, because they are so *straitned in duty*; and they are straitned in duty, because they are so *legal* in it. Their discouragement flows from their *straitning*, and their *straitning*, flows from their *legal spirit*; for a *gospel spirit* is a *spirit of liberty*. When a believer is for the most part straitned, without life, without liberty, it is an evidence of a *legal spirit*; for *where the spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty*. *The law of the spirit of life in Christ Jesus makes the man free from the law of sin and death*, Rom. 8. 2. When one is influenced by the *covenant of grace*, he runs in the way of God's *commandments*. Tho' you have once known what it was to run sweetly in the Lord's way, yet if now you find an *habitual indisposition*

tion to duties, and religious exercises to be a heavy yoke, a grievous burden, this indisposition testifies against you, that tho' you have once known the gospel of Christ, yet now you're hankering after the law. The Lord may indeed withdraw his presence from his people, for necessary ends, even from the man that hath much of a gospel spirit; and such a man, amidst all his trials of that sort, will triumph in Christ, and say, *tho' I have little in hand, yet I have much in hope; whatever my own wants be, I have enough in Christ; however weak in myself, I am strong in him: imperfect in myself, but compleat in him.* But when for the most part the person does not find pleasure in duty, hath little heart to it, and finds it not *easy and light*, but *grievous*, it is a token, that he is bearing the *yoke of the law, or old covenant*: For *Christ's yoke is easy, and his burden light*; but this *law-yoke is heavy*. The law, the first husband, requires *hard and heavy things*, and does not *help* the sinner with *strength*; but Christ, the new husband, requires the same things, but he gives strength to perform; and what he requires of us, he works it in us; *I can do all things thro' Christ strengthning me*, were it to overleap a wall, and fight armies of devils in my way. 8. It is a sign of a *legal temper*, when a poor creature finds still *discouragements*, except when about religious duties, and finds *no peace* when about any other work, but is still racked except when upon his knees, or going about some *religious performance* or other: It is a token of being knit too much to the first husband; for the law drives hard, and craves hard: But Christ is *very tender and gentle* in his commands and demands; and a person under the *influences of grace*, will find as much *sweetness*, even when *eating and drinking*, and when he is about his *lawful employment* sometimes, as when about *religious exercises*. Mistake me not here, think not that Christ will indulge his people in the *omission of duty*, that is not what I intend. God forbid; I know & am persuaded, *that the sweetest hours that the believer hath, is when he can attain communion with God in the ordinances & duties of his appointment*: But yet, they that have much of a *gospel-spirit*, can with peace & freedom of mind, go about other things as the *work of Christ*; tho' it be a piece of self-denial to them, not to be always with him; they would be every minute with him, and are longing for *uninterrupted communion with him*: Yet the thing I say is, that their hearts are not dotheartened, nor their spirit dispirited, when called to other things; and it favours much of a *legal spirit*, when the poor exercised creature can find no peace about their other lawful duties, unless they be still about duties that are properly religious duties, such as prayer, & reading, and hearing, and the like; for, in some sense, other duties, such as plowing & sowing, & the like, may be

turned to religious duties by a *spiritually-minded* man, and such as have a *gospel spirit*, while they carry a *heavenly* mind to their *earthly* work. 9. It is a sign of too much of a *legal temper*, when a man is not satisfied with the *measure of grace* that the Lord allows him, but frets against heaven because *he hath not so much as others*. Let none mistake me here neither: No man ought in an indifferent way to be *content with any measure of grace*, we are still to be *going on to perfection*; but when we grudge and grieve, and *are pained at the heart*, and *murmur against God*, because we *have not this and that measure as others have*, it is a symptom of *bankering after the law*. A *gospel spirit* does not strive with God, but meekly waits upon that sovereign, *who will have mercy upon whom he will have mercy*, and dispenses freely of his gifts & graces as *he pleaseth*. 10. It is a sign of a *legal temper*, when a person is more taken up *with the gifts of Christ*, than *with Christ himself*; more taken up with any little thing they get from him, than with himself. When they get any sensible grace, any sensible good affections, melting of heart, melting of spirit, any inclination to what is good, any gifts or graces, whether more common or special, they admire these, and *are not so much taken up with Christ himself*: But the person that is *evangelical in his actions*, by what he gets he is led to the *giver*; if this be sweet, O he is infinitely sweeter that sent it; I embrace the token, and it draws out my heart after him, from whom it came. 11. It is a sign of being too much under *the influence of the law*, when the believer is *possessed with a fretful spirit*, and is not content *with anything*: For *the gospel sweetens a man's frame of spirit*. If the believer go to the law, he is always pain'd and wounded, and a diseased person is always a fretful person, and this fretfulness is a sign, *that he is not sound at heart*; but the gospel is *health to the heart, and medicine to all the flesh*. A gospel spirit is a *spirit of faith, a spirit of love, a spirit of power, and of a sound mind*, 2 Tim. 1. 7. And hence, take a believer when he is much under *the influence of the grace of the gospel*, ten thousand little difficulties, which sometimes fret him and put him into confusion, will not move him, then, *when he is living near Christ and under the influence of the covenant of grace*; but when at other times every thing frets him, it is a sign that the law hath the ascendant, for *the law works wrath*, Rom. 4. 15. 12. It is a sign of a *legal spirit*, when, upon the back of religious duties, the man hath more freedom to sin: *Sin shall not have dominion over you, for you are not under the law, but under grace*. The law irritates corruption, raises the devil, but cannot lay him; but *the grace of God in Christ, teaches to deny ungodliness, and worldly lusts*. This grace only keeps down the devil, and lays him low, as it were; yea, *bruises the serpent's head*, and

and *destroys the works of the devil*. When a man performs duty in a legal way, to quiet his conscience; why then, when conscience is quieted with the duty, lust gets a vent, like the whore, *Prov. 7. 14. I have offered my peace-offerings, this day I have paid my vows; come, let us take our fill of love*. But when a man performs duty in a gospel-way, not merely to *satisfy conscience*, or *pacify the judge* but to *glorify God*, to *honour Christ*, which is the *great gospel-end* of performing duty; then this glory of God & Christ, that he hath in view, prompts him to desire, by the means of duty, to be avenged of God's enemies in the heart; and when he gets victory, he desires to pursue his enemies, even to the death.

Now, my dear friends, if there be any believer here, I am sure some of *these evidences*, if not all, may find you out, to have too much of a *legal temper* about you. O believers, you that have *fled for refuge to the hope set before you*, will you consider what danger you're in from Christ's rival, the law as a covenant, your first husband, and how much your hankering after that doth undo you? You (it may be) think, you're in hazard from carnal friends, or from the world; but you cannot understand how you can be in hazard from the law: But you may be in greatest hazard from that which you're least afraid of. Paul tells the believers here, and elsewhere, to whom he writes, what hazard they were in, even from *these that pretended to preach the gospel*, who were but ministers of the old covenant, who pressed, and knew nothing but to press people to yield *obedience and subjection* to their old husband the law, pretending to the *greatest holiness and strictness of life*; and pressing nothing but *do, do, do, and live*. Nay, but says Paul, I, and all believers, have another way of living to God, and to his glory, than by living on or by the law as a covenant; *I through the law, am dead to the law, that I might live unto God*. O believer, arm your self against all *proxies* that the law makes use of; study the *nature, fulness and freedom* of the *new covenant*; and pray much for the *spirit of wisdom, and revelation in the knowledge of Christ, and his gospel*. I go on to the

3^d Thing here proposed, which was to shew the *causes* of this *legal temper*. Why is the world so set upon the law as a covenant, and so little upon Christ as *the Lord their righteousness*? I sum up all the reasons into this one, which I shall draw out into some particulars: And it is *gross ignorance, proud ignorance*, *Rom. 10. 3. For they being ignorant of God's righteousness, and going about to establish their own righteousness, have not submitted themselves unto the righteousness of God*. The world is ignorant of God, ignorant of the law, ignorant of the gospel, ignorant of Christ and his righteousness.

1. *Ignorance of God*, is one *cause* of this *legal temper*. People are ignorant of the *perfections of God*; more particularly, they are ignorant of the *holiness of God*: If men saw what an infinite holy God he is, and what an infinite hatred he bears towards the *least sin*, or *violation of his law*: if they knew that a *proud thought* were enough to damn a million of angels, and that a *wandering thought* is enough to damn a million of worlds, would they entertain a *fancy of being justified and accepted* upon the ground of any *legal righteousness* of their own, whether natural or gracious? Nay, they would not imagine to be thus accepted, if they did not think, that God is such an one as themselves. They are ignorant also of the *justice of God*, & the *righteousness* of that *judge*, who *will by no means clear the guilty*; and if it were not so, that they were ignorant of his *justice*, would any guilty sinner hope to be cleared and acquitted any other way, than upon the *account of a ransom of infinite value*? They are ignorant of the *wisdom of God*, in the glorious plan of *redemption* and contrivance of *salvation* by the *righteousness* of another, even of the God-man Christ Jesus. *Ignorance of these*, and the like *attributes and perfections of God*, is the great *cause* of their being joined to the law, and alive to it.

2. *Ignorance of the law* is another *cause*. And here, 1. They are ignorant of the *precept of the law* in the extent, spirituality, holiness and perfection thereof: the young man in the gospel tho't himself *perfect*; Why? He did not know the law. *Paul* tho't himself *blameless*, while he was *alive to the law*. Men think it a narrow rule, condemning only some gross enormities of life, and commanding only some outward materials of obedience; but they see not the *commandment to be exceeding broad*; hence they imagine, they can observe it perfectly well. 2. They are ignorant of the *penalty of the law*, the *sanction* of it: They do not believe, that there is a curse intail'd upon every disobedience, *Cursed is every one that continueth not in all things that are written in the book of the law, to do them*. Hence they are fond of their own *legal righteousness*, not knowing the severity of the *legal sanction*. 3. They are ignorant of the *end of the law*, even of God's end and design in giving it. God gave the law to *Israel* with fire and thunder: For what end? Even to be a *schoolmaster* to lead them to Christ, *Gal. 3. 24. For Christ is the end of the law for righteousness, to every one that believeth, Rom. 10. 4.* But behold, so ignorant was *Israel* of the end of the law, that, like the *legal spirit* in our own day, they tho't it was given for this end, that they might obey it as a *condition of life*, as it bore the image and representation of a *covenant of works*; so they turned it directly to a covenant of works, saying, *Exod. 19. 8.*

All that the Lord hath commanded, we will do. If it had been possible or practicable for them to have performed what they ignorantly promised, there would have been no need of Christ, or his *righteousness* either: We will do, say they, there is *obedience*; we will do, yea, we will do all, there is *perfect obedience*; yea, we will do all that the LORD JEHOVAH hath commanded us; there is *exactly*, and *perpetually perfect obedience*: Yea, we do all, we ourselves; there is their *perfect personal obedience* resolv'd upon: As if they had in their possession all the power and holiness that *Adam* had in innocence. What says *Josbua* to them, upon such a proud, ignorant, and arrogant resolution as this? Indeed, he tells them, it was simply impossible for them; *Ye cannot serve the Lord, for he is a holy God, Josb. 24. 19.* He is a *holy God*, and you're a sinful people; it is impossible for you to do what you say. The law was given them, to let them see their *utter insufficiency* and *inability*, to let them see their sins, and desert because of sin, that, under the fear of divine wrath, they might be driven to the Saviour. But they being ignorant of this great *end of the law*, set up an *obedience* of their own.

3. *Ignorance* of the *gospel* is another *cause* of this *legal temper*; and here manifold ignorance discovers itself. 1. They are ignorant of the promises of the *gospel*, such as that, *Isai. 44. 24. Surely shall one say, in the Lord have I righteousness and strength.* Here is a sum of the *gospel* promise, a *promise of Christ*, and of *faith in him*: *Surely shall one say*; here is a promise of *faith*, & *faith* working out from the heart to the mouth; for *with the heart men believe to righteousness, and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation. One shall say.* What? no more but one? What a pity is it, that only one should say so? Indeed it intimates that very few will be brought off from their *legal temper*. One shall say, not every one. Well, but what will he say? *In the Lord have I righteousness and strength*; righteousness for justification, strength for sanctification; righteousness to make me happy, strength to make me holy; righteousness to give me a title to heaven, strength to give me meetness for heaven. I have all this, shall one say, *by the appropriating act of faith*, applying all to himself in particular, with assured confidence, according to the measure of *faith*. *I have righteousness and strength.* Where hath he it? *It is in the Lord* I have it; I have it not in my self, nor in my own *natural power*, I have it not in my own *free will*, I have it not in my *walk or conversation*, I have it not in my *zeal or profession*, I have it not in my *religious duties or performances*, I have it not in my *heart or life*, nay, certainly I have it not there; but surely *in the Lord have I righteousness and strength*, in the Lord only: Men are ignorant of this. 2. They are ignorant of

the *method of the gospel*, in the application of the grace promised, particularly in the command of believing, which belongs to the dispensation of the gospel; wherein the law, both in its *commands* and *threatnings*, is used in a subserviency to advance the *ends* of the *gospel*. Tho' the law does not teach us to believe in Christ, yet he being revealed, it obliges us to believe in him; tho' the law reveals not a favour, yet the gospel revealing him, the law obliges us to come to him. But now this method of the gospel, and dispensation thereof, is not known in the world; hence come *legal notions* of it, men confounding the command of believing with the gospel to be believed; the *duty of faith* with the *object of faith*; and so turn the gospel to a *new law*, a new covenant of works, as if the act of believing were our righteousness for acceptance with God. Neither can they conceive the command of believing to be the great command, tho' God himself hath said, *This is his commandment, that ye believe in the name of his Son*: Nay, *legalists* cannot understand that; they think it is God's *great command*, that seeing they have sinned by *breaking the law*, they should repent by *turning to it*; seeing they have displeased God by their *sins*, they should please him by their *repentance*; seeing they have provoked him by their *disobedience*, they should pacify him by their *obedience*; seeing they have drawn down the *curse* by their *transgressions*, they should remove it by their *reformation*: They do not know that the great command is, *to believe on the Son of God*. 3. They are ignorant of the *great end* of the *gospel*, which is, to humble and abase the creature to the lowest, and to raise and exalt grace to the highest; that *No flesh should glory in God's presence*, but that *he that glorieth, should glory in the Lord*; *in the Lord shall all the seed of Israel be justified, and shall glory*: This is the *great end* and *design* of the *gospel*; but the base *legal spirit* is ignorant of that design. 4. They are ignorant of the *gospel covenant*: The doctrinal and practical confounding of the two covenants of *works* and *grace* is the great reason of this *legal temper*. And here people discover ignorance of the condition of the covenant; they are ignorant of the condition of the covenant of grace and works; the condition of the covenant of works was *personal obedience*, the man himself that does these things, shall live in them; and *perfect obedience* was required, a *perfection* of parts, a *perfection* of degrees, a *perfection* of duration: The condition of the covenant of grace, is Christ's *perfect obedience received by faith*. There is much ignorance of this, at the root of all the *legality* that takes place in the world. They are ignorant of the *form of the covenant*, how by the covenant of works we get a strength within ourselves,

ourselves, and by ourselves we could obey it; how by the covenant of grace our strength is without us, as well as our righteousness, *In the Lord have I strength*; and, *we are to be strong in the Lord*, not in ourselves, but in the Lord, and, *in the power of his might*; to be strong in the grace, not that is in ourselves, but in the *grace that is in Christ Jesus*.

4. Ignorance of *Christ* and his *righteousness*, is a great *cause* of men's establishing a *legal righteousness*, *Rom. 10. 3*. God was about to cast off a whole church, to reject them, & unchurch them. Why? What was the reason? Because they were so extremely proud that they would rather be *damm'd* with their own *righteousness*, than *saved* by *Christ's righteousness*, or obliged and beholden to him for it. They would not submit to it; why? Because they were ignorant of it; they did not see the *glory* of it, as it is the *righteousness of God*; they did not see the *necessity* of it, because their own righteousness was reckoned sufficient; they did not see the *fulness* of it, as answering all the demands and commands of the law; they did not see the *value* of it, as sufficient to procure the *favour of God*, and purchase *grace* and *glory*; they did not see the *acceptableness* of it, as being the only righteousness with which God is well pleased, and that whereby the *law is magnified, and made honourable*: They are ignorant of all this, and therefore they go about to *establish a righteousness of their own*, and will not submit to this. Their ignorance was a *proud ignorance*, and so it is with all by nature; we are filled with *proud ignorance*, and *ignorant pride*; tho' our *power* be gone, our *pride* remains.

The 4th thing here proposed, was, the *evil* and *danger* of a *legal temper* and *legal obedience*; why? 1. This legal way is a very unpleasant work, it is a wearisom work; *What a weariness is it?* says the man. *He is wearied in the greatness of his way, and yet says he not, there is no hope*, *Isa. 57. 10*. It is true, the law hath sometimes its influences of comfort to its votaries, and *stony-ground bearers* may receive the word with joy, and no doubt they may pray and do other duties also with joy; but it is only a *good temper*, that evanishes, having no rooting in *Christ*. Can a *deal man* have pleasure in *vital actions*? Can a heavy stone incline upwards? O but the *legal soul* is a miserable creature! The law drags him to duties, conscience presses him to work, saying, *Fast, pray, pray, Man, work for your life, repent, reform, as you would not be damm'd*: But behold, he cannot, tho' they be good duties he is called to; and the *legal covenant*, the *legal minister*, the *legal conscience* of him cries, *Make brick, make brick, make brick*; but behold he hath no *straw*, no *straw*, nothing to make it of. He hath no *strength*, no *grace*, no *communica-*

tion; and so he tugs, he works, he sweats, but it is a heartless and unpleasant work. 2. *Legal obedience* is very unprofitable work, as well as unpleasant, *Isa. 57. 12. I will declare thy righteousness, and thy work, for they shall not profit thee.* The self-righteous Pharisee may *fast twice a week, give alms of all that he hath*; he may make long prayers, many prayers; he may both preach and pray frequently and fervently; yea, the *poor legalist* may work at his *secret devotion* and *family devotion*; he may *wait on ordinances*, & frequent *communions*, and run the whole round of duties; and when he hath done thus forty or fifty years, all the profit is, he gets hell for his pains, *Isa. 1. 11. To what purpose is the multitude of your sacrifices? All is unprofitable.* 3. The *legal obedience* is very carnal, for it is a life wholly destitute of the spirit, *Gal. 3. 2. This I would learn of you, says, Paul; if you will be doctors of the law, let me have a lesson from you, if you can give it, received ye the spirit by the works of the law, or by the hearing of faith?* Was it by the works of the law? I believe not; nay, the spirit is not received in that way: It is in and by the *gospel of Christ*. The *legalist* is destitute of the spirit; whatever *affectitious holiness* he may have, or *real holiness* he may pretend to, he wants a *sanctifying work*, sealing work; *Sensual, not having the Spirit*. 4. *Legal obedience* crosses the most *glorious design* of heaven, particularly God's design in giving Christ, and Christ's design in coming to the world. (1) It crosses God's *greatest design*; what is that? It is even the *exalting of his free grace*; What is the *great design* of all the *great works* of God, *election, redemption, regeneration, providence*? Why does he choose one, and reject others? Why does he choose a *wicked Publican*, and cast a *righteous Pharisee* to hell? Why does he redeem poor, ignorant, ill-natur'd people from their miserable state, and let the rich and learned go to hell? Why does he *regenerate* an elect soul, after he hath been *twenty or thirty years* in the *devil's service*? And after they are *regenerate*, why does he in providence let them *fall into straits, wants, sins, manifold temptations, troubles, affliction, desertion, and heavy complaints* on these accounts? Why? All is to *exalt free grace* in the issue. But now the *legalist* crosses this *design* of God; he would have *self exalted*, his *works exalted*, instead of *Christ*, and *free grace*. He puts another righteousness in the room of the righteousness of Christ, and so takes the *dung* of his own righteousness, as *Paul* calls it, and casts it upon the *face of free, rich and sovereign grace*, to cover, and hide and darken it. O what a *devilish design* is this, in opposition to God's *glorious design* of making *grace* shine brightly! (2.) It crosses Christ's *great design* in coming to the world: The *grand intention* of the Son of God in coming from heaven, was, to

bring in an everlasting righteousness, Dan. 9. 24. But behold, the legalist's design in establishing his own righteousness, is, to make all Christ's labour to be lost labour; he frustrates the very end of Christ's death, and makes it vain, Gal. 2. last. *If righteousness come by the law, Christ is dead in vain.* Instead of Christ's everlasting righteousness, he sets up a righteousness that cannot last half a day nor half an hour, nay, not a moment. 5. *Legal obedience* hath the evil of blasphemy in it. It reproaches the righteousness of Christ, as if it were not sufficient, as if his atonement were not perfect, as if his satisfaction were not full, as if his obedience were not perfect, unless it be patch'd up with the rags of the man's own righteousness. Is not Christ's righteousness perfect without your addition? O do not blaspheme the Son of God, and say in effect, his obedience was not a divine, perfect obedience; for thus you reproach his fulness and sufficiency. 6. *Legal obedience* issues in a terrible disappointment; the poor deluded man thinks his prayers and duties, that he hath been performing for so many years, will make an excellent robe to cover him: I hope, says the man, I have something that will contribute to make me die in peace; I have something to make me stand in judgment, that others have not; for many a duty have I performed, many a prayer have I made, these twenty or thirty years, and many times have I prayed with very much warmth of affection, and liveliness of frame; and therefore, I have a good hope, that God will be pleased, and all will be well with me. But, O what a fearful disappointment does the man meet with! Death comes; and if he die in the same legal dream, he goes down to the grave with a lie in his right-hand. The hypocrite's hope is like the spider's web; why? What comes of it? The spider works it out of her own bowels; it is her house, it is her food, it is her fence; there she dwells, there she feeds, there she secures and shelters herself for a while; but at the close of the day, or end of the week, the broom comes along, and sweeps her & her lodging and all to the ground: Even so, the legalist works a web out of his own bowels, he wraps himself in this garment of his own spinning; here he dwells, here he works, here he feeds, here he shelters himself from all challenges, and apprehensions of danger; but behold the broom of death and destruction comes and sweeps him, and his refuge of lies, down to the bottomless pit. If his eyes be open on a death-bed to see hell, to see the justice of God, to see the spirituality of the law, the imperfection of his duties, the emptiness of his performances, and the sandy foundation he hath been building his faith upon, then his conscience roars, his heart despairs; he hath no peace, no comfort; but finds himself miserably disappointed. If his eyes be not open, why then? He dies

dies in a *delusion*, as he lived, sinks into the *lake of fire*; and in *hell* he opens his eyes, and finds himself *eternally disappointed*: O see then, what ground there is to lament over this *legal temper*, which is indeed a *damnable temper*, where it hath a full reign.

Exhortation, both to them that are *alive to the law*, and to them that are *dead to the law*, of whom the text especially speaks. 1st. To *unbelievers*, and *all these that are alive to the law*. O, for the Lord's sake, take no rest till you get out of that *damnable state*: O consider what you are doing, so long as you are *not dead to the law*; the best thing that you are doing, in that case, is, that you're building your nest about the old rotten walls of the covenant of works. May be, you think you're a good protestant, you're a good christian, you have a good heart, you perform good duties, you partake of good ordinances, and what ill should you fear? 1. I tell you, that you're under the curse of the law of works; *Cursed is every one that continueth not in all things that are written in the book of the law to do them*. And while you're *under the law*, and seeking to establish a law-righteousness of your own, all the people of God are obliged to say, that God is in the right to curse you; they are obliged to say *Amen*, to all the curses of the bible against you, *Deut. 27. last. Cursed is he that confirmeth not all the words of this law; and all the people shall say, Amen*. If you will take the old covenant of doing for *life, and justification*, then you must take it with a vengeance, unless you do perfectly, and do to purpose, which is impossible for you; *Cursed is every one that continueth not in all things, &c.* and all believers can say *Amen* to it, in the words of *Paul, Let him that loves not our Lord Jesus Christ, be Anathema Maranatha*. While you are under the law, *no blessing* belongs to you, but all *divine curses*; if you will not get out of your *legal righteousness*, and get under the *gospel-covert* of the blood of Jesus, nothing but terror belongs to you, and nothing but terror and curses can I preach to you: For, *As many as are of the works of the law, are under the curse*. 2. I must tell you, as you are under the curse of the law, so you are under the command of the law, *Do, and live*: Tho' by the gospel call you are not obliged indeed to seek righteousness in yourself, in order to life, but to seek it in Christ; yet by your *unbelief*, you keep yourself under the command of the law, *If thou wilt enter into life, keep the commandment*; keep it perfectly, or else vengeance shall overtake you. It is not your little efforts that will satisfy the law, tho' you should *read, fast, mourn, and shed tears* of blood all your days; if you will pay any duty to the law as a covenant, *You are a debtor to fulfil the whole law, Gal. 5. 3*. The law is a chain that is linked together, and if you take *one link* of it, the weight of the *whole chain* will be

be upon you; and so if you will do any thing in obedience to the law, that you may be thereby *saved* and *justified*, you're under *bondage* to the *whole law*, and bound to do every thing perfectly, that you may be justified. O the miserable bondage that you are under! You will never be able to satisfy the law, and so you are condemned already. Yea, let me tell you more, you are a wicked ungodly creature: Whatever you seem to be to others, or think you are yourself; yet being *alive to the law*, you are a stranger to the *life of God*; for, till you be *dead to the law* you shall never *live unto God*; tho' you look like an *angel of light* for holiness, yet, being *alive to the law*, you have no true holiness nor godliness. Ye that are still trusting to your works, you'll meet with a sad disappointment; *for by the deeds of the law no flesh living can be justified*. But there are others, who seem to be upon another extreme; they say, the law is now *abrogated*, and we are not to seek *justification or salvation* that way; and therefore we are careless about the law, or about any *duty of obedience*. Yea, but let me tell you your doom out of the law also; you are a desperate sinner: Because you cannot *satisfy the curse of the law*, therefore you run away from the *commands of the law*, and run away to the devil, instead of running to Christ. But I'll tell you, tho' the law cannot justify, or save you, yet it can condemn you: It hath power to condemn you, tho' it hath none to save you; and it will condemn, and does condemn you, and all that are out of Christ; and therefore, for every sin that you are guilty of, you must answer; and *every sin* is enough to *damn you*, by virtue of the law. O then, may this be a mean to move you all that are *under the law*, to seek in to Christ, who is the *end of the law for righteousness*, to every one that believeth! Come, poor, cursed, condemned, ungodly sinner, if you would live unto God here, and live with him hereafter, come out from under the *heavy yoke of the law*; Christ hath a good and perfect law-biding righteousness to give you, tho' you have nothing to bring to him, but sin and guilt, and misery, and hell about you, yet come to him; and if you cannot come, O go to him, and tell him that you cannot come, and plead that by his *omnipotent power* he may *draw you*; and if you do so in truth, it is one to a thousand, if he does not meet you half way. O sirs, you cannot be saved, to the credit of *God's holiness*, unless you join in with *Christ's righteousness*, which answers also the threatenings of the law, and satisfies the *justice of God*. In this way, mercy can take vent, to the credit and honour of all *God's perfections*. O my brethren, are you for this way of it? O then say, farewell to the law of works for ever; here is a more *noble and glorious way*. O blessed be God for ever, if that be the bargain be-

twixt Christ's righteousness and your soul! O may the Lord draw you to it! But now,

2dly, To you that are *believers*, and have closed with Christ, and so are *dead to the law*; remember you're not to live a lawless life for all that: My *exhortation* to you is, that *being dead to the law, you live unto God*. Let me offer some *motives* and *directions*, and the rather that I have taken some pains to gather together, and lay before you, many things relative to a *legal temper*, for *guarding* you against the *Neanomian* extreme, on the one hand; let men beware lest their carnal hearts abuse this doctrine of grace to *Antinomian* licentiousness on the other hand. Sure I am, the *gospel-doctrine* of itself hath no such *tendency*: Tho' an ignorant world may suspect the doctrine of the gospel, the doctrine of Christ's righteousness, as if it were against a *personal righteousness or holiness*. I declare to you, in the name of *Jehovah*, that the contrary is true, and that you'll never live according to the law as a rule of holiness, till you be *dead to the law* as a covenant and condition of life. *He that hath ears to hear, let him hear*. If the *light of the glorious gospel*, even the *light of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ*, did once shine into your heart, then beholding this glory of the Lord, you would be changed into the same image from glory to glory by the Spirit of the Lord; yea, to believe the gospel savingly, is the way to fulfil perfectly. The true believer may be said to fulfil the law, both as it is a covenant, and as it is a rule: As it is a covenant, he fulfils it perfectly and legally in his head and surety, in whom he hath perfect everlasting righteousness; and as it is a rule, he fulfils it perfectly also, with a perfection of parts here, and a perfection of degrees hereafter: And in both these respects may that word be explained, *Rom. 1. 3, 4.* where the *righteousness of the law* is said to be fulfilled in believers, whose character is, *that they walk not after the flesh, but after the spirit*. Now, I would press you to this spiritual walk, this holy life, which is a *living unto God*; for tho' your holiness be not necessary for your justification, which is the damnable doctrine of popery; tho', I say, it be not necessary for your justification, because you're *dead to the law* in point of justification, yet it is necessary, because you're *dead to the law*, for this very end, that you may *live unto God* in point of sanctification, and that you may be *holy*. More particularly, for motives, consider the necessity of holiness in these following particulars:

(1.) It is necessary in respect of God; and here (to use the method of a great divine on this head) consider how the will of God, the love of God, the glory of God, obliges you in particular, believer, to live unto God. 1. The sovereign will of God obliges you to holiness, 1 *Thef. 4. 3.* This is the will of God, even your sanctification. It is the will

will of God the Father; he hath ordained it: *We are his workmanship created in Christ Jesus unto good Works, which God before had ordained that we should walk therein.* It is the will of God the Son, Joh. 15. 16. *I have ordained you that you should bring forth fruit, and that it should remain.* It is the will of God the Holy Ghost, whom we grieve by our sins, if we do not study holiness. 2. The love of God obliges you to holiness; yea, this is the end of the electing love of the Father, the purchasing love of the Son, and the operating love of the Holy Ghost. It is the peculiar end of the electing love of the Father, *who hath chosen us that we should be holy and unblameable, Eph. 1. 4. before him in love; he hath chosen us to salvation, thro' sanctification of the Spirit.* It is the peculiar end of the purchasing love of the Son, *who gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify to himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works, Tit. 2. 14. And who loved his church, and gave himself for it, that he might sanctify and cleanse it by the washing of water, and present it to himself a glorious church, not having spot or wrinkle, nor any such thing, but that it should be holy and without blemish, Eph. 5. 25, 26, 27.* It is also the peculiar end of the operating love of the Holy Ghost, *his whole work in us, and for us, consisting in preparing us for, and enabling us to the duties of holiness, and bringing forth the fruit thereof in us.* Believer, if you have any regard to the sovereignty of God, Father, Son and Holy Ghost, any regard to the love of God, Father, Son and Holy Ghost, it obliges you to holiness of heart & life. 3. The glory of God obliges you to holiness, and makes it necessary. Would you glorify the Father, *then let your light so shine before men, that they seeing your good works, may glorify God. Herein is my Father glorified, that ye bear much fruit.* Would you glorify the Son? It is the will of God, *that all men honour the Son even as they honour the Father.* And how is this done? Even by believing in him, and obeying him; *Ye are my friends, ye evidence yourselves to be so, if ye do whatsoever I command you.* Would you glorify the Holy Ghost? It is by studying Holiness; *for we are his temple, and holiness becomes his house and temple for ever; and he is dishonoured when his temple is defiled.* Surely, believer, when I speak to you, I cannot be supposed to speak to one, that neither regards the sovereign will, love nor glory of God, Father, Son and Holy Ghost; tho' your holiness should all be lost, and never regarded, which is impossible, yet here is reason enough for it.

(2.) In respect of yourselves, you're necessarily obliged to holiness; your own honour and peace are concerned here: *It is profitable; Godliness is great gain, having the promise of this life, and that which is to come. It is pleasant; For wisdom's ways are pleasantness,*
and

and all her paths are peace. *There is no peace, saith my God, to the wicked; but the fruit of righteousness is peace, and the effect of righteousness, quietness & assurance for ever.* Yea, it is honourable, and the greatest honour you can be advanced unto; to be holy is to be like unto God.

(3.) In respect of *others*, you're obliged to holiness; it may tend to *their conviction and conversion*. On the one hand, it may tend to *their conviction*, and stop their mouths, who are enemies of God, and that both here and hereafter. 1. It may stop their mouths here, as you see, 1 Pet. 2. 15. *This is the will of God, that with well-doing, you may put to silence the ignorance of foolish men.* Ignorant fools may call you hypocrites, they may call you *Antinomians*, and enemies to the law: Now, by well-doing, you give them an unanswerable document, that tho' you be *dead to the law* as a covenant, yet you put *honour* upon the law as a rule of *holiness*, and so make them ashamed of their base calumny, according to that 2 Pet. 3. 16. *Having a good conscience, that whereas they speak evil of you, as of evil doers, they may be ashamed that falsely accuse your good conversation in Christ.* And, 2. Hereafter, in the day of judgment, it is said, *the saints shall judge the world*, not only as they will be assessors with the Son of God, and applaud him in all his judicial proceedings; but in regard their *holiness* and *good works* will tend to the confusion and conviction of the wicked: And indeed the good works of the saints will meet them one day, with so changed a countenance, that they shall scarce know them: They see them now to be all black, defiled and deformed; but they will then be bro't forth beautiful and glorious, to the shame of the wicked, *Mat. 25*. On the other hand, your holiness may tend to the *conversion* of others, 1 Pet. 2. 12. The holiness of professors hath sometimes tended to the conversion of the profane, who, when the day of their gracious *visitation* hath come, have glorified God upon that account, 1 Pet. 3. 1, 2. and therefore says Paul, Tit. 3. 18. *This is a faithful saying, & these things I will, that thou affirm constantly, that they which have believed in God, be careful to maintain good works; for these things are good and profitable unto men.*

(4.) In respect of your *state*, you stand obliged to holiness. Are you in a justified state, accepted into friendship with a holy God, of *purser eyes than to behold iniquity*? Should you not evidence your justification by your sanctification? Is it not necessary that you should be *holy*, if you dwell in the presence, walk in the sight, and lie in the bosom of such a *holy God*? Are you in a sanctified state? Wherefore was you regenerated? Wherefore got you a *new heart*, & a *new nature*, & a *holy principle of grace*, but that you should be holy? Are you in an adopted state? Why so? but that you should live like the children of God, and be *followers of God, as dear Children*.

dren? O, was you not justified, adopted & sanctified for this end, that you might *live unto God*? If we be believers, what a shame is it for us, to live so unsuitably to our *state*, as many times we do? Is that all the thanks we give to God for his favours, that we should trample his statutes under our feet, dishonour his name, break his law, and grieve his Spirit? It does not become you, it is not like you, believer. He hath loved you with an *everlasting love*, and drawn you with *loving-kindness*; will you act like a devil in enmity against him, because he hath acted like a *God of love* towards you? O fy for shame, believer, *Tell it not in Gath, &c.* Have we not the *hope of glory*? And shall we not, *having this hope, purify ourselves, even as he is pure*? Are we partakers of the precious promises? Then, having these promises, dearly beloved, *let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh, &c.* Are we heirs of glory? And shall we not seek to have our right and title unto glory cleared? *Rev. 22. 14. Blessed are they that do his commandments, that they may have right to the tree of life, and may enter in through the gates to the city*; that is, either that your right may be made evident, according to that word, *Ye are my friends, if ye do whatsoever I command you*; that is, you thus evidence yourselves to be my friends; or, concerning this right, know there is a right of *merit* and a right of *meetness*, both necessary; a right of *merit*, believer, you have not in yourself, but in Christ; and that is established in justification, thro' *the righteousness of Christ*; a right of *meetness* you must have in yourself from Christ, and that is in *sanctification and holiness*: What shall I say? Are you not *dead to the law*, that you may *live unto God*? Are you not to testify your gratitude towards him, that hath provided another law-righteousness than your own? Are you not to separate yourself from the world, that are walking in the broad way to hell and damnation, and under the curse of the law and the wrath of God? Are you not *delivered from the wrath to come*, and of all men in the world under the greatest obligations to be *holy*? Should you not study to please that God who hath pitied you? Hath he not *washed you in his blood*, and ought you not, through his grace, to study to let it be known to the world, that his blood hath a *virtue to sanctify you*? Yea, hath he promised, *sin shall not have dominion over you, because ye are not under the law, but under grace*? Should ye not study, thro' his grace, to let it be seen, that his promise is verified in you?

(5.) In respect of the *danger* you are in, if you do not *study holiness*. If you be a child of God, you are indeed freed from the *curse of the covenant of works*, that penalty can never reach you; but is it nothing to you, that your heavenly Father should chastise

you, hide his face from you, *deny an answer to your prayers*, hide your *evidences* of heaven from you, give you up to the tyranny of your lusts, and then take *vengeance* on your *inventious*?

(6.) In respect of the *advantage* herein. You are *obliged to holiness*: Why? In this way you may come to live joyfully, and die comfortably; in this way your integrity may be supported, as it was with *Job*; in this way you may come to have *sweet communion* with God, according to Christ's promise, *Joh 14. 21. He that hath my commandments and keepeth them, he it is that loves me, and I will love him, &c.* In this way you shall be fitted for serving him in your generation, *2 Tim. 2. 19.* In this way you will have an *evidence of your justification*, *1 Joh 3. 19.* In this way you shall bring down the blessing of God on every work of your hand, all that ye do shall prosper, *Psal. 1. 4.* Yea, in this way you shall become a *publick-good*, a *common-good*, a *bleffing*, and a *benefit* to all about you, both in communicating good to them with whom you converse, and in diverting judgments from these that are about you, as ten righteous men would have preserved *Sodom*. O what a *Sodom* is the present generation! And as it is like *Sodom* and *Gomorrhah*, and perhaps a thousand times worse, in respect of sins against *law* and *gospel-light*, which *Sodom* never had; so, if the Lord do not leave us a remnant, we shall be like *Sodom* and *Gomorrhah*, in respect of judgments. All these things, & a thousand more that might be adduced, should press you mightily to the *study of holiness*, and living unto God; you are *dead to the law*, that you may *live to God*. But next,

2dly, For *direction*. *Quest.* O how shall I live unto God? I shall offer you no *directions* but one, which my text leads me to, and that is, if you would *live unto God*, O study to be more and more *dead to the law*: The more you are *dead to the law* as a covenant, the more you will live according to the law as a rule: What? Do you not find a *legal spirit* that remains with you, and weakens your hands in *duties of holiness*? When you are wrestling at duties in your own natural strength, it is a legal old covenant way; and do you not find it a hard, heavy, wearisome task? I believe there is *little holiness* there. But when you are leaning on the strength of Christ, do you not find your soul enlarged and quickened in duty? When you perform duty from a principle of *slavish fear*, that is a *legal way*; and do you not find your hands weakened, and little heart to the work? But on the contrary, when the *love of Christ* constrains you, is it not then that you *run with pleasure in the ways of his commandments*? Yea, sin hath dominion over you, when you are, and in so far as you are under the law; for the *motions of sin are by the law*: The law irritates corruption, and cannot subdue it; for it

it is the grace of God, revealed in the gospel, that effectually teaches to deny ungodliness and worldly lusts. To be dead to the law, is to be married to Christ; it is to be brought off from the first Adam, and united to the second Adam. And, believer, as you are in Christ, so you are to abide in him, if you would be fruitful, and live unto God, *John 15. 4. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, except it abide in the vine; no more can ye, except ye abide in me.* Now, to abide in him, is just to be strong in the grace that is in him, and to continue to be strong in him by faith; and this is necessary in order to fruitfulness: As, tho' an imp be grafted into the root, if it be not fastened and take firm rooting, it does not come to fruitfulness: so the sinner is made a christian, by being cut off from the law, and ingrafted into Christ; but he is not a fruitful christian, if he do not take a fast hold of Christ, and draw virtue from him: Therefore, *abide in me, and I in you,* says Christ; and O but 'tis well said! For, if he do not abide in us, we will never abide in him by the grace of faith, unless he abide in us by the spirit of faith. If we provoke God to take away his spirit, our faith fades, fails and withers; and then we depart from the Lord by an evil heart of unbelief. Here is the way then to live unto God, and to bring forth fruit to him, even to die more and more to the first husband, the law, and to live by faith upon your blessed husband, Christ. *Quest. But by what outward means should we thus live?* May we not neglect duties, since we are dead to the law? Nay, God forbid. It was the devil's temptation to Christ, to cast himself headlong from the temple, because God had promised to preserve him in all his ways; so, believer, God hath promised to preserve you, he hath promised that sin shall not have dominion over you, and that you shall never perish; and is the devil tempting you therefore to throw your self down headlong from the temple, and from temple means and ordinances, publick and private? O tell that abominable devil, as Christ did, *It is written, thou shalt not tempt the Lord thy God.* If you neglect means, you tempt the Lord your God, who hath commanded you to use means, and made this the method of the communication of grace and strength, to wit, in the use of such means, as faith, prayer, reading, hearing, meditation, watchfulness: Therefore, O be diligent in the use of these means; only do not trust to the means, by putting them in Christ's room; give means their own room, and do not expect, without the grace of the new covenant, that means will do the business. Grace is the spring from which the living water does flow, and means are the channel and pipes thro' which the water is conveyed; and if the fountain do not send out streams, all the conduits and pipes in the world can never convey it unto us. Therefore

in the use of means, be still looking on the Lord : Look to him, both for grace to use the means, and for grace to bless the means. If you lay stress upon the means, they become unprofitable : In the use of these means, O cry, cry mightily to the Lord, that he would kill your self-confidence ; cry for *the spirit of life*, to quicken you, that you *may live unto God* ; for, 'till the spirit of life enter into the dry bones, there will be no stirring, no motion, no living to God. Cry for the spirit of faith, so as you may say with *Paul* in the context, *I live, yet not I, but Christ liveth in me ; and the life I live, is by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me.* O cry for faith and the assurance of faith : No doubt one may have faith, and yet want that assurance, which we commonly call so ; but whether there be some kind of assurance or persuasion in the nature of faith, is a question I do not here enter upon : Only, this I am sure of, from the word of God, *that doubting is no part of faith* ; for faith and doubting are as opposite as light and darkness. Some believers indeed have many doubts, many doubts, many doubts ; why ? because they have little faith, little faith, little faith ; *O thou of little faith, wherefore didst thou doubt ?* And I find the believer *that walks in darkness, and hath no light*, is directed to faith as the antidote against his darkness and doubting ; *Let him trust in the name of the Lord, and stay himself upon his God.* Cry, I say, for the spirit of faith, and faith will work by love : Cry for a gospel-spirit ; for I testify in the Lord's name, that gospel-holiness will never flourish among us, or in the generation, 'till we be more free of a legal spirit, and *that we will not live unto God, unless we be dead to the law.*

The Harmony of the divine Attributes displayed, in the Redemption and Salvation of Sinners by JESUS CHRIST.

Being a SERMON preached at *Dunfermline* upon the 29th of *September* 1723, immediately after the Celebration of the LORD'S SUPPER.

By the Rev. Mr. RALPH ERSKINE.

PSAL. LXXXV. 10.

Mercy and truth are met together : Righteousness and peace have kissed each other.

MY friends, at a solemn marriage-supper there is usually a friendly company who meet together ; and when, at such an

an occasion, all things are managed with sobriety and decency, it is very joyful and pleasant to the parties concerned, to see the members of the meeting, with mutual kindness to one another, harmoniously gracing the solemnity: Even so *at the marriage-supper of the lamb*, I mean, the sacrament of the Lord's supper, which we have been celebrating, there is a joyful company, not of men and women, for that would make but a poor earthly meeting; nor yet of saints and angels, for that would make but at best a mean creature-meeting; but it is a glorious delightful company of divine attributes and perfections, in the sweetest concord meeting together, and embracing one another. This wonderful conjunction of divine excellencies is the friendly company that meets together, to put honour upon this nuptial solemnity; and to see them thus harmoniously embracing one another in the salvation of sinners, *is the sweetest sight that the bride, the lamb's wife, shall ever see at the marriage-supper*, whether it be at the lower or upper table. There is a great meeting in *this house*, but an infinitely greater in this *text*; a meeting of divine excellencies, to grace the solemnity of the marriage-supper of the lamb: *Mercy and truth are met together, righteousness and peace have kissed each other.* When God made heaven and earth out of nothing, he made them by a word, without any other ceremony; but, when he made man, there was some particular solemnity, a grand council, as it were, of the glorious Trinity called; *Come, let us make man after our image.* But now man having unmade himself, if God hath a mind for the praise of his own glorious grace to make him up again, *by a new creation in Christ Jesus*, there must be a more glorious solemnity yet; not only a council of the adorable Trinity, but a grand meeting of all the attributes of God, to consult their own glory that was marr'd, and reconcile their own interests, and seemingly contradictory claims: For the sin of man had brought real confusion among all the creatures of God on earth, yea, and a seeming war among all the attributes of God in heaven, concerning the execution of the sentence of the law upon mankind, the transgressor thereof; some of these attributes, such as *Mercy*, saying, if the sentence of death be executed upon them, how shall I be glorified? Others, such as *Truth*, saying, if the sentence be not executed, how shall I be glorified? Is it to be expected that such opposites can meet together? Or, if they meet, that they will agree together cordially? Yea, tho' it be beyond the expectation of men and angels, yet, behold, it is here celebrated with a song? *Mercy and truth are met together, righteousness and peace have kissed each other.*

This *Pſalm* conſiſts of a *prayer of faith*, and an *answer of peace*. 1ſt, The Church's prayer, from the beginning to the 8th v. where they are praying for the removal of many tokens of God's diſpleaſure they were under, notwithstanding their return out of the *Babylonish* captivity. 2dly, The *answer of peace* that is made to their prayer, from v. 8. and downward. We have here the *psalmiſt* liſtning and waiting for the answer; *I will hear what God the Lord will ſpeak*; the answer itſelf in general is peace, *He will ſpeak peace to his people*, &c. If he give not outward peace, yet he will ſuggeſt inward peace, ſpeaking that to their hearts by his ſpirit, which he had ſpoken to their ears by his word. Whatever other ſort of peace and proſperity they enjoyed, when at length the children of the captivity, after a great deal of toil, had gained a ſettlement in their own land, yet peace with God, and ſpiritual proſperity under the *Meſſiah's* kingdom, was the great thing here promiſed, and prophesied of; and that is a peace that lays the ſoul under the ſtrongeſt obligation to keep at a diſtance from all ſin, which is the greateſt folly, and to beware of backſliding thereto. *But let them not return again to folly*: For true peace with God brings in war with ſin. But this is further explained in the main leading part thereof, namely, *ſalvation and glory*, ver. 9. *Surely his ſalvation is near to them that fear him, that glory may dwell in our land*. Now, whatever other ſalvation be here imported, Chriſt is the great ſalvation intended. When he is near in view, then the believer cries out, with old *Simeon*, *Now mine eyes have ſeen thy ſalvation*: And, whatever other glory and honour be here imported, Chriſt is the chief glory here intended: When he goes away from a land, then *Ichabod, the glory is departed*; but, *where he abides, glory dwells*; for he is called, *A light to lighten the Gentiles, and the glory of his people* *Israel*. But now, if we would know what ſort of glory it is that appears when Chriſt is revealed, why it is even the glorious harmony of all the divine attributes illuſtriouſly ſhining in him, who is both *our ſalvation and our glory*; *Mercy and truth are met together, righteouſneſs and peace have kiſſed each other*. Now, tho' theſe words may be applied to the happy meeting of graces in men, upon the revelation of Chriſt in the ſoul, which I may afterwards obſerve in the ſequel, and in which ſenſe ſome interpreters underſtand it; yet I take it mainly to import *the happy meeting of perfections in God to be glorified in the ſinner's ſalvation by Jeſus Chriſt*, which is a gloſs that no interpreter I have had occaſion to conſult does neglect or omit; and, if any of them ſhould miſs it, I think they would miſs the very ground-work and foundation of all other happy meetings: *Mercy and truth have met together, righteouſneſs and peace have kiſſed each other*. In

In the words you may observe, *1st*, The *members* of the meeting. *2dly*, the *manner* of the meeting. *3dly*, The *harmony* of the meeting. *4thly*, The *strangeness* of it.

Observe, I say, 1. The *members* of the meeting *mercy, truth, righteousness, peace*. I hope I need not caution some in this assembly, that they beware of imagining these various perfections of God, under the names of *mercy, truth, righteousness* and *peace*, as if they were really distinct and different things in God; or, as if they were really different parties, making a formal consultation, in order to their agreement: *For God is one*, and cannot be divided; *he is one infinite, eternal and unchangeable Being*; there are not distinct and different things in his nature and essence, however his perfections be thus represented to our weak, finite capacities, which cannot understand the perfections of God but in several parts, as it were. By *mercy* then, here, we are to understand God himself, as he is a *merciful and gracious God*: By *truth* we are to understand *the same God*, as he is a *true and faithful God*: By *righteousness* we may understand his *justice*, or God himself, as he is a *just and righteous God*; and, by *peace*, the same God, as he is the *God of peace*, and a *God reconciling the world to himself*. So that the whole comes to this; it is the great and eternal God himself, consulting with himself, in a manner becoming his infinite and adorable perfections, how to glorify himself in all his glorious attributes, in the way of saving sinners in and by Jesus Christ.

2. The *manner* of the meeting. These excellencies and perfections of God meet together, as it were, in pairs; *mercy and truth, righteousness and peace*, going hand in hand into the council-chamber, to concert the matters that concerned their highest glory and honour.

3. The *harmony* of the meeting. Having met together, they *kiss and embrace each other*. *Mercy and peace*, as it were, express their complacency in *truth and righteousness*, and *truth and righteousness* express their complacency in *mercy and peace*, and delight in one another's honour: For not one attribute of the divine majesty can or will be glorified to the dishonour of any other attribute, but mutually embrace each other in their everlasting arms, for supporting the honour of each other's excellency with complicated ineffable endearment.

4. The *strangeness* and remarkableness of this meeting. For the agreement of these parties met together is the more remarkable, in regard of their jarring and opposite claims: For that *mercy and peace should meet together*, and agree in favour to save us, and that *truth and righteousness should meet together*, and agree in jus-

rice to destroy us, were not so strange and remarkable. And, if they had kept separate and remain'd so, man had been for ever separate from God, and some darling attributes had never been glorified in man's salvation, our sin and rebellion having in a manner set the attributes of God at such variance, as nothing else than infinite wisdom could provide a sufficient answer to all their contradictory claims and interests, which behoved to be done ere the proposal concerning the salvation of any sinner could be gone into. Why, says *mercy*, it is my interest that the sinner live and not perish, that I may be magnified, since I have said, that *I will have mercy on whom I will have mercy*. Well but, says *truth*, it is my interest as a God of truth that the sinner die, since I have said, that *the soul that sinneth shall die*. Yea, and says *righteousness*, I must join with *truth*, and claim the sinner's damnation for the advancement of my interest and honour; for I have said, and will not gainsay it, that *I will by no means clear the guilty*. O but, says *peace*, I must join in with *mercy*, and claim the sinner's salvation, for advancing my interest; for I *create the fruit of the lips, peace, peace to him that is afar off, and to him that is near*. So there appears to be a war in heaven among these infinitely adorable attributes and perfections, while *mercy and peace* are saying, we must have glory in shewing undeserved pity on the sinner, and yet *truth and righteousness* are saying, we must have glory in executing the deserved vengeance. And now, O men and angels! pray tell us, can these *antipodes* meet together? Can these jarring-like attributes of the divine Majesty embrace each other in the salvation of the sinner, so as to get all their demands answered, and their different interests advanced? What say you, children of men, can you devise how these differences can be compos'd for your own safety? No, no; *human wisdom* says, *It is not in me*. What say ye, angels, that *excel in strength and wisdom*? Can you contrive the reconciliation of these irreconcilable demands? No, no; *angelical wisdom* says, *It is not in me*. Well, since creature-wisdom fails, may we address the infinite wisdom of the Deity and enquire at a higher hand? Behold, now we have taken upon us to speak unto the Lord, who are but dust and ashes: What sayst thou, O infinitely wise Jehovah? Can these opposite claims be reconciled, to the satisfaction of all parties, and the salvation of the sinner? Yea, it is done, *it is done in a crucified Christ*, whom we have been remembering at this solemnity; and therefore we may sing this marvellous song upon an after review of it, saying, *Glory, glory, glory to God, that mercy and truth are met together*, &c.

OBSERVATION, *That in the salvation of sinners by Jesus Christ, the glorious*

glorious attributes and perfections of God do harmoniously conspire and embrace one another. Or thus, That in Christ crucified for the redemption of sinners, all the glorious attributes of the divine Majesty do harmoniously conspire, and embrace one another.

When God is well pleased, no perfection of God is displeas'd; *but God is well pleas'd in Christ*: And therefore every perfection of his nature is well pleas'd, none of them displeas'd or dissatisfis'd, but all pleas'd and satisfis'd to the full. See *Hos.* 2. 19, 20. This is declar'd by an audible voice from heaven, saying, *This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleas'd*, Mat. 3. last. And why? Even for the reason you have, *Isa.* 42. 21. We see *he hath brought in a righteousness* answering the demands of all that stood in the way of our salvation: Did *divine truth* and *righteousness* say, that the threatenings of the law must be executed, so sure as God is true, as well as its precept obtemperated and obeyed? Well, can a righteousness, satisfisying both these demands, do the business? Yea, says *justice* itself, in concert with *mercy*, if there be but one righteous man in the *Sodom* of this earth, that can satisfis my broken and violat'd law, in its command of perfect obedience, and in its demand of complete satisfisction; then I will spare all the elect world, for the sake of that one righteous man, and, *By his knowledge shall my righteous servant justify many*. Well, says *mercy*, here is one whose name is *wonderful*, and whom they call *Immanuel*, God-man, who hath *brought in an everlasting righteousness*, both active and passive, suiting the precept and penalty of the law: Why then, might one attribute say to another, we are all pleas'd, and with one consent let it be proclaim'd on earth, that *the Lord is well pleas'd for his righteousness sake; for he hath magnified the law, and made it honourable*. And now the great affair of man's salvation is so well concert'd and contriv'd, that God may have mercy upon them, and be at peace with poor sinners, without any wrong to his truth and righteousness: The attributes of God have met and agreed, and seal'd their agreement with a kiss of infinite kindness, harmony and satisfisction; *Mercy and truth are met together, righteousness and peace have kiss'd each other*.

Now, that I may speak to this purpose a little more fully, the method I propose is,

1. To touch a little at this question, who are the *members* of this meeting? Or, what are these *attributes of God*, which do thus harmoniously conspire together, proposing their various claims?

2. I would enquire, *when*, and *where* it is that *they meet together*, and embrace one another?

3. *How*, and after what *manner* it is, that *they meet together*, and kiss one another?

4. *Why*, or for what *reason* it is, that they have met together thus harmoniously? 5. Make some *application*.

First, I would speak a little of the *members* of this meeting, or the attributes of God that thus harmoniously conspire together. We need not ask, at whose *instance* this meeting is called? It is at the instance, and by the order of JEHOVAH, Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, one God; his sovereign will and pleasure resolving, in a manner like himself, to concert with himself. Neither need we ask, what is the *occasion* of the meeting? Why, man had sinned, and all mankind, by their sin, was involved under the curse of the law, and wrath of God; and yet God had resolved and decreed, for the glory of his grace and mercy, to save a world of sinners, *elect according to the foreknowledge of God*. And while *grace, mercy and peace* are upon this loving design of saving sinners, it was fit that *justice, truth and righteousness* should be called in to the same council, to appear for their interest; since the proposal of such a salvation of sinners seems to encroach upon their honour, which required the vengeance due to be executed upon the *sinner*. Well, the meeting being called, these glorious perfections, *mercy, truth, righteousness and peace* appear; *mercy and peace* full of pity, *truth and justice* full of fury, which made a seeming controversy in heaven. We may suppose *Adam arraigned in the name of all mankind, and standing as a trembling prisoner at the bar*; yea, his very tongue chained up in silence, by reason of sin and guilt, and he sentenced to eternal death, and ready to have the sentence executed upon him and all his posterity. We may suppose, next, *the several members of the meeting opening the assembly*, by putting in their several claims; and we may observe them in the order of the text.

I. MERCY, being full of pity towards the miserable, comes walking along *in the cool of the evening*, and meekly craving leave to speak, notwithstanding that *truth and justice* be present at the meeting: *It is true*, says MERCY, *That man hath sinned, and just that man should die; but art not thou, O Lord, full of pity and compassion, the Lord, the Lord God, pardoning iniquity transgression and sin? What tho' man hath sinned and is all over befouled with mire and blood? yet look upon him in love, and destroy not the work of thy own hand; he was made a child after thy own image: Tho' now his garment be rent and all bloody, yet see, is not this thy son's coat? JOSEPH is gone, and wilt thou lose BENJAMIN also? Angels are gone, and shall men be lost also? Miriads of angels are fallen, and that irrecoverably; and shall man perish also? O spare him! is he not a little one? and his soul shall live. I see,* might MERCY say, *that TRUTH and RIGHTEOUSNESS or JUSTICE, which have the poor sinner in their chains, are here present ready to speak*

in this assembly for their interest and honour against the criminal: But let it be marked in the minutes of this court, that MERCY craves to be magnified and must have honour at this meeting. Well, MERCY having spoken her mind,

2. TRUTH comes in naked and open-mouthed, *in favour of God's faithfulness, and in opposition to man's perfidy and treachery, saying, I have heard what MERCY craves in favour of this criminal; but, O thou faithful and true God, the word is gone out of thy mouth, and there is no revoking of it; thou hast said to Adam, In the day thou eatest thou shalt surely die; and now he hath eaten, he hath sinned, and shall he not die? What, is there Yea and Nay with God, who hath faithfulness for the girdle of his loins? Must not God's word of threatening take effect? Yea, heaven and earth shall pass away, but a jot of his word shall not fall to the ground: And therefore, whatever be the demand of MERCY, let it be marked in the records of this meeting, that TRUTH craves to be magnified; and that its honour be not infringed in the least, by any claim or plea that MERCY had brought in.* Well, TRUTH having spoken, gives way to her sister justice; and thereupon,

3. RIGHTEOUSNESS or justice comes in, and impleads against the rebel sinner: *Righteousness, I say, bringing her scales in her hand, in which she had tried him, and found him lighter than vanity itself: he is weighed in the balances, and found wanting; yea, not only wanting and destitute of all that perfection and obedience which the law requir'd, but full of all that rebellion which the law discharged, having sinned and come short of the glory of God; and so is righteously subjected to the sanction of the law, and sentence of eternal death: And therefore, says RIGHTEOUSNESS, O thou infinitely righteous and just judge, MERCY can have no hearing in this court to the prejudice of thy honour and glory, as a just and righteous God. As TRUTH hath pronounced the sentence of wrath & vengeance against sin; so, if thou be a just God, the infinite vengeance due to such an infinite evil must be executed to the full. This criminal is my prisoner, and loosed he shall not be, till I get full satisfaction, and my sword be drunk with blood; for, vengeance is mine, and I will repay it, saith the Lord; and I will by no means clear the guilty: And therefore let it be register'd in this court, that RIGHTEOUSNESS craves to be magnified, and JUSTICE to be glorified in a full satisfaction; and this is claimed and demanded in the name of the righteous and just judge of the universe; and shall not the judge of all the earth do right? Here is the language of justice. What then? O! shall the demand of mercy be utterly run down by these powerful opposing pleas of truth and righteousness? Is there no friend in this court to take mercy's part? Yea, there is: Therefore,*

4. PEACE immediately steps in with an olivebranch in her hand
say-

saying, *Fury is not in me; and may I speak a word in behalf of forlorn mankind? may I offer a meek answer to the claim of TRUTH and RIGHTEOUSNESS, which they have advanced in opposition to the demand of MERCY? for, a soft answer turneth away wrath. Well, PEACE being allowed a hearing, proposes a healing overture saying, O thou God of peace, may not an atonement be made, a reconciliation thought of, betwixt thy Majesty and thy creature? May not one be found out to stand in the gap, and bear off this wrath, to become surety for this great debtor, to acquit and liberate this poor miserable prisoner and criminal? May not one be found out that will make up the breach, by vindicating the honour of TRUTH, and satisfying the demands of JUSTICE, and so making way for the claim of MERCY; and then all differences may be peaceably composed. so as we may harmoniously agree and kiss one another? O! may not then a peace-maker be found out, in whom we may find all our demands satisfied at once, without prejudging one another; why, if such an one can be found, surely his name shall be called wonderful, counsellor, the prince of peace. Well, the overture and proposal of peace being recorded among the rest of the archives of the glorious court; and it being such a peaceable overture, no member of the meeting could disprove it: But the great question then is, how it could be effectuate? For, if one man sin against another, a man might determine; but, if a man sin against *Jehovah*, who shall intreat for him? For when an infinite majesty is offended, who among finite creatures is able to satisfy it, or, *What can countervail the king's loss? Wherewith then shall he come before the Lord, or bow himself before the most high God? Will thousands of rams do it, or ten thousand rivers of oil, or the fruit of the body for the sin of the soul? No, no; sacrifice and offering thou wouldst not; for it is impossible that the blood of bulls or of goats should take away sin, Heb. 10. 5.* What then, will angels become surety for the sin of man? No, no; tho' they had a will, they have not power, they have but oil enough in their vessels for their own lamps. What then shall be done? Why, might *Peace* say, let us not stand in a demur; we have infinite *Wisdom* here present with us at this meeting, let us hear her judgment concerning this peaceable proposal, if it be possible that such a person can be found in whom we may harmoniously centre at last. Then *Wisdom* sits down upon the privy-council bench, &c, being full of eyes, does gravely determine this doubtful case with a happy issue: *It is expedient, says WISDOM, that one die for the people, that the whole nation of unkind perish not; but he must be such a righteous one, that can justify many; yea, he that will undertake this, must be finite, that he may die; and infinite, that he may conquer death, and satisfy infinite justice: But lo, there is none such to be found among all the creatures that**

ever God made, neither can such an one be found; unless the Son of God himself, the second person of the glorious Trinity, shall be pleased, by an unspeakable mystery, to become flesh, made of a woman, made under the law, to redeem them that are under the law, that they may receive the adoption of sons, Gal. 4. 4. That so, when he, that hath no sin, shall become sin for man; man who hath no righteousness, may become the righteousness of God through him, 2 Cor. 5. 1st: And thus MERCY may be magnified, TRUTH justified, RIGHTEOUSNESS cleared, JUSTICE satisfied, PEACE concluded, and all contented. WISDOM having determined how this proposal of peace might be effectual, all parties hearkned, as it were, with pleasure, and willingly subscribed to the happy overture; and then heaven and earth conspired together in solemn thanksgiving, saying, *Glory to God in the highest, on earth peace, and good will towards men.* Thus the jarring attributes of God are now reconciled; and behold, the members of the meeting, that seemed to be at the greatest variance, are embracing one another in their arms; *Mercy and truth are met together, &c.*

The second thing was, *when and where* did these blessed parties meet together? When we speak of a remarkable meeting, it is usual to enquire into the time and place of the meeting. Now, the *place* where, and the *time* when, as to this wonderful meeting, are two questions, which I put together; for they may both be answered at once, because of their near relation.

1st. Then, in general, the *meeting-place*, or the place of meeting, is CHRIST; and the time of the meeting was when Christ put himself in our room, or substitute himself in the place of the sinner, to answer all the demands of all the members of the meeting, who had any objection against our salvation, or any thing to lay to our charge. Where then, and when did they *meet together and kiss each other*? Why, it was even in Christ, when he took our law-room, to pay our debt, and purchase our liberty in such a manner as *mercy* and *peace* might have their interests advanced, without injury to *truth* and *righteousness*; that *mercy* might have vent to the credit of *truth*, and *peace* might be proclaimed to the honour of *righteousness*, and the sinner saved to the satisfaction of *justice*. They meet together and embrace each other in him as the surety, *the surety of the better testament*, Heb. 7. 22. We were *debtors* to the mandatory and minatory part of the law, arraigned at the instance of divine *justice* to pay the debt; Christ substitutes himself in our room, and comes under the law to pay the whole debt. It is true, the debt was personal, and *justice* had a demand upon the person that sinned, by virtue of the covenant of works; but that covenant never excluded

a surety, tho' it provided none. The law promised life, upon our personal obedience; but, in case we fail, it revealed no surety to make out an obedience in our room. There behoved indeed to be a secret reserve in the covenant of works, whereby the perfect obedience of another was not excluded: For, if the covenant of works had absolutely excluded a surety in our room, then the covenant of grace had been excluded, and our salvation had been impossible after our fall; but, tho' the covenant of works did not exclude a surety, yet that covenant did neither provide nor reveal a surety: This is done in the covenant of grace, which is Christ as surety fulfilling for us the covenant of works, in all the articles of it. Now, is truth and faithfulness at any loss here? No, the truth of the promise & threatning both, of the law of works, is fulfilled. On the one hand, the promise of eternal life made to perfect obedience; which, tho' we forfeited in our own person, yet we receive in the person of Christ; the promise of life upon the ground and condition of perfect obedience being fulfilled to us in him, who hath yielded that perfect obedience in our room: On the other hand, divine *truth* and faithfulness, in the threatning of the law, which was death, is glorified, in that it is fulfilled upon the surety; while we, who came under the sentence of death in the first *Adam*, undergo that death in the second. Again, is *righteousness* and *justice* at any loss by this surety in our room? No, no; whether we look upon it as vindictive or retributive justice, vindictive justice is displayed in its utmost severity upon Christ; *Awake, O sword, against my shepherd, and the man that is my fellow:* And so the sword is drunk in his blood to infinite satisfaction. Retributive justice is gloriously displayed also, in the sinner's being rewarded, justified, saved upon this ground. It is true, might Justice say, *I could have demanded satisfaction upon the sinner himself in his own person; but, as I can sustain no injury to my honour by such a surety as this, whom they call EMMANUEL, God man, so I find my honour and interest, instead of being impaired, is advanced by this exchange of persons: For, tho' I should damn the sinner to all eternity, I'll never get such full and complete satisfaction upon any finite creature, as I will get by one stroke of my avenging sword upon that person of infinite dignity; and so it pleased the Lord to bruise him.* Why then, *they meet together and embrace one another* in him, as a surety; and, if truth and righteousness be both pleased to the full, the parties cannot but all agree, and embrace each other. Again they meet together and embrace one another in him, as a sacrifice, *a sacrifice and offering of a sweet smelling savour unto God, Eph. 5. 2.* Why, *he offered up himself by the eternal spirit.* O great! Even by his eternal

head; a valuable sacrifice indeed! They meet together in him, as a propitiation, *Rom. 3. 25. Whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in his blood, to declare his righteousness, &c.* Behold him righteous in shewing mercy; here is the atonement, the propitiation, that very word which the *septuagint* calls the *mercy-seat* in the old testament; and it is the word that the poor public in made use of, when he was seeking mercy, saying, *God be merciful to me a sinner.* He remembered this mercy-seat and propitiation. It is not simple mercy that he sought, but mercy through a propitiation; he looked to the blood of atonement, to the sacrificed lamb of God, saying, Give me mercy for this; by that solemn propitiation be thou propitious to me. Here it is, that *mercy* and *justice* meet together. They meet together in him, as a ransom, *Job 33. 24. Deliver his soul from going down to the pit; I have found a ransom.* In a word they have met together, and kissed one another in a crucified Christ, whose death was the payment of our debt, the punishment of our sin, the price of our redemption, and a purchase of our life, liberty and eternal salvation. Here is the meeting-place then of these glorious perfections of God; here is the person in whom they centre, that they may be all glorified to the highest: *Mercy, truth, righteousness* and *peace*, all are pleased. *Mercy* is gratified, and constitutes him to be the mercy-seat; *truth* is satisfied, and centers in him as the *way, the truth and the life*; *righteousness* is contented, and declares him to be the *Lord our righteousness*; *peace* is perfected, & proclaims him to be the *prince of peace*. Yea, not only are all the members of the meeting pleased and satisfied for themselves, in the advancement of their own particular interests, but they are infinitely well pleased in each other, and that the interests of their seemingly opposite parties are advanced, as well as their own particular claims: *Mercy* is pleased that *truth* hath got all its demands, and *truth* is pleased that *mercy* hath got all her desire, and *righteousness* is pleased that *peace* is proclaimed, and *peace* is pleased that *righteousness* is honoured. *Mercy* and *peace* rejoice that they are magnified to the infinite glory of *truth* and *righteousness*, and *truth* and *righteousness* rejoice that they are glorified to the infinite pleasure of *mercy* and *peace*; and hence they not only meet together, but kiss one another. Here you see where they meet together: So much for an answer thereto more generally.

2dly, More particularly, as to the *meeting-time*, you may take these following particulars for the further clearing of it. Altho' this blessed meeting once taking place is still continued, and cannot be said properly to adjourn from *time to time*, & from *place to place*;

for this assembly never dissolves: Yet, in a suitableness to our weak capacity and finite understanding, which cannot rightly conceive of a meeting that never had a time to meet, because they met in eternity, and never shall have a time to part, because they meet to eternity; we cannot conceive of it, I say, but by taking it, as it were, into so many parts, or considering it in so many periods: And there are these eight remarkable periods: wherein *mercy* and *peace* meet with *truth* and *righteousness*, and kiss each other.

1. The first remarkable period is this, they met together at the council-table of the *covenant of redemption* from all eternity, before ever the foundation of the world was laid; and ere ever the morning-stars sang together, *mercy and truth met together, righteousness and peace kissed each other*: For the council of peace did then meet, *Zech. 6. 13.* and all was concerted by infinite wisdom, how *mercy* should be magnified, *truth* cleared, *righteousness* vindicated, and *peace* concluded, and all in Christ, who according to the tenor of that covenant (whereof the covenant of grace is but a transcript) was to give *his soul an offering for sin*, and then was to *see his seed*, and *the pleasure of the Lord to prosper in his hand*. Then it was that this pleasant meeting in him was first constituted, as you may see, *Prov. 8. 30. 31. He being set up from everlasting, ere ever the earth was*, God in all his glorious perfections was delighted in him, and in him his *delights were with the sons of men*. This was the grand meeting, at which the time and place of all the subsequent meetings were concerted, and all the other particulars we are to mention are but the result of this, and as it were emanations therefrom; for it is a meeting that never dissolves, tho' in several periods it appears like a new meeting unto us. Therefore,

2. Another remarkable period is their meeting together in the garden of *Eden*, after man had made himself naked and obnoxious to the flaming sword of divine Justice. *Mercy* comes walking in the garden in the cool of the day, and the guilty criminal being examined in open court, behold, *mercy* and *truth* meet together in the happy sentence that was pronounced, *The seed of the woman shall bruise the head of the serpent*, *Gen. 3. 15.* Behold *righteousness* and *peace* kissing one another in the righteous vengeance that was to be executed upon the devil and his works, in order to effectuate a happy peace betwixt God and man. This meeting was gradually cleared up under the old testament, and in the legal sacrifices, pointing out the great propitiatory sacrifice.

3. Another remarkable period is their meeting together at *Bethlehem-Ephrathah*, upon Christ's Incarnation, *Micah 5. 2, 4, 5, &c.*

4. Another remarkable period is their meeting together at the banks

banks of *Jordan*, when Christ was baptized, *Mat. 3. 13, 16, 17, &c.*

5. Another remarkable period is their meeting together in the garden of *Gethsemane*, when Christ, *being in an agony, did sweat great drops of blood*, under the pressure of avenging justice; every drop of blood was an ocean of mercy: And, while he was prest in the wine-press of God's wrath, *mercy* was express. No mercy to Christ; for *God spared not his own son*, even when he cried, *mercy, mercy, God's mercy*; saying, *Father, if it be thy will remove this cup from me*. No, no, no mercy was shewn to him, otherwise no mercy had been shewn to us: Justice must have its due from him, that mercy might have vent towards us; and so here *mercy* and *truth* meet together.

6. Another remarkable period is their meeting on mount *Calvary*, where Christ was crucified. It was upon the cross of Christ that *mercy and truth meet together*, that *righteousness and peace kissed each other*; for there it was that he paid all the elect's debt to the last farthing that truth and righteousness could demand, until *he cried with a loud voice, and said, It is finished*. Having done all that the law could injoin, he suffered all that the law could threaten, so as it cannot crave a farthing more. It is finished; all that was stipulated for with the Father in that federal transaction; all that was promised in that eternal compact is finished; every article agreed to in the counsel of peace was finished. The bargain that he had signed with his hand, he now sealed with his blood; and in his appearance upon the cross, or in his obedience to the death, did all the attributes of God meet, as in a centre: And on this account was mount *Calvary* more glorious than mount *Sinai*; for in mount *Sinai* God appeared in his terrible Majesty, making the mountain to tremble, and the earth to shake; but here in mount *Calvary* he appeared, not only in his terrible majesty, but in his tender mercy; in his terrible fury against sin, and in his tender favour towards the sinner; and now, the controversy betwixt *justice* and *mercy* seems at a crisis. Here was the critical juncture, wherein their different demands behoved to be decided; and it was done with such a solemnity, as made the whole universe, as it were, to tremble and quake: For then did God *shake, not the earth only, but also heaven*; for, when Christ was under the mighty load of this terrible wrath in the sinner's room, there was a great earthquake, and the heavens grew black, the sun was eclipsed, and that at a time contrary to the common rules of nature; which made a heathen philosopher, at a distance, cry out, *That either the frame of nature was on the point of dissolution, or the God of nature was suffering*: And indeed he was suffering unto blood, and unto death. Behold the

the living and eternal God here, in our nature, wounded to death, and bleeding out his life, to be a sacrifice for sin, that justice might be satisfied, and mercy might be magnified and all the attributes of God glorified to the highest. O wonder, that *Golgotha*, the place of a skull, should be such a famous meeting-place for the divine perfections? It was a place of the greatest shame and ignominy; but in him *who endured the cross, and despised the shame*, it was made a place of most resplendent glory: For, in the cross of Christ, *mercy and truth, righteousness and peace met and embraced each other*. God's attributes did harmoniously join together, so as the one does not lessen, but illustrate the glory of the other, while they shined gloriously in the face of Christ crucified, as a beautiful and bright constellation; for he was *set forth to be a propitiation, to declare the righteousness and justice of God, together with his other glorious names*.

7. Another remarkable period is their meeting together at the bar of God's great justice-court in heaven, *within the veil, whither the forerunner hath for us entred, even Jesus*, Heb. 6. *last*. When Christ was upon the cross, *the veil of the temple was rent in twain from the top to the bottom*, and a way was made for entering into the holy of holies. And as the priests under the law were not only to offer the sacrifice without the camp, but after that were to enter the holiest of all, not without blood, but with the blood of the sacrifice, *to sprinkle the mercy seat*, Lev. 16. 14. 15. Even so Christ, *having offered himself a sacrifice, and suffered without the gate*, Heb. 13. 12. *he is entred into the holy place by his own blood*, Heb. 9. 12. there to appear as our high priest, in the power and virtue of his blood, to make a full atonement, and sprinkle the mercy-seat. Hence believers are said *to be come to Jesus the mediator of the new covenant, and to the blood of sprinkling*. And where is this? Even in heaven, as you see in the context, Heb. 12. 23, 24. Now, in this work, Christ carried the price of his blood into the very presence of God for us, Heb. 9. 24. and paid it down before him; and, in this act, justice hath its satisfaction brought home; and, by this act, mercy and justice actually are met: For hereby Christ sprinkled the very mercy-seat with blood all over, both *upon it, and before it*, as the forecited Lev. 16. represents: For the mercy-seat of old stood so, that it could be seen but two ways, namely, *upon it, and before it*, as a table next to the wall; and so this points out, that whatever way we look to mercy by faith, we may see mercy and blood mixt, mercy and justice met together, and all sorts of mercy conveyed thro' the blood of Christ, top-mercies, and side-mercies, upper-mercies of a spiritual nature, and lower mercies of a temporal

ral nature; for the mercy-seat is sprinkled with the blood upon it, and before it, and whatever way you look to it. The sacrifice was finished on the cross, and all sacrifices finished therein; but the blood of the sacrifice behoved also to be carried within the veil in order to the full atonement, that what was written in blood upon the cross, might be sealed in the presence of God at the heavenly bar: And we act not our faith far enough for redemption, unless we follow Christ from the cross to the bar of God's justice-court in heaven, to see all sealed and secured there within the veil, where this blood is exposed, as it were, and pled at the bar; where *mercy and justice meet together, and embrace each other.*

8. Another remarkable period is their meeting together at the bar of conscience, God's lower court, on the day of actual reconciliation betwixt God and the sinner: For then, *the blood of Christ, who through the eternal spirit did offer himself without spot to God, doth purge the conscience*, Heb. 9. 14. And *the blood of sprinkling, wherewith the conscience is purged from dead works to serve the living God*, doth put forth its purgative power and virtue by a certain internal speech; and what doth it speak in the conscience? *It speaks better things than the blood of Abel*; that speaks *vengeance*, but this speaks *mercy and peace*, in conjunction with *truth, righteousness and justice*: For, wherever justice-satisfying blood cries for mercy and peace, there *mercy and truth, righteousness and peace meet, and embrace each other.* This blood is the cement whereby they are joined together. Before this blood be applied, the conscience of the convinced sinner is all in a flame, like mount *Sinai*; thunder and lightning, and smoke and darkness, and fear of hell and vengeance, compassing the soul about, while it is arraigned at the instance of the fiery law, to pay the double debt to the mandatory and minatory part of the law, that is, perfect obedience upon the pain of eternal death and damnation. The sinner finds himself lost and undone for ever by this law: But then, whenever the blood of sprinkling comes in, & appears at the bar of conscience, it speaks better things; it is a better speaker than the law: And what says it? Why, the language of it is, By your leave, O law, you have nothing to crave; for Christ the Son of God was arraigned at the instance of divine justice, to pay all this debt, because he was this sinner's surety and substitute; and he actually paid it, by obeying the command, and undergoing the penalty of the law: And for this I produce the ancient records of God; *In the volume of his book, it is written of Christ, that when sacrifice and offering would not, he said, Lo, I come, I delight to do thy will*; and that *the Lord hath laid on him the iniquity of us all*; That *he was made a curse for us*; yea,

that he was made sin for us, even he who knew no sin, that we might become the righteousness of God in him: And therefore, O law, tho' thou hast truth and righteousness on thy side, yet truth and righteousness have met with mercy and peace, and they have concerted matters, and agreed harmoniously, and kiss'd one another, in token of their full agreement in Christ; so that in Christ all charges are answered, and thus in the believer's conscience, parties meet together.

3. The *third* thing proposed was *how*, and after what manner is it that they meet together, and kiss each other? We are to conceive of it after the manner of God; for it is more than a meeting of saints, it is more than a meeting of angels, it is a divine meeting of all the glorious attributes of God: And we may observe these following qualities of it;

1. It is a *wonderful* and *mysterious* meeting, it is above our comprehension and conception; O how wonderful a meeting is this! The very *name* of the person, which is made the place of appointment, the meeting place, is called *wonderful*, Isa. 9. 6. Because the meeting is about us, *his name is called Immanuel, God-with us.* O how mysterious is this meeting! *Great is the mystery of godliness, God manifested in the flesh,* 1 Tim. 3. 16. that is, all the attributes of God meeting together, and harmoniously embracing one another in the eternal Son of God, who hath assumed our nature into his own personality; this is the most wonderful mysterious meeting that ever was in heaven or earth.

2. It is a *joyful* meeting, they meet with infinite pleasure and satisfaction in one another; *Behold my servant, whom I uphold, mine elect, in whom my soul delighteth,* Isa. 42. 1. As the perfections of God are glorified in Christ, so they rejoice and are delighted in him: *For Jehovah is well pleased for his righteousness sake;* and therefore *the pleasure of the Lord shall prosper in his hand, and he shall see the travail of his soul, and be satisfied.* Surely, if God hath his pleasure, and Christ his satisfaction, no attribute of the divine majesty, no member of the meeting is displeas'd or out of humour; no, no: *This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.* My justice is pleas'd, my mercy is pleas'd, and all my other attributes are pleas'd. O it is an exceeding pleasant and joyful meeting! May all that hear me be well pleas'd to see it; no joyful meeting, but what hath a respect to this.

3. It is a *holy* meeting. Some meetings among men, that are called joyful meetings, yet are very unholy and sinful meetings; but here is an infinitely holy meeting: *Holiness to the Lord,* is the motto of it. A meeting of holy saints and holy angels is not such

a holy meeting as this meeting of the holy attributes of God, to advance the great design of infinite holiness. All the holy meetings that ever were, or will be, are the result of this, and the effect of some portion of holiness sent from it; for all holiness issues from it. Here *mercy and truth meet together* in a holy manner; *righteousness and peace salute each other* in a holy way, and *greet one another with a holy kiss*.

4. It is a *happy* meeting. All happiness and blessings flow from this meeting; Christ the meeting-place is the centre of *all spiritual blessings*, Eph. 1. 3. Many unhappy meetings have been in the world since sin entred into it, and sinful unholy meetings are ever miserable and unhappy meetings; but this holy meeting must be a happy meeting; and this holy kiss must be a happy kiss. If *mercy and truth* had not met together, we had never met with God; if *righteousness and peace* had never kissed each other, we had never got a kiss of the fair face of the Son of God, nor ever been taken into the divine embraces.

5. It is a *free* meeting. *Mercy and truth* met together freely; without being constrained; *righteousness and peace* kissed each other freely, without being forced. No motive from without could ever take place to move God to call this meeting from eternity; it was according to *his own purpose and grace, which is given us in Christ Jesus before the world began*, 2 Tim. 1. 9. Free sovereign grace is the original of the meeting. It is also such a free assembly, where every member might freely speak, and not one to interrupt another, as is usual in meetings among men, where some cry one thing, and some another, in a confused manner, like that assembly, Acts 19. 32. where it is said, *The assembly was confused, and the greater part knew not wherefore they were met together; and some cried one thing, and some another*. No, this meeting is free, in opposition both to all constraint and compulsion from without, and to all confusion and commotion from within. Where sovereign free grace is the master-convener, there can be no compulsion; and, where the God of order is the great manager, there could be no confusion; and, where the God of peace was all in all, there could be no dissention. Therefore,

6. It is a *harmonious* meeting. Whatever different claims and pretensions the members of the meeting seem to have, yet they harmoniously concur in advancing one another's honour and glory; and hence, as they mutually met together, so they affectionately embrace one another. There was no discord at this assembly, no proper variance or striving for state, but gloriously conspiring with joint hearts and hands to glorify each other in

the salvation of a company of sinners by Jesus Christ. The divine essence is undivided: And, as *there are three that bear record in heaven, the Father, the Word and the Spirit; and these three are One*; so the attributes of God, however manifold to our apprehension, yet there is no division among them, they are all one, and their conspiring together in Christ, for our redemption, is called *the manifold wisdom of God*. The manifold perfections of God meet together in one, with one consent, and with one heart. Behold *mercy and justice* in one another's arms; and so close is the embracement, that they are just one. Tho' it is a full meeting, and all parties present, yet there is no war, no jar, no dissention, no division, but all harmony and concord, and love and affection; it is the most peaceable meeting that ever was. And yet,

7. It is a *bloody* meeting; and never was, and never will there be, such a bloody meeting in heaven or earth. *The mercy-seat must be sprinkled with blood*; mercy cannot be vented without blood, and truth cannot be cleared without blood, righteousness cannot be vindicated without blood, and peace cannot be purchased without blood; *Without shedding of blood there is no remission*, no mercy to be vented, no peace to be proclaimed; *Christ hath made peace by the blood of his cross*, Col. 1. 20. *A bloody husband hast thou been unto me*, said *Zipporah*; but, O how much more may Christ say, a bloody meeting hath this been unto me! *Who is this that cometh from Edom, with dyed garments from Bozrah? Isa. 63. 1*. Why, what is the matter that his garment is dyed with blood? Why? when *mercy* and *truth* met together, they press'd to be so near one another in him, that they press'd the blood out of his veins; and so it was a bloody meeting: And, when *righteousness* and *peace* kiss'd each other, it behoved to be in Christ; and so the sword of justice behoved to pierce him thro' and thro', that so these sacred lips might meet and kiss each other in his heart; and so it was a bloody kiss. They kiss'd each other with such good will, that Christ was, as it were, bruised betwixt their lips, that the blood might cement and glue them together. One would think, such a bloody kiss would be no pleasant kiss; nay, but *it pleased the Father to bruise him*. They met together on a sea of blood: Thus it was a bloody meeting. Again,

8. It is an *efficacious* meeting. Many meet and assemble together, and yet do nothing for their meeting, it is to no effect; but *here mercy and truth meet together efficaciously, co-operatively*: All is done at the meeting that God propos'd to be done, and all is done that concerns the glory of God and salvation of men; their meeting together is their working together, and that to perfecti-

on; *For God the Lord is a rock, and his work is perfect.* Their meeting together is their building together, *Pfal. 89. 2, 3. I have said, mercy shalt be built up for ever: Thy faithfulness shalt thou establish in the very heavens.* There is *mercy and truth* both building, and the foundation of the building is laid in Christ; *I have made a covenant with my chosen, &c.*

9. It is an *unexpected* meeting, it is beyond the expectation of men and angels. If friends and intimates should meet, and salute one another, it would not be surprizing; but to see opposites, antipodes, and antagonists meet together, and embrace each other this were surprizing and unexpected: So, to see light and darkness, love and enmity, life and death meeting, how unexpected were that? Thus it is here, *mercy and truth, righteousness and peace*, these attributes of God, with respect to us, were opposites and antipodes. The language of *truth and righteousness* is, death and damnation to the sinner; the language of *mercy and peace* is, life and salvation to the sinner: And, when a sinner finds himself pursued to death at the instance of divine justice, and the truth and veracity of a God engaged against him, according to the threatening of the law; O how *unexpected* a rencounter is it, when he finds *mercy and peace* meeting with *justice and truth*, and stopping the pursuit, according to the promise of the gospel, to the credit of the opposite parties, saying, *Deliver his soul from going down to the pit; I have found a ransom*, and so all odds are made even, all opposites reconciled, to the infinite surprize, and beyond the expectation of all created beings! No wonder then, upon this meeting discovered, the poor soul cries, *Is this the manner of man, O Lord? O, who is like unto thee!* Nay, *there is none like unto the God of Jesurun, that rides on the heaven for their help, and in his excellency on the skies.*

10. It is an *everlasting*, indissolvable meeting. Other meetings will adjourn their meetings from time to time, and from place to place; yea, other meetings must part; and, when they part, they may never meet again; and we that are here met, must part, and never all meet again in time; even as some others that met together with us the last year, are away to eternity. But O, this meeting betwixt *mercy and truth, righteousness and peace*, is a meeting where there is no parting; the meeting is from everlasting to everlasting: Their meeting together, and kissing each other, is an eternal and unchangeable meeting, and an eternal and unchangeable kiss; it is every way like God, without beginning, without ending, and without succession. Whatever beginning, issue or increase it hath with respect to its manifestation to us, yet in itself it is still the same in Christ Jesus, who is *the same yesterday, to-day,*

and for ever, Heb. 13. 8. *without any variableness or shadow of turning.* The meeting never breaks up, it is a continued meeting never to be dissolved, and there they kiss one another to all eternity; *for his mercy endureth for ever, and his righteousness to all generations; and because of truth, meekness and righteousness, in his majesty he shall ride prosperously; and of the increase of his government and peace there shall be no end.* I have said, *mercy shall be built up for ever; and I have said, Truth shall be established in the heavens.* Why, what is the meaning of all these expressions? The language is as if one glorious attribute of God should say to another, O the sin of man sets us all as it were at variance, and the whole creation knows not how to reconcile God with himself, if he shall save one sinner; but, behold, we having met together in Christ the righteousness, the ransom, the atonement, the propitiation; having met together, we shall never part again; having embraced one another in behalf of these poor miserable sinners our arms shall never separate, that are clasped together. *Mercy & truth have met together, saying, you and I shall never part; righteousness & peace have kissed each other, saying, you & I shall never sunder, nor suspend the embracement; neither death nor life, nor hell, nor devils, nor sin itself, shall ever separate us.* It is a bargain among us, a divine match; they have met together by an everlasting covenant, sealed the bargain with an everlasting kiss, and cast a knot in an everlasting righteousness, which is the band of the union, even Christ; *for the covenant does stand fast with him,* Psal. 89. 28. where you will also see how this everlasting meeting is established in Christ, ver. 14. *Justice and judgment are the habitation of thy throne, or the establishment of thy throne, as it may be rendered; And mercy and truth shall go before thy face.* And, ver. 21. *With him my hand shall be established, and my faithfulness and my mercy shall be with him.* And, ver. 28. *My mercy will I keep for him for ever.* Thus it is an everlasting meeting.

The fourth thing proposed was, *why, or for what reasons* they have met together, and kissed each other? Why have the perfections of the glorious God conspired so harmoniously, and met together in such a sweet solemnity? Surely such a meeting as this must have noble designs in view; and I'll tell you these four reasons of the meeting, or four things that were to be concerted at this great assembly.

1. They met together, to concert measures for advancing the glory of God to the highest. This parliament of heaven met together upon ways and means, for bringing in the greatest revenue of praise and glory to the crown of heaven, to Father, Son and holy Ghost, and all the glorious attributes of this great and eternal God.

God. These attributes conspired harmoniously to set forth and glorify themselves most illustriously: They met together, and kissed one another, that they might glorify each other. The glory of God was the first and last end of the meeting: What is the chief end of man, but to glorify God, and enjoy him for ever? And O, what is the chief end of God! It is even to glorify himself in all his perfections, and to enjoy himself for ever. And, how does God glorify himself most brightly? It is even in Christ the meeting-place of these perfections, with a view to our redemption, *To the praise of the glory of his grace, wherein he hath made us accepted in the Beloved*, Eph. 1. 6. And how does he enjoy himself most sweetly? It is even in Christ, *Behold mine elect, in whom my soul delighteth. I was daily his delight*, says Christ, *while my delight was with the sons of men*, Prov. 8. 30. They met together to put a crown of glory and honour upon each other. Adam's sin and rebellion, and your sin, my friends, and my sin (O that God-dishonouring evil, sin!) which had pulled off that crown of glory as it were, from the head of the great King eternal and immortal, and cast it into the mire, and stained it with filth and dirt: But, behold, these attributes of God meet together to take up the crown, to rub off the dust and dung that sin had cast upon it, and to add some more sparkling jewels to it than ever, & set it upon the head of their sovereign, to the highest praises of his mercy, justice, truth, righteousness and grace, and love, and holiness, and wisdom, and all his other excellencies; that men & angels might sing and say, *Glory to God in the highest*, &c. that all the saints might sing a concert in praise of the meeting betwixt mercy and truth, justice and peace, saying, *Psal. 89. 14.*

Justice and judgment of thy throne

Shall be the dwelling place:

Mercy accompany'd with truth

Shall go before thy face.

And that every saint might sing the 57th *Psal*m, and 9th and 10th verses;

I'll praise thee 'mong the people, LORD,

'Mong nations sing will I;

For great to heav'n thy mercy is,

Thy truth doth reach the sky.

They met together, to put a crown of glory upon the head of Christ, *Heb. 2. 9.* in whom they met. This assembly did convene for the coronation of the son of God: For, *he having humbled himself, and become obedient unto death, even the death of the cross, God hath highly exalted him, and given him a name above every name*, *Phil. 2. 10.* *That at the name of*

JESUS, every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth; & that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father. Christ hath glorified the Father, & therefore the Father glorified him, *Joh. 13. 31, 32.* And now is the son of man glorified, and God is glorified in him. And, if God be glorified in him, God shall also glorify him in himself. Him that honour-eth me, I will honour, says God. And in whom does this take place to perfection? It is in Christ: God is honoured most highly by him; and therefore he is honoured most highly of God. *Amen, so let it be, and so it shall be.* And therefore it is concerted in that meeting, that all the saints shall glorify him: Hence that royal edict comes forth, *He is thy Lord, worship thou him,* *Psal. 45. 11.* And so we find them doing, *Rev. 5. 9.* *Thou art worthy to take the book, and open the seals; for thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God by thy blood.* It is concerted in that meeting, that all the angels shall glorify him: Hence that edict comes forth, *Let all the angels of God worship him,* *Heb. 1. 6.* And so we find them doing, *Rev. 5. 11, 12.* *I heard the voice of many angels, and the number of them was ten thousand times ten thousand, and thousands of thousands, saying with a loud voice, Worthy is the lamb that was slain, to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honour, and glory, and blessings.* It is concerted in this meeting, that all the creatures in heaven and earth, sea and land, shall glorify him; as we see *ψ. 13.* But, lest the sinful creatures upon earth, like you and me, should not glorify him, or see his glory, it is concerted in that glorious meeting, that the Holy Ghost, the eternal Spirit, one God equal in power and glory with the Father and the Son, shall be sent down to the earth to glorify him, *Joh. 16. 14.* *He shall glorify me; for he shall receive of mine, and shew it unto you.* O, hath the spirit of God been shewing any thing of Christ among you this day? Any thing of his grace, fulness, righteousness, so as to glorify him, and make him glorious above all things to you? Why then, we may reckon that you have found something of the saving fruits of this glorious meeting; for the grand design of it was to glorify God in Christ, by the spirit. They met to concert all things relating to the glory of the Father, in the Son, by the Holy Ghost. They met to consult their own glory in Christ, that mercy and truth might be glorified in him.

2. They met together to concert their proper work, in carrying on this great end, of the glory of God, and his perfections. They do not meet together to sit idle, and do nothing; no, they meet together to concert each of them their proper business: As Christ said to his friends, *Wherefore was it that ye sought me? Wist ye*

ye not that I must be about my father's business? So may I say here, the attributes of God met together, that they might go about God's business. What business? What work belongs to each of them severally? Why, mercy and truth meet together, that they may be sent upon an embassy together, *Psal. 57. 3. God shall send forth his mercy and his truth*; his mercy to give in the promise of the gospel, and his truth to make out the same: Thus mercy and truth meet together, that they may be sent forth upon some gracious expedition, particularly both to be leaders and followers to the remnant, whom God appointed unto life. On the one hand, to be leaders; hence the *Psalmist* cries, *Psal. 43. 3. O send forth thy light and thy truth; let them lead me, and bring me to thy holy hill, and to thy tabernacle. Then will I go to the altar of God, to God my exceeding joy.* Behold the wonderful business of *mercy* and *truth*, and the work they are sent out upon, even mercifully to lead blind souls to a God in Christ. On the other hand, it is to be, not only leaders, but followers, *Psal. 23. 6. Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life.* If the child of God, under any temptation, refuse to be led by *mercy* and *truth*, and give up with them as his leaders, yet, for all that, he shall not hinder them to be his followers: he may run out of God's way, but *mercy* will follow and bring him back; and, when *mercy* follows, it is ever in company with *truth*: And O, what think you of this wonder! *mercy* and *truth* meet together, that they might go forth together, like two pages, to follow you, believer, thro' all the steps of your wilderness-journey; *goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life.* Here is a piece of work, that *mercy* and *truth* have met together for, even to be sent forth, as leaders and followers of poor elect sinners, till they be out of all hazard, in Emmanuel's land where glory dwells: See *Psal. 61. 7.* But then, as *mercy* and *truth* have met together, to pursue their proper work; so *righteousness* and *peace* have kissed each other, for pursuing of theirs. Well, say you, what is the work of *righteousness* and *peace*? You have a word in the last verse of this *Psalms* where our text lies; *righteousness shall go before him, and set us in the way of his steps.* Divine *righteousness*, displaying itself in Christ Jesus the sun of righteousness, goes before him to prepare his way, and to bring us to God, and to our duty. And to be sure, whenever *righteousness* goes before, *peace* will follow after; *for the fruit of righteousness is peace*, whether it be imputed or implanted. Here then the work of *righteousness* and *peace* kissing each other, is to bring in these blessed effects in their order: We consider them as divine perfections in the text: and, in these effects,

fects, *righteousness* leads the van, and *peace* comes up with the rear.

3. These attributes conspire harmoniously, they meet together, and kiss each other, for this reason, that, by their meeting together, they may concert the dissolving of some unhappy meetings. These opposite-like attributes of God meet together, that some intimates may be separate, and sad and sinful agreements may be broken up. *Isai. 28. 15.* there is a sad meeting and agreement we read of ; *We have made a covenant with death, and with hell are we at agreement.* Why ? Is not this the case of all men by nature ? Yea ; but, how is this sad and miserable meeting dissolved ? See *vs. 16.* *Behold, I lay in Zion for a foundation, a stone, a tried stone, a precious corner-stone, a sure foundation : Judgment also will I lay to the line, and righteousness to the plummet.* Well, when judgment and righteousness mercifully meet in Christ, the sure foundation, what will be the effect ? It follows, *vs. 17, 18.* *The hail shall sweep away the refuge of lies, and your covenant with death shall be disannulled, and your agreement with hell shall not stand.* Whatever sad aspect this scripture may have to the despisers of Christ, yet it hath a merciful aspect to all the chosen of God, and all that desire to cleave to the Lord Jesus ; yea, there is here a foundation of faith laid for all that hear the joyful sound, that whatever sinful and miserable meetings and agreements there are betwixt hell and them, betwixt death and them, yet it can not stand before this glorious meeting, which was designed to break up and dissolve the opposite meetings that stand in a contrariety thereto. There are many black unions which this blessed union does dissolve, and there is no dissolving of them but by this blessed meeting. There is the black union betwixt the sinner and the law, which is the foundation of the black union betwixt the sinner and his sin : For, when the union betwixt him and the law is dissolved, then the union betwixt him and his sin is dissolved ; according to *Rom. 6. 14.* *Sin shall not have dominion over you ; for ye are not under the law, but under grace.* Now, what is the covenant of grace ? Why, *mercy* and *truth* meeting together, *righteousness* and *peace* kissing each other in Christ Jesus, is the substance, the marrow, the kernel of the covenant of grace ; and it is this blessed meeting that dissolves the union betwixt the sinner and the law, and so betwixt the sinner and his sin. O view the glorious design of this meeting ! They met together, that you might be separated from your sad associates. By nature you and the devil had met together, and you was a slave to him ; and it is the virtue of this meeting in Christ, that dissolves that ; *the seed of the woman shall bruise the head of the serpent.* The world and you had met together, and you took pleasure

pleasure in your wicked companions, or else was wholly drowned in worldly affairs; O it is the faith of this meeting that dissolves that! *This is the victory that overcomes the world, even our faith.* The curse of God and you had met together, and you lie under that curse, till, in the faith of this meeting, you shall see, *that Christ hath become a curse for us.* This meeting is designed for the breaking up of all these, and the like unhappy meetings. They met together in a glorious band, to loose all the knots the devil had tied.

4. These glorious attributes of God do conspire harmoniously they meet together and kiss each other, that they might concert and carry on some happy meetings, and make up some blessed matches. These opposite-like attributes harmoniously meet, that opposites and irreconcilable things might meet together harmoniously, and kiss each other, whether real or seeming opposites.

(1.) There are real opposites that meet together harmoniously, by virtue of this glorious meeting; particularly these six,

1. These opposite-like attributes meet together harmoniously that opposite natures might meet together, even that God and man might meet together, and embrace each other. And there are these two meetings betwixt God and man, that were concerted at this meeting: The one is the meeting betwixt God & man, in the hypostatical union of the two natures of Christ, our *Emmanuel God-man*, in one person; this is the *great mystery of godliness, God manifested in the flesh*; and this is the foundation of all other saving and merciful meetings betwixt God and man: The other is the meeting betwixt God and man, in the spiritual union betwixt Christ and his members, in one mystical person, by the bond of the spirit; *For he that is joined to the Lord is one spirit*; And this union is the foundation of all spiritual communion with God. We were not only at an infinite natural distance from God, as we are creatures; but at an infinite moral distance from him, as we are criminals and sinners: But the attributes of God met together and kiss'd each other in Christ, that God and man might meet together in a close spiritual union, and kiss each other in a sweet spiritual communion: Whatever spiritual communion you have with God, believer, this day, it flows from this glorious meeting of the divine attributes in Christ; and this union and communion is indeed a meeting of opposite natures: God became man, and took on our nature, and he makes us partakers of his nature, &c.

2. These opposite-like attributes met together, and kiss'd each other, that opposite wills might meet and embrace each other. God's will & ours are opposite; this is indeed a branch of the for-

mer, but our wills are the great forts of corrupt nature, that stand out against God and his will: *We are enmity against God, and not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be.* Now, how comes the will to be reconciled to God's will? It is only by Christ, in whom the perfections of God meet together: *Thy people shall be willing in the day of thy power.*

3. These opposite like attributes meet and kiss each other, that opposite persons, *Jews and Gentiles*, man and man, that were enemies and haters of one another, might meet together; that *Jews and Gentiles* might meet together, and men at variance with men might meet together: Hence it is said of him, in whom the attributes of God do meet, *He is our peace*, Eph. 2. 14. *who hath made both one, and hath broken down the middle wall of partition: Having abolished in his flesh the enmity, &c.* If any thing slay the enmity to God or man, this is it.

4. These opposite-like attributes of God meet and kiss each other, that opposite climates might meet together; I mean, that heaven and earth might meet together, the church militant and the church triumphant. Heaven and earth were at variance by our sin; but now, in Christ, saints in heaven and saints on earth meet together; Hence we are said to be *come to the general assembly and church of the first born that are written in heaven, to the spirits of just men made perfect.* All believers are said to be thus *come to mount Zion, the heavenly Jerusalem*, Heb. 12. 22. Yea, in Christ, angels in heaven, and men on earth, do meet together: Hence also believers are said to be *come to the innumerable company of angels; and the angel of the Lord encamps about them, &c.* Yea, all things in heaven and earth do meet together, and kiss each other in Christ, the meeting-place, Col. 1. 20. *Having made peace by the blood of his cross, by him to reconcile all things to himself, whether things in heaven, or things in earth*, Eph. 1. 10. See how, upon the back of this meeting in the text, heaven and earth are said to meet together in the following verse; *Truth shall spring out of the earth, and righteousness shall look down from heaven*; which I insist not upon here.

5. These opposite-like attributes of God meet and kiss each other, that opposite covenants might meet and embrace each other, even the covenant of works, and the covenant of grace, in Christ the meeting-place of the divine perfections: These two covenants do, as it were, join hands and agree. Did the covenant of works command perfect obedience? and, being broken, did it demand complete satisfaction? Behold, Christ's obedience to the death answers both; God's covenant of grace, dispensed to us, is just Christ fulfilling for us the covenant of works: And so in him

they meet, and kiss each other; *For he is the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth.* Again,

6. These opposite-like attributes of God meet and kiss each other, that opposite tho'ts might meet together, and embrace each other, even God's tho'ts and our tho'ts. How opposite these are, you may see, *Isa. 55. 8, 9. For my tho'ts are not your tho'ts, nor your ways my ways; for, as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways, and my tho'ts than your tho'ts.* Some have presumptuous tho'ts, while they look only to God's mercy, and so they think certainly God will have mercy upon them, tho' yet they are strangers to Christ; these are opposite to God's tho'ts, he hath no tho'ts of shewing mercy that way. Others have despairing tho'ts, while they look merely or mostly to God's justice, and so their tho't is, O, will God have mercy on such as I am; and, he cannot in justice save such a one as I! These tho'ts are also opposite to God's tho'ts: *My tho'ts are not your tho'ts.* O then, how shall these opposite tho'ts meet together? Why, let a man view the mercy and justice of God met together, and harmoniously kissing each other in Christ, so as to see God in Christ reconciling the world to himself. If your thoughts be spiritualized, to discern mercy venting itself thro' the sacrifice that satisfies divine justice, then God's thoughts and your thoughts meet together, and kiss each other. Thus the divine attributes meet together harmoniously, that real opposites may meet together harmoniously: This glorious meeting lays a foundation for these happy meetings.

(2.) There are seeming opposites, that meet together harmoniously, by virtue of this glorious meeting; as,

1. These opposite-like perfections of God meet together, and kiss each other harmoniously, that opposite-like *providences* might meet together & kiss each other. There are frowning *providences* and smiling *providences*, crosses and comforts in the believer's lot; here is a *providence* that favours the promise, and there is a *providence* that seems to contradict the promise; here is an up, and there is a down: Well, how shall these walk together? Why? They meet and embrace each other in Christ, the meeting-place; for *all things work together for good to them that love him, and are the called according to his purpose.* Hence we will find, not only light and darkness in the believer's lot, but sometimes light and darkness meeting together. *Zech. 14. 7.* there you read of a *day*, that is *neither day nor night*; yet *a day known to the Lord, neither clear nor dark, but as evening-time it shall be light*: There evening-darkness ushering in the morning-light. Hence they have occasion both to *sing of mercy and of judgment*, because of their meeting together, and kissing each

each other, and working together for good: Behold the cross and the crown meeting together.

2. These opposite-like perfections of God meet together, and kiss each other, that opposite-like desires may meet, and embrace each other. While *mercy* desires our life, and *justice* seems to demand our death; these are reconciled only in Christ, in whom *mercy* and *truth*, *righteousness* and *peace* meet and embrace each other. But look to our own desire of God's glory, and our salvation, men and angels could never have contrived how these two desires could be reconciled, if *mercy* and *truth* had not met together, and kiss'd each other; for the glory of God's truth and righteousness, in the threatening of his law, seems to rest satisfied with nothing less than our destruction; and therefore to desire God's glory, would have been to desire our own damnation; and consequently, in desiring our own salvation, we may have desired God's dishonour: But now this blessed contrivance of infinite wisdom lets us see how these two are, not only reconciled, but made inseparable; *Having set forth Christ to be the propitiation, through faith in his blood, to declare his righteousness in the remission of sins.*

3. These seemingly opposite attributes meet and kiss each other, that seemingly opposite graces might meet & embrace each other; for example, *reverence* and *confidence*. How shall *fear* and *reverence* meet together with *faith* and *confidence*? Why, *truth* and *righteousness* are at the meeting, and therefore *fear* and *reverence* becomes us; but *mercy* and *peace* are also on the bench, therefore *faith* and *holy confidence* may boldly step in; *We have boldness to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus.*

4. These opposite-like attributes meet & embrace each other, that opposite-like duties may meet together. *Prayer* and *praise* seem opposite duties in some cases; prayer supposes our wants to be great, otherwise, why should we pray? Praise supposes our enjoyments to be great, otherwise, why should we praise? Well, *truth* and *righteousness*, these awful attributes, present at the meeting, say, we have nothing in ourselves, therefore we ought to pray; but *mercy* and *peace* say, we have all, we have enough in Christ, and therefore we ought to Praise. *Humiliation* and *gloriation* seem opposite duties; but the seemingly opposite attributes of God meeting together, bring also these duties to meet and embrace each other. Is *truth* and *righteousness* in the company with *mercy* and *peace*? Then *humiliation* is our duty; but, is *mercy* and *peace* in company with *truth* and *righteousness*? Then *gloriation* is our duty; *let him that glories, glory in the Lord.*

5. These seemingly opposite attributes of God meet and embrace

brace each other, that seemingly opposite experiences may meet and embrace other, and be reconciled, tho' seemingly irreconcilable. There are *sad* experiences, and *sweet* experiences: O here is the sad experience of a guilty conscience, a powerful corruption, and a conquering temptation! Can ever that be reconciled with the experience of holy peace, pardon and victory? Yea, here is a foundation laid for the reconciliation of these opposites. If *justice* and *mercy* have met together, then a guilty conscience and a mercy-seat may meet together; a prevalent corruption and pardoning purifying blood may meet together; as they did in the Psalmist's case, *Psal. 65. 3. Iniquities prevail against me: But as for our transgressions, thou wilt purge them away.* The sad experience of fatherly anger, or of the feeling of divine wrath, may meet with the sweet experience of felt love and favour; for *mercy* and *justice* are met together, *Isa. 54. 7, 8.* The sad experience of perplexing thoughts may meet with the sweet experience of spiritual consolation, and be swallowed up therein; since *truth* and *justice* have met with *mercy* and *peace*: Hence it was that these two met together in *David*, *Psal. 94. 19. In the multitude of my thoughts within me, thy comforts delight my soul.* O! Is such a sad experience consistent with an interest in Christ? Why? Both terrible and amiable attributes of God meet together in Christ, and therefore it is not strange that the saddest and sweetest experiences meet together, so as not to be inconsistent with the state of a believer that is in Christ. To see awful *justice* and lovely *mercy* meeting together in a sweet-smelling sacrifice, is a greater wonder, than to see your saddest and sweetest experiences meeting in Christ, to make up a Hallelujah, *praise ye the Lord*; and the former meeting is the reason of this.

6. These irreconcilable-like attributes of God meet and embrace each other, that irreconcilable-like scriptures might meet together and embrace each other. How shall *Exod. 34. 7. He will by no means clear the guilty*, or justify the sinner, be reconciled with *Rom. 4. 5. where he is said to justify the ungodly*? O how can these two opposites meet together? Why, *mercy* and *truth* have met together in Christ, to make up a match betwixt them: A ransom is found, a propitiation is set forth; why then, these opposite-like scriptures may meet together, and kiss each other. *He will by no means clear the guilty*, without a ransom, a propitiation: Well, is the ransom found, and the propitiation set forth? Then he will justify the ungodly on that ground; *Deliver his soul from going down to the pit, I have found a ransom.* Now, he can justify the sinner, and be just in so doing, while he draws him in to Christ by faith,

Rom. 3.25,26. Thus you see the reasons of the meeting. In a word, they meet together upon a design to bring the greatest good out of the greatest evil, and the highest glory out of the deepest misery, to the praise of all God's glorious perfections.

The *fifth* thing proposed was the *application* in a few inferences. Is it so, that, in the salvation of sinners by Jesus Christ, the glorious attributes and perfections of God do thus harmoniously conspire and embrace each other? Then hence we may see,

1. What a dreadful evil *sin* is, which sets all the attributes of God, as it were, at odds, and puts all the world into confusion, and every thing out of order; it sets heaven and earth, and all things in them, at variance one against another. To think light of sin, is to think light of this glorious meeting of divine attributes, that met together to break this rebellion, and take order with this horrid insurrection against heaven. O what a great matter is the salvation of a sinner! Ere that can take place, this grand meeting must be called; all the injured attributes of God must have an honourable reparation. *Justice* must be satisfied, *truth* vindicated, *righteousness* cleared: And, in order to all this, a surety must be provided, even a God in our nature; the guilt must be imputed to him, and *the iniquity of us all must be laid upon him*; and then a bloody tragedy must be acted upon his soul and body, till he sink to death under the weight of infinite wrath. But,

2. Hence see what a wonderful person our *Lord Jesus Christ* is, in whom so many wonders meet together. It is in him that *mercy* and *truth*, *righteousness* and *peace* do meet together, and kiss each other. Here all the bright perfections of the divine nature do gloriously conspire; here is the bright constellation of all the divine attributes shining forth in him, and every star performs its revolution in this orb. Behold in him the bright glory & excellency of God's grace & love, a whole Trinity in concert, each person to perform his own part, and each attribute its own work; and *Christ the image of the invisible God set forth to be a glorious theatre*, on which men and angels might see the splendor of the transaction; *He is the brightness of the Father's glory, & the express image of his person*, Here is the *great mystery of godliness, God manifested in the flesh*, and all his attributes meeting together, and kissing each other, in our *Emmanuel, God-Man*. There are two things meet in Christ, which should make him wonderful to us: The one is, all our sins meet together on him, that they may be condemned, according to that word, *Isa. 53. 6. The Lord hath laid on him the iniquities of us all*, or made them to meet on him: The other is, all the attributes of God meet in him, that they may be glorified: And indeed there is no saving

saving or satisfying knowledge of any property of God, but what is to be had in Christ. To see God to be a merciful, just, true, righteous, good & holy God, is neither a saving, nor a satisfying sight, unless we see these attributes meeting in Christ for our salvation; and to see this, is to see *the glory of God in the face of Christ*. Here see the glory of divine mercy! What is pardoning mercy? It is God's free gracious acceptance of a sinner, upon satisfaction made to his justice, in the blood of Jesus; Nor is any discovery of mercy, but as relating to the satisfaction of justice, consistent with the glory of God; *mercy* cannot be seen savingly, but as meeting with *justice* in Christ. Here also we see the glory of divine truth in the exact accomplishment of all his threatnings and promises. That original threatning and commination, whence all other threatnings flow, Gen. 2. 17. *In the day thou eatest, thou shalt surely die*, backed with a curse, *For cursed is every one that continues not in all things*, &c. is in him accomplished fully, and the truth of God therein cleared to our salvation, while *he tasted death for us, and was made a curse for us*; so that, in every threatning his truth is made glorious. And, as to the promises, *they are all Yea and Amen in Christ Jesus, to the glory of God by us*. 2 Cor. 1. 20. And so of all the other attributes of God, they are made glorious and exalted in Christ to our salvation. Hence when Christ desired his father to glorify his name, *John* 12. 28. to make his name, that is, his nature, and properties, and perfections, all glorious in the work of redemption, that he had in hand; he was instantly answered from heaven, *I have both glorified it, and will glorify it again*; I will give my attributes their utmost glory in thee.

3. Hence see the difference betwixt the *law* and the *gospel*. One great difference betwixt them lies in this, that, in the law, the sinner that hath violated the same, may see *truth* standing engaged against him, but no *mercy* in company with *truth*; and *righteousness* in arms against him, but no *peace* in company with *righteousness*. *Justice without mercy, and war without peace*, to the sinner, is the motto of the law: For therein *truth* and *righteousness* meet together, but *mercy* and *peace* are not at the meeting; and so the language of the law, to you that are out of Christ, and under the law, is, no mercy, no peace, but the wrath of God, the vengeance of God, the curse of God upon you, and that so sure as God is a God of *truth* and *righteousness*: There is the *law*. But, in the *gospel*, *mercy* & *peace* come into the meeting, & make up a match betwixt all the opposite-like parties, to the highest glory of God, and the greatest happiness of the sinner; and they seal the match with a kiss of infinite complacency, so that the sum of the gospel is this, *mercy* & *truth* are met together, *righteousness* and *peace* have kissed each other.

4. Hence we may see what is the fountain-head and foundation of all true *communion* and *fellowship* with God and man. This glorious meeting is the foundation of all other happy meetings; fellowship with God, and an happy meeting with him, is a stream that flows from this fountain. We could never have met with God, or got a kindly kiss or embrace in the arms of his favour and love, if this divine meeting and embracement had not made way for it. Fellowship with man, or the communion of saints, is a rivulet that flows from this spring. When saints meet together for prayer or praises, under the influence of the spirit, and under a gale of heaven; when their hearts are fired with love to God, and to one another in him; what is this? It is just a live-coal cast in among them from the altar, Christ Jesus, where all the attributes of God meet together, and kiss each other; and hence true fellowship with God, and with the saints, are both declared to be in and thro' Christ Jesus, 1 John 1. 3. *That which we have heard and seen, declare we unto you, that ye may have fellowship with us: And truly our fellowship is with the Father, and with his Son Christ.* The harmony of the attributes of God in Christ, is the fountain of all the harmony among the saints: The little harmony that takes place among them in our day, and the rarity of holy fellowship-meetings, flows from the little faith of this heavenly divine meeting; for all the saints, that are under the lively views thereof, cannot but desire to meet together, and embrace each other harmoniously, in the arms of mutual love.

5. Hence see the malignity of the sin of *unbelief*, the great employment whereof is, to *spoil the harmony* of the divine perfections, and to do its utmost to *dissolve* that glorious meeting, and *separate* what God hath joined, saying, in effect, they have not met together, nor kissed each other. This we may discern in the unbelief, whether of secure or awakened sinners: See it in the unbelief of the secure sinner, who sets *truth* and *righteousness* out of the meeting, saying, God is a merciful God, and I shall have peace, tho' I walk in the imagination of my own heart, adding *drunkenness* to *thirst*: Thus they hope in God's mercy, and speak peace to themselves, while they never view the truth and righteousness of God, and how the credit thereof shall be saved, or the honour thereof repaired: And hence, as faith is said to *set to the seal, that God is true*, or that he is a God of truth, so unbelief is said to *make God a liar*. To fancy that God will have mercy on their souls, without regarding the truth of his threatenings, is to make God a liar, and say, mercy and truth have not met together; to think that God will be at peace with them, while his righteousness and justice are not satisfied, is to make

make God a liar, and say, righteousness and peace have not met together. Thus the unbelief of the secure sinner puts *truth* and *righteousness* out of the meeting. Again, on the other hand, the unbelief of the awakened sinner puts *mercy* and *peace* out of the meeting, saying, O he is a God of truth, and how shall he have mercy on the like of me? He is a God of awful justice and righteousness, and how will he be at peace with me? What is the language of this, but that *mercy* and *peace* have not met with *truth* and *righteousness*? Here is a making God a liar also, and separating what God hath in the gospel declared to be joined. Behold then the malignity of unbelief; it breaks the glorious meeting, and will not let them kiss one another. The presuming sinner will not let God have the glory of his truth and righteousness, the despairing sinner will not let God have the glory of his mercy and grace; both are in a concert with the devil to break the harmony of the meeting. But O, may virtue come from that glorious meeting in Christ, to the poor sinful meeting in this house, for dashing your unbelief to pieces, that we may see *mercy and truth meet together, righteousness and peace kissing each other!*

6. Hence see sure and noble ground for the *boldness* and *confidence* of faith in Christ; *In whom we have boldness and access with confidence by the faith of him*, Eph. 3. 12. Here's an answer to all the objections of unbelief and diffidence, the chief whereof lies here; O, says unbelief, may I, sinful guilty I, lay hold on the promise of mercy and peace in the gospel, when I see the great ordinance of the divine threatening hard charged with the truth and righteousness of God, and ready to be discharged against me with thunder and lightning, saying, no mercy, no peace; *He that made thee will not have mercy upon thee*; and, *There is no peace, says my God, to the wicked*? Mercy and peace in the promise then, says unbelief, cannot take place with respect to me; for truth and righteousness in the threatening stand in the way, *like a flaming sword, to keep the way of the tree of life*. Nay, but, says faith, here the promise and the threatening have met together, and kissed each other in Christ; mercy in the promise, and justice in the threatening, have met and agreed in him, *in whom all the promises are Yea and Amen*, and in whom all the threatnings are fully executed, by drawing out his heart-blood. Thus then, *we have boldness to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus*, Heb. 10. 19. *By a new and living way, which he hath consecrated for us through the veil of his flesh: Therefore let us draw near with a true heart, in full assurance of faith*. O what ground for the boldness and assured confidence of faith, with particular application, notwithstanding the threatening! The threatening

hath nothing to say to me, faith faith, for Christ hath spoken with it already, and spoken it out of breath; he hath left it speechless and breathless; not a breathing of wrath in it towards me. The believer may have a million of doubts, while his unbelief keeps the chair; but let gallant faith come in, and take the room, it will dispel them all. Let once unbelief break the harmony of this meeting of divine attributes in Christ, and then nothing but doubts of God's favour and mercy must ensue; but let faith view the harmony, and see them meeting and kissing each other, and then, according to the measure of faith, such will be the measure of holy boldness, confidence and persuasion of the favour, mercy and good-will of God in Christ, with particular application to the person himself. Take away unbelief from faith, and then not a single doubt will remain behind: Unbelief creates all the doubts that are in the believer, his faith hath no part in them. The general doubtful faith of the *Papists* is not faith, but unbelief; and therefore no wonder that our forefathers abjured it in our national covenant. Behold the sure ground and firm bottom that faith stands upon, even the mutual meeting and embracement among the divine perfections in Christ. If you break and separate the meeting by unbelief, then your confidence is broken, and your peace with God marr'd; but, if you keep them together in your view by faith in Christ, then you have boldness, confidence and affiance on this ground; yea, then God in Christ, and you meet together, and kiss each other.

7. Hence we see what is the *best mark* of a believer in Christ, for your trial and examination: Try it just by this, What view have you got of this *glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ*, and of the attributes of God meeting and embracing each other in him? Have you seen the *glory*, and felt the *virtue* of this happy meeting?

1. Have you seen the *glory* of it? When once in a day you had seen the attributes of God in arms against you, because of your sinful rebellion against God, and when you had seen the truth of God pronouncing the sentence of the law, and his righteousness and justice ready to inflict the sentence, and execute the same with curses and vengeance, making you despair of mercy, and give up with all hope and expectation of peace with God by the law of works; have you thereupon got a view of the harmonious meeting of these attributes of God, in Christ Jesus, as the surety, the sacrifice, the ransom, the propitiation, in whom the truth and veracity of God is accomplished, and the righteousness and justice of God satisfied? And so mercy and peace vented gloriously, without detriment to any other excellency or perfection of God.

Hath

Hath nothing satisfied your conscience, but the view of this meeting betwixt *mercy* and *justice*, in the death of Christ, and kissing each other in his mediation? Hath God and you met together this way, and made your heart joyful to kiss and embrace this wonderful device, as worthy of God, and suitable to you? Have you seen his glory at this rate? Then, in God's name, I pronounce you a believer in Christ; *For God, who commanded light to shine out of darkness, hath shined into your heart, to give you the light of the knowledge of his glory, in the face of Christ*; and Christ and you met together, and kissed each other! whether it was in the day of first believing, when you fled to him for refuge, or in the day of after-manifestation, when, upon the back of dismal hiding on God's part, or grievous backsliding on yours, the Lord drew aside the vail, and gave you a glance of his glory; whether it was by some word of grace, sweetly and powerfully coming in, and opening your understanding, to see this harmonious meeting, or by some sweet droppings of the blood of sprinkling upon your conscience, by which blood the meeting is cemented together. Have you seen this glory, whether in a secret corner, or publick ordinance; whether at the market-cross of the gospel, where this glorious meeting is proclaimed, or at a communion-table, where it is sealed? It is all one, it was heaven begun.

2. Have you felt the *virtue*, as well as seen the glory of this harmonious meeting of the divine attributes in Christ? 2 Cor. 3. 18. *Beholding, as in a glass, the glory of the Lord, we are changed into the same image, from glory to glory, as by the spirit of the Lord.* Surely, if you have seen this glory, you have felt something of this virtue, by *changing you from glory to glory*. It is true, many that have got a discovery of this glory of the Lord, can never think that they have felt the sanctifying virtue thereof, and this keeps them down in the pit of discouragement; it is true, they that are not sanctified, and made holy, they discover, that they never beheld this glory of the Lord: For this meeting of attributes makes a meeting of graces in the person that sees it savingly. But you must remember, that this virtue will never be perfectly felt, 'till this glory be perfectly beheld in heaven, where *we shall be like him, because we shall see him as he is*: And therefore, since you cannot judge and try yourself by a perfect sanctification, try it by the beginnings of it; this transforming virtue, this sanctifying virtue is present with you, though you cannot discern it. But, that you may thro' grace discern something of it, let me ask you, What makes you wrestle in secret sometimes against sin, if it be not some sanctifying virtue? What makes the prevalency of sin to humble

you to the dust? What makes you lament your own unholiness and impurity? What makes you long and groan for compleat victory over, and freedom from, sin? What makes you glad of any victory over your corruption, when this glory shines? What makes your heart to rise against sin? and, when sin prevails, what makes you find yourselves uneasy, and continually out of your element, 'till the Lord return, and until you get a new dip in the *Jordan of the blood of the Lamb*? You have no mercy on your lusts, and are at no peace with them, but still crying vengeance upon them! Why, it is just the sanctifying virtue that flows from this view of the glory of God in Christ, in whom *mercy* and *peace* meet with *truth* and *righteousness*. If you fall and stumble at any time, believer, is it not like the stumbling of a horse, that makes you run the faster? So as you get more good of one fall, than a natural man will get of a hundred duties, while it makes you still the more humble and watchful, and circumspect and dependent. Why, by all this, it appears (whatever be the defect of your sanctification) that, *having beheld the glory of God, you are changed into the same image from glory to glory*; you have seen the glory, and felt the virtue of this harmonious meeting of divine attributes in Christ. But then again,

8. Hence we may see ground of *terror* to all christless, unbelieving souls, that never have seen the glory, nor felt the virtue of this harmonious meeting, and live careless about either of these. What shall I say? *If our Gospel be hid, it is hid to them that are lost*, 2 Cor. 4. 3, 4. *In whom the God of this world hath blinded the minds of them that believe not, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ should shine into them.* May be, you are presuming upon the mercy of God, while yet your eyes are blinded, that you do not see the truth of his threatenings standing against you: And therefore, O blasphemer, do not think that he will be a God of *mercy*, and not a God of *truth*? Nay, his mercy will never be vented, unless the glory of his truth be saved. May be you are speaking peace to yourself, saying, *I shall have peace*; while yet your eyes are blinded, that you do not see how God's being at peace with a sinner is consistent with his righteousness in taking vengeance upon sin. O then, blasphemer and presumer, do you think that God will be a God of *peace*, and not a God of *righteousness*? Know it then, in the Lord's name, O sinful unbelieving wretch, that, as there is no mercy for you, to the discredit of God's truth; so no peace, to the dishonour of his righteousness. You expect *mercy* and *peace* separate from *truth* and *righteousness*; and therefore, *mercy* and *peace* shall be separate from you, and *truth* and *righteousness* will meet with you in
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fury, and with a vengeance. Your false hope of *mercy* and *peace* makes you merciful to your lusts, and at peace with your idols; but the *truth* and *righteousness* of God, which you exclude from the meeting, will hide *mercy* and *peace* for ever from your eyes. *Justice* instead of *mercy*, war instead of *peace*, will ensue; for *truth* and *righteousness* will execute judgment upon you, for the abuse of *mercy* and *peace*. While, through unbelief, you do not see or approve their meeting together, and kissing each other in Christ: While you are in this case, you cannot meet with God; tho', you may meet with his people at ordinances, or at a communion-table, yet God and you never met together: Nay, you have other company the devil and you meet together, and your lusts and you embrace each other; the world and you meet together, and its vanities and you do kiss each other; the law & you have met together, and its curse and you do embrace each other. But, because you do not see the terrible curses & threatenings that you are under, remember that, in a short while, death and you will meet together, and its cold arms and you must embrace each other; and, if this gospel be hid to you, then, after that, hell and you will meet together, and the flames of divine wrath and you will embrace each other to eternity; and the motto written upon the door of your hell will be, *The vengeance of truth & righteousness, for the abuse of mercy & peace.* Let this word of terror sink into your conscience, O graceless, christless, unbelieving soul, that never saw the glory, nor felt the virtue of this blessed meeting, and, *Gallio* like, *care for none of these things.* But on the other hand,

9. Hence, from this doctrine, see ground of *comfort* to all believers in Christ, who have seen the glory, and felt the virtue of this harmonious meeting of divine attributes in Christ. This doctrine is as comfortable to you, as it is terrible to others. Can you say before God, That these last two marks are your experience? Then I can say, that all the comforts, that issue from that glorious meeting in Christ, belong to you; and God allows you *strong consolation, who have fled for refuge to the hope set before you: For that city of refuge, to which you have fled,* is the centre of the meeting, and the place appointed, where they *kiss one another* harmoniously. Why, say you, *What concern have I in their meeting and embracing each other?* O believer, they met together for your sake, and kissed one another out of kindness to you: For there was no real jarring among them, but all the apparent jarring was about you, and how they should be glorified in your salvation; and when infinite wisdom found the ransom, and so the way how they should all be glorified in your eternal happi-

ness, then they hugged each other in their arms, as it were, in a rapture of joy, for your sake, Prov. 8. 31. *His delights were with the sons of men.* It was not one attribute only, that had its delight, satisfaction and glory, 'tis *delights* in the plural number; for all the *attributes of God* had their *delights*: And about what was it? Why the *counsel of peace* was concerning you; *for his delights were with the sons of men.* And you having seen the glory of this device, and felt something of the virtue thereof, God and you have met together, and Christ and you have kissed each other; he hath embraced you, and you have embraced him; and that embracement is a pledge and earnest, that he and you will meet together in heaven, and embrace each other to eternity. This meeting and embracement is founded upon the harmonious meeting and embracement of the divine attributes in Christ; and therefore it shall be sure, abiding and everlasting; and all these attributes are engaged for your comfort and support, and *this glory of the Lord you shall for ever behold*: For Christ, in whom all these glorious perfections meet together, hath prayed for it, *John 17. 24. Father, I will, that these whom thou hast given me, &c.* Here then, believer, is ground of comfort to you, in every case: comfort against *desertion*. Is it long since Christ and you met together, and kissed each other? Behold, here is the reason, why, *he will never altogether leave you, nor forsake you*; but still meet with you now and then, when he sees it fit, and give you the other kifs of his infinitely blessed lips, and embrace of his arms, till you come to the intimate, immediate embracements of his love in glory; why, because *mercy and truth are met together, righteousness and peace have kissed each other*. So sure as mercy and truth are met together, as surely will the Lord meet with you. Here is comfort against the *law*, when it comes in as a covenant upon your conscience, saying, *Pay what thou owest, or otherwise thou art cursed, and must go to hell*; and the law, speaking in the name of *truth and righteousness*, seems terrible: But you may soon answer by faith, and say, *O law, the demand is just indeed, and agreeable to truth and righteousness; but you mistake the person: For truth and righteousness have already met with mercy and peace, in the person of Christ my husband, who endured all my hell, and became a curse for me; and therefore I have no ground to fear the hell thou threatenest, nor the curse thou denouncest, nor any liability thereto*. Here is comfort against *Satan* and his temptations. For this blessed meeting in Christ did concert his ruin, and the bruising of his head. Here is comfort against *church-divisions* and *commotions*: When neither ministers nor private christians do meet together, or embrace

brace one another with love and amity; is this sad and afflicting to you? Here is a meeting, that may give you comfort in that case: For no member of that meeting will ever fall out among themselves, or fall out with you. Here is comfort against your jarring with friends: What do I know but there is some here that cannot get lived in peace with such a friend or relation, nor their christian liberty enjoyed, because of their frowns? And may be they are as aliens to you, not in speaking terms with you; you cannot meet together with them *cordially*, nor embrace one another *amicably*: But let this be *your comfort* in that case, *mercy and truth are met together, righteousness and peace have kissed each other*; and you have got a kiss by the by, and that is better than all the kindness of all the friends in the world. Here is comfort against *publick calamities* that seem to be approaching, or personal trials that may be coming upon you. Here is a cordial, though affliction and you meet together; though, in a little, death and you meet together; yet this meeting of divine attributes in Christ, your glorious head, speaks comfort and safety to you in every case. Though you should die distracted, this meeting cannot be dissolved; and you, having seen the glory, and felt the virtue thereof, shall be sure to enjoy the benefit of it to eternity: *Yea, surely goodness and mercy shall follow you all the days of your life, and you shall dwell in the house of the Lord for ever.*

10. The last inference is, Hence see the *duty* of *all that hear and know this joyful sound*. Never was there a sweeter sound in heaven, or in earth: And what is the duty of all you that hear it? Surely, the news of such a glorious and harmonious meeting of the divine perfections, about the salvation of sinners in and by Christ Jesus, should be joyfully received. Here are *the good tidings of great joy to all people*, Luke 2. 10. When *Elisabeth* the mother of *John*, and *Mary* the mother of Jesus our Lord, met together and saluted each other, *the babe leapt in Elisabeth's womb for joy*. Behold, here is yet a more wonderful meeting and salutation among the jarring like attributes and perfections of God; and surely, if the *babe* of grace be in *your womb*, it will leap for joy, when you perceive such a blessed meeting and salutation. O may it not bring our heart to our mouth, and make it flutter within us, when we hear of such a salutation as this, *mercy and truth are met together!* &c. And again, What is your duty, believer, who not only hears, but knows this joyful sound? Your duty is, not only to rejoice in this matchless harmonious conjunction of divine attributes in Christ, but to exemplify the same, by an harmonious conjunction of graces and holy virtues in you. Let *mercy and truth* meeting together, as di-
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vine attributes, in Christ, be exemplified by *mercy* and *truth* meeting together, as divine virtues in you: Let *righteousness* and *peace* kissing each other in him, be exemplified by *righteousness* and *peace* kissing each other in you: Let the meeting of *mercy* and *truth* engage you to be merciful and true; *merciful*, because *your heavenly Father is merciful*; and *true*, because *he desires truth in the inward parts*. Let the embraces of *righteousness* and *peace* engage you to be righteous and peaceable, that is, to be students of purity and peace: *For the wisdom that is from above, is first pure, and then peaceable*, Jam. 3. 17. It is declared in the verse following our text, that it is the design of these perfections of God, looking down *harmoniously* from heaven, to make suitable graces spring up from the earth: *Truth shall spring out of the earth, and righteousness shall look down from heaven*. When *the Son of righteousness*, in whom all the excellencies of God do shine, looks down; then as the natural sun, shedding its influences, makes fruit to spring up from the earth; so the Sun of righteousness looking down, and shedding abroad his influences, makes *truth*, and all the rest of *the fruits of the spirit*, to spring out of the earth, out of the heart, the soil where they are sown, in regeneration. O does *mercy* look down from heaven to you, in friendship with *truth*; shall not this mercy make you merciful to the bodies and souls of others, by doing them all the temporal and spiritual good that you can? And shall God manifest his *truth*, in conjunction with *mercy* towards you; and will you not be a friend to *truth*, even to all the precious truths of his gospel? Shall not *truth*, in opposition to hypocrisy, be your study; and *truth*, in opposition to error, be your concern; and this *truth*, in conjunction with *mercy*? For, when *truth* is in any hazard, should not *mercy* to your own soul, and the souls of others, make you zealous for it? And *mercy* to your children and the generation that is to come after you, on whom we show no *mercy*, if *truth* be not transmitted purely to them, as it was by our forefathers to us, at the expence of their blood, however now the waters of the sanctuary are troubled. Again, does *righteousness* and *peace* look down from heaven, kindly embracing each other in your behalf, believer; And shall not you be a student of *righteousness*, in opposition to all unrighteous and unholy ways; and of *peace*, in opposition to contention & discord? *As much as possible, follow peace with all men and holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord*. Does God glorify his *righteousness* towards you; and will you study no *righteousness* in your conversation towards God & man? Does *God speak peace* to you, and will you be at *war with him*, and love to live in war with any of his? Shall that be the disposition of any, with whom God is at peace?

peace? *O tell it not in Gath!* Surely there are none here, that have tasted of this sweet peace of God, but they would desire to live at *peace with all men*, and particularly all the saints. They would desire to see all the honest ministers of *Scotland* meeting together more kindly than they do, and embracing each other. Some indeed are at this time reproached as enemies to peace in the church; but the matter is, peace must not be studied separately from *righteousness*, nor *mercy* separately from *truth*, but all as meeting and embracing one another: For *mercy* and *peace*, without *truth* and *righteousness*, is a cruel conspiracy against God and man. Now, certain things have past concerning the truths of God, and the righteousness of Christ, in our day, which some think will stand infamous till doom's-day; and, this *truth* and *righteousness* being the great ministerial trust, some chused rather to be reproach'd by the world as enemies to peace, than be challenged by God and their own conscience as betrayers of the trust. However, O believer, study you through grace to get a match made up betwixt *mercy* and *truth*, *righteousness* and *peace* in you, seeing there can be no merciful *peace* to the prejudice of righteous *truth*: And study to get all these attributes of God exemplified in your heart and life, and the seal and impress thereof upon your soul, you being united to Christ, in whom all these glorious excellencies of God do meet together with harmonious embracements. *Out of Christ's fulness do you receive, and grace for grace.* As the child receives member for member from the father, and the paper letter for letter from the press; so, *beholding his glory, be you changed into the same image*, by receiving *mercy for mercy, truth for truth, righteousness for righteousness, and peace for peace*: *Out of his fulness do you receive grace for grace, holiness for holiness, and an holy virtue suitable to every holy perfection that is in him, and all these harmoniously meeting together and kissing each other in you*: Let no heavenly grace or holy duty be excluded out of the meeting: Let faith and repentance meet together, let love and new obedience kiss each other; let knowledge & practice meet together, and prayer and praises embrace each other. Yea, let opposite-like graces meet harmoniously in you: let humility & boldness meet together, let godly sorrow & holy joy embrace each other. Here is the gospel-holiness we call you to, in a suitability to these harmonious attributes of God in Christ: If the world call you *Antinomians*, know it is the will of God, that by well-doing you put to silence the ignorance of foolish men, 1 Pet. 2. 15. Let the mouth that reproaches the gospel be stopt by the power of it in your walk. The world will surely reckon you the greatest stars, that give the greatest light: *Therefore let*

your light so shine before men, that others seeing your good works may glorify God: even the works of mercy and truth righteousness and peace, hand in hand together: And thus, for the sake of the glory of God, the honour of Christ, and the credit of the gospel, let the world know, that you have seen the glory, and felt the virtue of these perfections of God, harmoniously meeting and embracing each other in Christ. Here is your duty and work, believer, in the wilderness; and now in all your shortcomings therein, still look again to God's holy temple, to Christ the meeting-place of these divine perfections: This is the mercy-seat, of which God says, Exod. 25. 22. There will I meet with thee, and commune with thee from between the Cherubims. And every new meeting with God there, will bring in new strength for all your work and warfare in time, till God and you meet together, and embrace one another, in glory through eternity?

And now, believer, I know you would desire that others should share of the same happiness with you; and therefore pray that a short concluding word may be blessed with power to thousands that hear me. O ye that are *by-standers* and *bearers* only, in whatever corner of this house round about me, whether you be in my view or not, you are in God's view; and I have a word from him to you all: And, as I have told you what a terrible thing it is to live and die in unbelief with respect to this glorious device, so now I would tell you your duty in this matter, and how you may share of the blessings and benefits, in time and for ever, that flow from this glorious meeting and embracement; and it is by kissing the Son of God, in whom all these attributes of God do kiss and embrace each other, *Psal. 2. 12. Kiss the Son, lest he be angry, and ye perish from the way, when his wrath is kindled but a little: Blessed are all they that trust in him.* Blessed are all they that kiss and embrace him. Would you then share of the grace and glory that issue from this wonderful meeting, and ineffable embracement among the divine perfections, in Christ the Son of God? O then, come and kiss the Son: O down, down with carnal thro'ts, carnal kissing, carousing, and cajolling; here, here is an object worthy of the most endeared embraces of the immortal soul. O come, and kiss the Son, by believing in him, and applying the benefits of this glorious transaction to yourself: And, be who you will, if you kiss and embrace the Son, you shall find these glorious attributes of God kissing and embracing you, and hugging you in their arms, as a darling of heaven, and a special favourite in the house of God. Are the attributes of God embracing one another in Christ? O flee into their embraces, by fleeing into Christ.

Sav'rot, Christ is in heaven, how shall I embrace him? For the word is nigh thee, even in your mouth, and in your heart, Rom. 10. 8. q. d. So near is he in this word, that you may kiss him with your mouth, as it were, and embrace him in your heart; and to take in his word of grace, and Christ in it, is to embrace him. What do you say against Christ? Are you afraid that *truth* and *righteousness* conspire against you, and hinder *mercy* and *peace* from ever meeting with you, and embracing you? O no, fear not; only believe, *that mercy and truth are met together*, and that *righteousness and peace have kissed each other in Christ*. *Truth* will not stand in the way of *mercy*; for they have met together: *Righteousness* will not stand in the way of *peace*; for they have kissed each other. He is indeed an infinitely just God, to take vengeance upon sin; but *justice* will not hinder *mercy* from coming to you: Only believe that *justice* and *mercy* are reconciled in Christ, so as *mercy* can vent itself towards you, to the credit of *justice*. But O! may such a black-mouthed sinner as I, as black as hell and the devil, expect a kiss of such an infinitely fair Jesus? Is that to be expected, that such opposites should meet in one another's arms? Yet, allow me, tho' a black sinner like yourself, to be the happy messenger, to tell you in God's name, that, be you as black as you will, such a meeting and embracing betwixt Christ and you is more to be expected, than ever men or angels could have expected that infinite *justice* and *mercy* should have met together, and kissed each other in a God-man; and this unexpected meeting is the very ground upon which your expectation of a meeting with, and embracement of God in Christ, is to be founded: O then, come, and kiss the Son. Why, but I cannot, say you; I think I would fain do it; but I cannot get at him, to kiss and embrace him. Indeed this kindness must begin on his side; and therefore, O pray that he would come, and meet you with a kiss of infinite love. Say with the church, *Song 1. 2. Let him kiss me with the kisses of his mouth: For his love is better than wine.* If that be the language of your soul, O I cannot embrace him; but my heart says, O let him come and embrace me, and draw me out of the embracements of all my former lovers and lusts, that I may never kiss any idol in the world again, but may live and die in the arms and embraces of the Son of God; is that the language of your soul before the living GOD? why then the embracement betwixt Christ and you is begun, that shall never have an end; for it is a pledge, that he and you shall meet together in heaven, and embrace each other to eternity.

Now, though I hope that this glorious meeting of divine perfections in Christ hath put forth some virtue to draw in some poor
soul

soul to the match; yet I fear that the most part are yet but idle hearers and spectators, as if they were not concerned: But O unconcerned soul, be who you will, O yet, will you come and see this great fight! O come and see *the greatest fight that ever was, or will be, in heaven or earth, a bush burning, and not consumed*; all the burning and shining attributes of God meeting together with infinite harmony in the bush of our nature, and yet the bush able *to bear the glory*, Zech. 6. 13. O come and wonder! Here is the wonder of men and angels! For this is a wonderful meeting to them: And the name of the meeting-place is justly called, *wonderful*! O come and partake; for the meeting is concerning your salvation in Christ: *His delights were with the sons of men*. O come and sing to the praise and glory of this wonderful harmonious embracement of divine perfections in Christ, especially you that partake, so as to see the glory, and feel the virtue thereof. O will you sing with your hearts, and lips, and lives, saying, *Glory to God*, that his attributes have met together, and kissed each other, in Christ; and that ever the like of me got a kiss by the by: *Glory to God*, that there is no breaking off this meeting, nor parting of these embraces, by sin, *Satan*, earth or hell; but that they meet and embrace each other to eternity. And tho' you cannot remember to sing all that hath been said, yet I hope the weakest memory may remember to sing the best note of all the sermon every day, saying, *Glory, glory, glory, to God, that mercy and truth are met together, righteousness and peace have kissed each other*.

The best BOND, or surest ENGAGEMENT.

A SERMON preached immediately before the Administration of the Sacrament of the LORD'S SUPPER, at Dumfermline July 19. 1724.

By the Rev. Mr. RALPH ERSKINE.

JEREM. XXX. 21.

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

MY friends, after the first *Adam's* heart departed from the Lord, so as to violate the covenant of works, never a 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 favour, as to draw the hearts of many after him: And if we could this day

day look into Christ's heart, and discover his heart-kindness in this matter, so as to knit 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 a day to be much remembered to all eternity. O then, let your hearts be looking up to the Lord, that you may see into the heart and bosom of this scripture, and into the mystery of this great question, *Who is this that engaged his heart?* &c.

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 preceding part of this 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 ver. 9. *They shall serve the Lord their God, and David their king, whom I will raise up unto them*. This governor is of our selves, *being in all things made 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, & 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* &c? Here is the event 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 hath set judgment in the earth, Isa. 42. 4*. Thus all the promises come to us in Christ; they come from God thro' him, and should lead us up to him, *in whom they are all Yea and Amen*. They are rivulets that sweetly flow and run forth from the ocean to the city of God, to the house of the mourner, to the field of the withered, 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*

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.* tho' the wound seem incurable, God will make a cure for it; and tho' you be cast off at all hands, and cast out at every door, and none seek after thee, yet I'll seek thee out; and tho' deserted and despised of these that are about thee, yet I'll put honour upon thee, yea, *I'll 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'll work in you all that you want, that is, *You shall be my people;* and I'll be to you all that you need, that is, *I will be your God.* O that we could take hold of this promise! It is as much as to say, I'll make you *holy,* and what I would have you to be, for *ye shall be my people;* and I'll 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,* &c. 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 stead,* 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 place 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 our selves, and broke our credit with God. The first *Adam,* our natural and federal head in the covenant of works, 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 undertakes the engagement that *Adam* brake: And he being a person of entire credit, the bargain was agreed to, and God issues out all blessings on his account: *For who is this that engaged his heart?*

In the words you may observe, (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. 10. 3. and 21. 17, 18.*

It said said, *Exod. 20. 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.) Observe, in the words, *his cordial compliance with this work; He engaged his heart to it, he 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 fulness 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 of the difficulties that stood in the way. (3.) You have here the *singularity of this fact*, and the *wonderfulness of it*, expressed in the question, *Who is this that engaged his heart to approach 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 those 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.*

OBSERVE, *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, 1. 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?* 2. The *nature of the work* that he engages himself in, while it is an engagement to approach unto God. 3. The *singularity of the fact*, included in the manner of the expression, *Who is this that engaged his heart to approach unto God?* 4. The reasons of the doctrine; or, why Christ came under this engagement: Together with the reasons of our faith concerning it; or, why it is, that JEHOVAH's

testimony is added in these words, *saieth the Lord.* 5. Draw some inferences 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, *Psal 40. 7, 8. When sacrifice and offering would not, then said he, Lo, I come, &c.* compared with *Heb. 10. 5, 6, 7.* (2.) From his reckoning it his glory and honour, that he hath taken this office upon him at his Father's call; as is plain from that expression, *Heb. 5. 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. 49. 5. Tho' 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. 50. 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. 2. 13.* (4.) From his promising subjection to his Father's will, in bearing reproaches, and laying down his life for these that were given to him, *Isa. 50. 5, 6. I was not rebellious, neither turned away my 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 10. 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 baptised with, and how am I straitned till it be accomplished?* And he never was at 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. 17. 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, *John. 17. 4, 5. I have glorified thee on the earth: And now, O father, glorify thou me with thine own self, with the glory which I had with thee before the world was.* Yea, he challenges it as his due every way, *ver. 24. Father, I will that these 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.

1st *Head*. The first thing I proposed, was, to shew what a wonderful 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's engaging.

First, *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. 9. 5. Amen says the apostle, and Amen let our hearts say to it, by putting the crown of absolute divine sovereignty 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 gangreene, 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 not say Amen. Under the great seal of the sacrament of the Lord's supper, we make the apostle's confession of faith, 1 John 5. 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 on 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, Secondly, *Who is this?* It is one, who, tho' 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 men; and being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, &c. Phil. 2. 6, 7. 8. It is he who, tho' 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 were under the law, and was cut off out of the land of the living. It is he who, tho' he was the prince of the kings of the earth & the king of kings, yet engaged to become a servant to servants, and accordingly girds himself to serve them, and to wash their feet, John 13. 4, 5. It is he who, tho' he be admirable in his sovereignty, his kingdom being over all, yet is matchless in his condescension. Tho' he is one that could never have been known, unless he had made himself known; yet he hath shewn himself to be one that is mighty in word and deed, saying, *It is I that speak in righteousness: mighty to save*, Isa. 63. 1. It is he who, tho' he be the only Son and dearly beloved

ed of God, yet engages to quit his Father's company, and bear 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. 8. 30. But it must be more; he engages to take our sin and guilt upon him, to bear our griefs, and over and above to undergo his father's wrath; insomuch that tho' the father's delight in him was never changed 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, *Isa. 53. 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 sweat 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, becoming the pleasant object of his infinite wrath? Christ was loved of the Father in his dying, and for his dying in our stead; he loves him in himself, and loves him as a sacrifice; for it was a *sacrifice of a sweet-smelling savour unto God*, Eph. 5. 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*, *Isa. 63. 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*, Rom. 5. 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 tho' 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; *tho' he was rich, yet for our sake he became poor; and tho' 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;

ther; let all the perfections that ever the world heard of, and infinitely more; let them be all gathered together, and infinity 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, tho' at an infinite distance from one another, *Col. 1. 20, 21. He hath made peace by the blood of his cross, and reconciled heaven and earth.* 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, *1 Pet. 3. 18. Christ hath once suffered for sin, the just for the unjust, that he might bring us to God. God is in Christ reconciling the world to himself;* and to 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 will let him want nothing of his due, he will give justice every farthing, and retrieve the whole glory that sin had 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. 9. 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. 8. 18. Behold, I and the children which thou hast given me are for signs and wonders. Zech. 3. 8. Thou and thy fellows that sit before thee are men wondered at;* and indeed, the more of Christ 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**.

2d *Head.* 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 great High Priest's approach unto God, in our room and stead. In order to clear this point then, in the general, I premise these two things. *1st*, All mankind were barr'd 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, ye 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 ever we approach to God in mercy, this broken precept must be repaired, this forfeited life must be redeemed, this incurr'd penalty must be executed, and endured. Here is a bar that neither men nor angels can draw & 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 vindicated 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 compleat 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. 59. 2. *Your iniquities have separated 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 barr'd out from the presence of God, there was no approaching to him. *2dly*, I premise, That the work of him who shall approach to God, in our stead, 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 those 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*:

offerings: 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; for, while they do, there is no approaching unto God. 3. To break the bar of man's natural enmity against God, otherwise 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 stead, 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 all 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, inasmuch that *God is well pleased for his righteousness sake*; and by destroying man's natural enmity, inasmuch that *they are reconciled to God by the death of his Son*.

But, more particularly, I would show 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 the God to *whom he engages to approach*. (4.) In what *station* did he engage to approach unto God. *First*, What engagements 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, *1st*, He engaged to put himself in the *form of a servant*, by taking on him our nature, and taking our place in law, that so the law might reach him in the stead of the guilty sinner; otherwise 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 scriptural 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, *2dly*, 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, 3dly, 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, Isa. 49. 24, 25, and so to restore the lost image of God upon man, and to make them partakers of the divine nature. And thus, 4thly, He engaged not only to destroy sin and 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 engaged to come, that we might have life, and that we might have it more abundantly: 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 compleat 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 engages to us that we 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

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 sin 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 the Father, *I give them eternal life, and they shall never perish; neither shall any pluck them out of my hand,* John 10. 28. He engages to the Father, *that of all that be hath given him, he shall lose nothing, but shall raise it up again at the last day; and that they shall all be 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 so called according to his purpose.

This leads 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, *Job. 6. 37. All that the Father hath given me shall come to me, & 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 stead: Think you so, my friends? 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 beforehand said *Amen*, so let it be. In a word, the sum of Christ's

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 stead, and to be *made sin for us*, and so to be *made a curse for us*, 1 Cor. 5. *last*. Gal. 3. 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 unto God*.

Secondly, *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 behoved to have stood at an infinite distance from God to all eternity, had not Christ been allowed to come near in our stead. 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, Joh. 10. 15. It is his Father's will that he came to do, Psal. 40. 8.* And how near Christ approaches to God in our stead, 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 band 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 this 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. 50. 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, *tho' 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, Philip. 2. 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, and his humble service to us for God's sake, *sloping down to wash our feet, to wash our hearts, to wash*

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. 5. 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 to me?* It is I, says Christ; and he says it with a solemnity, *Lo I come, Psal. 40. 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

Thirdly, 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 stead, 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 *essentially* 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 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 thro' 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. 6. 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 it 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, *Lev. 21. 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 stead. (3.) He engaged to approach unto God as a *threatning God*, threatning death and wrath to the transgressors of his command, and saying, as *Lev. 10. 3*. *I will be sanctified by all that approach or come nigh 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 God of infinite holiness, whose command must be obeyed; but as God of infinite justice, whose threatning must be executed: And therefore, he coming to God in the stead of these that had broken the command, and incurred the threatning, 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 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 into 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, tho' 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 the 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

mas 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 to go to hell, and quench the fire of it for us; yea, and 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 stead; when he approached to God as a *commanding God*, he came near, as it were, to the throne of his holiness, and there he was an obedient subject in our stead; when he approached to God as a *threatning 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 stead; 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 executed upon him, while he gave himself to incensed justice in our stead. 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 stead; therefore he is said to be *justified in the spirit*, 1 Tim. 3. 16. and Christ himself says, *He is near that justifies me*. Isa. 50. 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* 16. 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 threatning 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.* 5. 10. Thus you see under what considerations we are to view the God to whom Christ did engage to approach. And who is this, &c. Fourthly,

Fourthly, In what *station* did he engage to approach unto God?

1. He engaged to approach unto God in the station of a *surety*; therefore he is called *the surety of the 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*, Phil. 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 negotiate 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*, Psa. 69. 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 often called *the sent of God*. Christ magnifies his office as being *the sent of God*, John 4. 34. *My meat is to do the will of him that sent me, and to finish his work.* John 5. 30. *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 have 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; *Uim 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, & as righteous as God would

would have him to be. *By his knowledge shall my righteous servant justify many.* A servant whom God glories in; *behold my servant, &c.* I might here show you how he engaged to approach unto God in the station of a *prophet, priest, and king; a witness, leader, and commander, Isa. 55. 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 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. *First*, Consider the matter of this engagement, and we will see the singularity of it, if we observe the mysteries that lie in the bosom of this *engagement*; particularly these six. *1st* 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, heaven and earth, time and eternity, finite and infinite together in one person: Here is *the ancient 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 marr'd 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, &c.* *2d* 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 stead 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.* *3d* Mystery here to be seen is, that which might make us fall aswoon 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. 3. 13. And to be made a curse, is a stronger word yet than cursed. Behold the ever holy God *becoming sin*, 2 Cor. 5. *last*; 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 put his name in our blood, and wrote down himself the *sinner*, that our names 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? *4th* 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. *5th* 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, tho' he be *the Lord of life, and hath the keys of hell and death in his hand, and at his girdle*. *6th* 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. 8. 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 utmost; 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*; there was none that would or could engage to do this, but he. *Isa.*

63. 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 the Father's wrath. *He saw that there was no man, and wondred that there was no intercessor*; therefore his own arm brought salvation, and his righteousness it sustained him, *Isa. 59. 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. 3. 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, tho' he was life itself, and could in an instant of time have risen up from the grave that he was laid into. (3.) 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 that 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, thro' his grace, to bless him for what he hath done. (4.) He engaged firmly, and that both in point of constancy and courage. In point of *courage*, he engaged in the work courageously, tho' he had justice, and wrath, and hell, and heaven, and all against him, yea, and poor man also, for whom he engaged; yet how courageously did he go thro' 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 where-with he encouraged himself, *Psal. 16. 8.* compared with *Acts 2. 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.* He engaged firmly as in point of *courage*, so 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 foresaw 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. 3. 22. yea, I will heal your backsliding, and love you freely, Hof. 14. 4. Your inconstancy, might he say, shall not make me inconstant too; he hates putting away, and continues in his love. (5.) He engaged *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 stead? No sooner is the motion made to him, than presently he was on fire of love to be thus employ'd and substituted in our stead 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. 16. 46.* The sentence of divine wrath, which is a terrible plague, was gone out; and therefore Christ does speedily engage to make the atonement. And so, (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 an offering for sin*, but also, *he engaged his heart*, that is, he engaged willingly; and so it was with the greatest frankness: *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. 8. 31.* he had so much pleasure and satisfaction in the work he had engaged in, that it is said, *His delights were with the sons of men, rejoicing in the habitable parts of his 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 lie in this corner of the world, and some of them in that corner; some of them lie among the isles, and uttermost parts of the earth; some of them lie in yonder isle of *Britain*, some of them in *Scotland*; and may I not say, some of them lie in *Fife*, and some of them in *Dumfermline*? He rejoiced in the habitable places of the earth, where he had sick patients to visit and 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

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 this 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 this 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 with him*: What, says Christ, *Luke 2. 49. How was it that ye 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 *expres- sive of a heart engaged in the work* than that passage you have? *Matth. 16. 23. There Peter began to rebuke Christ, when he spake of his suffering; 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 turn'd 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 hath tuned 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 baptized with, and how am I straitned until it be accomplish'd?* 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 19. 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 he was talking 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 3. 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 chap. of *John*, he brake off, as it were, in the midst of his sermon, and says, *Arise, let us go hence*. Of all works, preaching was most pleasant to him; but behold he breaks off, & goes out, that he might be taken and crucified, that the occasion might not be slipt. 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 18. 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 his 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 thy self, 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 into his Father's hands, 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 entred into heaven*, now to appear in the presence of God for us, Heb. 9. 24. *If, when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son; how much more, being reconciled, shall we be saved by his life?* He that was dead is alive and lives for evermore; and he 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 as to the matter and manner of it; and

and how his heart was engaged to approach unto God: And so far is he from repenting of the bargain, that never a repenting tho't has been in his heart to this day, with respect to the whole of this work.

4th Head. The fourth thing proposed, was, to give *the reasons of the doctrine*, why Christ did so heartily come under this engagement, together with the *reasons of our faith about it*; or, why it is, that *Jehovah's testimony* is added in these words, *saith the Lord. Who is this, &c. 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. 1st, He engaged his heart, from obedience to his Father's command; *I delight to do thy will, O my God*. God the father chose him to this service; *Behold my servant whom I have chosen, mine elect, &c.* and he authorized him in it, and caused him to approach. *This commandment have I received of my Father*. 2dly, He engaged his heart, from zeal to his Father's glory. Tho' the whole creation of men and angels had been offered up as a whole burnt-offering, it would not have repaired the honour of God for one sin whereby his honour 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, *Joh. 3. 16. God so loved the world, &c.* We may behold here the height and depth, and 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, & by this engagement it is done. What tho' the whole world were drowned in a deluge of water, or, as *Sodom*, burnt to ashes? What tho' all the posterity of *Adam* were doom'd to everlasting burning? What tho' every spire of grass or atome of dust were a rational creature, and for sin thrown into hell? This would be indeed an excellent act of justice: But what is all this to the justice executed upon Christ, when he stood in our stead? What are all other judgments to his bloody sweat in the garden, and his

expiring groans upon a cross? Here is the highest act of justice imaginable, to make the soul of his dearly beloved Son an offering for sin, when imputed to him. See *Rom. 3. 25*. 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 honoured, and his holiness never shined 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*, & 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 crush'd ten thousand worlds. *Psal. 62. 11. Once have I heard, yea twice, that power belongeth to the Lord*. 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 distant extremes; the divine and human nature are united in one person, the justice and mercy of God united in 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, *Isa. 31. 14. Who among us can dwell with devouring fire, &c.* 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. 3dly, He engaged his heart, from a view of his Father's reward, *Heb. 12. 2. For the joy that was set before him, he endured the cross, &c. and now is set*
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down at the right-hand of God, Heb. 2. 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, &c.* therefore God *bath highly exalted him*, Phil. 2. 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. 4thly 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 heart of sinners to him, and so to make way for their approaching unto God in him.

Secondly, As to the reason of our faith, in the last words of the text, it is built upon a *Thus saith the Lord*; Who is this, &c. *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. 19. 7. The testimony of the Lord is sure. It is very sure, Psal. 93. 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. 19. 8. and Psal. 60. 6. God hath spoken in his holiness, 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 in to it; at least, here is ground of joy unspeakable, *John 15. 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're to observe two things in the text; the one is, the glorious *object* of faith, a Christ engaging himself in our stead: The other is the convincing reason of faith; it comes with a *Thus saith the Lord*. Now, in order to get our faith fixed, & bro't 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 a 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 ever 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 intire 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 text, *I'll 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 *Sarab's* both were dead: But he considered the veracity and ability of the God that promised, Rom. 4. 21. *He was fully perswaded that he that had promised was able to perform*. 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 hony; here is a great promise: But O, says *Moses*, how will they believe this? Why, says God, *go tell them that I AM hath sent you*, even the God of beings, that can give a being to what I say. I was known to their fore-fathers 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 my self 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
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promise will overfet our faith, while the man fays, O, it is too good news to be true! It is too great for me! And fo we reafon ourfelves out of our faith: But, O! fee who fays it, and that it is the word of JEHOVAN, and here is firm footing for your faith.

5th head. 5th thing propofed, is the application of this doctrine, in fome inferences. Is it fo, that Chrift, the eternal Son of God, did thus cordially engage himfelf to approach unto God in the work and bufinefs of our redemption? Then hence we may infer the following particulars. We may fee, 1. The greatnefs of our ruin by nature, and the bad cafe that mankind is in, that not one of all the pofterity of *Adam* can or dare approach unto God, or come under engagements for this end. If we do, we engage ourfelves to what is impoffible to perform, and we approach to a fiery tribunal, where we are doom'd to eternal death, unlefs we come under the wings of this glorious engager and approacher to God. This God will fhew no regard to any perfonal bond or engagement of ours: For our perfonal credit is forfeited and broken, not only originally in *Adam*, by the violation of the covenant of works; but actually in our own perfons: We never kept a word that we promifed to God, we never kept our engagements to God a day to an end; and therefore God will not truft us. I'm far from difallowing of perfonal covenanting and engaging, when it is put in its due place, that is, after a man hath once clofed with Chrift as the principal engager, and then vows, thro' his grace, and under the covert of his engagement from gratitude, to ferve 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 furety. And we are blind, if we do not fee that our credit is forfeited. Look to our national engagements, covenant, and SOLEMN LEAGUE! and I believe our national credit is forfeited and broken: Never a nation was more folemnly engaged to God, and yet never any national engagement was more folemnly broken and buried; the credit of our minifters and people, of our nation and church, funk into the depth of defection, divifion, error, fecurity, and carnal compliances. And whereas our forefathers transmitted to us their pofterity, precious truths, and pure confeffions of faith, worthy of the name of reformers; how are we like to tranfmit to our pofterity a world of trash and lumber, inftead of precious treafure? while, among other things, old reformation-principles and doctines are like to be carried down to fucceeding generations after us, under the notion of *wildnefs*, *new-fchemes*, and *Antinomian-cant*. And as we ought to be humbled this day for the breach of our *national cove-*
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nant 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 very first engager in their stead; and then, that, under the acceptable covert of his engagement, they come under obligations, thro' 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 forfeited; for an evil heart of unbelief causes our departure from the living God, every moment. And this is such an universal disease, that there is not one of *Adam's* race that God can now trust without a surety, nor allow to approach to him without a mediator.

2dly, 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 sinners 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 the light of the knowledge of his glory in the face of Jesus Christ*.

3dly, 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, nor 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 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 surety keeps them and their stock both; and he being the

the *engager*, they may *engage* to do any thing, yea, all things, upon his strength, *I can do all things thro' Christ strengthning 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 he know the person to be a bankrupt, that can never make payment, but rather is still running more and more in debt; but, if that person, be he ever 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 cautionry: because tho' the bankrupt whom you have good ground to suspect, should break the next hour and become utterly insolvent, yet you are secured, because you can pursue the cautioner when you will, upon his engagement and bond of suretyship. Well, just so it is here; poor 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 gave way, when he violated his first covenant-engagement. Nay, the Lord knows, you are so far from being able to pay your debt, that you're but every moment borrowing more and more; but, be you ever so poor and insolvent, if you once accept of Christ for your cautioner, then God will accept of any bond from you, that hath his name as the engager in it; for, if you fail, your cautioner is liable, and he is a rich and opulent cautioner abundantly sufficient; and God seeks no better than his bond, tho' you be ever 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. 8. 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 answer to any law-suit against me, with the defence of my cautioner's full payment in my stead, so, if you have any thing further to say against me, go to my cautioner

tioner who is engaged for all ; he is able to answer all that you can say, and therefore let all challengers and him make up matters 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'll wager upon his head, that I'll get to heaven, in spite of all the devils in hell ; I'll wager upon his head, *that the head of the serpent shall be bruised* ; I'll wager upon his head, *that sin shall not have dominion over me* ; I'll wager upon his head, that I shall perform duty, and *do all things thro' him strengthning me* ; I'll 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'll 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 is also 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 both gratified his holiness, and satisfied his justice. Here, I say, you see the right engaging and right approaching.

ably, 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 stead ; 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

gaged heart of Christ do it not? He is come here this day to court your hearts; 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 stead. Away with the devil's logick, *May be it was not for me that Christ engaged, nor for me that he approached to 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, sirs, 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 he can; but you dare not be answerable to God for meddling with them; and you meddle too far, if the tho'ts thereof discourage you from coming to Christ this day. Will it be a good answer for you, before the bar of God? Lord, I tho't, perhaps I was not elected, and therefore my heart could never be engaged to Christ. What answer can you expect from God, but such a one as 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 your self 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 out-shoot the devil in his own bow, and draw an argument for faith from what was done from all eternity, *Tit. 1. 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 to me; 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 thro' 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 to our children, and to all that are afar off.* And when our hearts cleave to any of these promises

that are fastned to Christ's engaged heart, then our hearts are carried up in God's order to the knowledge of the divine counsels, and go up the scripture-stair; while Satan would have us begin at the top, that we may fall down headlong. Now, among these promises that are let down from Christ's engaged heart for us to embrace with our heart, there is one, *Jer. 31. 3. 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 fastned to Christ's heart, and the lower end of it hanging down the length of your 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 a 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 in to 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 hardned against you, as your hearts were hardned 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. 31. 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 on 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 founding 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 both mine and yours may be melted into one, and being run together with the fire of my 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, and calls and threatnings, sermons and sacraments have not melted your heart; and if you go to hell, the flames of hell will never melt 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 frozen heart. O, is the blessed fire kindled yet? Is your heart engaged to him or not. If not, will you consider,

First, 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, & 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, and engaged to the flesh & the lusts thereof, & engaged to wicked company, and 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 stead, 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're, at best, *married and engaged to the law, you're 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'll pay thee all*. You're not yet pleased to have one to undertake for all in your stead; & therefore O sad is your state, for you stand under a personal *obligation* to pay all indeed: You're *a debtor to do the whole law*; and yet, because of your failure, you're 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'll find God out of Christ *a consuming fire*.

2dly, Consider how sweet it is *to have your hearts engaged to him*, whose heart was engaged to approach to God for you: Why? He is before-hand with 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*. Tho' your debt be never so great, he is engaged to pay it; tho' your sins be never so heinous, he is engaged to pardon them; tho' your corruptions be never so strong, he is engaged to subdue them; tho' your enemies be never so mighty, he is engaged to conquer them; and tho' the promises be never so precious in themselves, & unlikely to be accomplish'd to you, yet he is engaged to fulfil them; only, while you're here, on this side *Jordan*, he will accomplish them in his

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, & 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 thro' the valley of the shadow of death into *Inmanuel'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 affection of any rational soul to engage with one that engages for all that you need in time and eternity. Why, say you, but must I engage to do nothing? O that old covenant, *do and live* sticks fast with you: *There*, man was engaged to do all; but *O here* 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 part of the engagement upon your self alone, and on your own head: For it never abides a touch; and when you break your engagement, then you're 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 such as you, God knows you're 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.

3dly, 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 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 in whom I am well pleased*; and all that he seeks is that you be well pleased too. And O you're ill to please, if that which pleases God, will not please you; and your heart is ill placed, 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

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'll please him more than ever your sins displeased him; and you'll honour him more than ever your sins dishonoured 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'll 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.

4thly. 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, my friends? 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 a *Manasseh* in compact with Satan? Is it the heart of a *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 expect 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 13. 8. Be your feet never so foul, and your heart never so black, you have the more need to let Christ wash you.

5thly, 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 neighbours are in eternity, since the last communion here; and you may never hear another action-*sermon* all your life: And tho' 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 would blow you in to the happy harbour of Christ's engaged heart; If there be a gale of heaven just now blowing, yet it may be over before an hour be past. *O shall not your heart be engaged unto Christ!* What if death approach to you, and cut 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 yet your heart not approaching to Christ; wo is me, what will come of you.

6thly, Consider, that Christ hath fulfilled his *engagement* to the 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*, &c. 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 law as a 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, tho' 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, tho' you had ten thousand good qualifications, you'll *count them all but dung for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ*, as Paul did. It is said of the creditor, concerning his

his two debtors, *Luke 7. 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're 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 from hell; if it be such as makes you come out of your self, 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'll 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, tho' 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, whore-monger, mocker, here is a *good bargain* for you, even you whom we 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 ye never such an incarnate devil, 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*, flashing 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,*

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 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 stead 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 me, saith the Lord?

A DISCOURSE after the solemn Work.

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 say, *What have I to do any more with idols?* There hath been a mutual donation betwixt Christ and you, as man and wife give up themselves to one another. Ye have rendred 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

your former husband, particularly the law, is dead, and ye are dead to it, *Rom. 7. 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 rendred up your love to him as your husband, so ye have rendred up your arms to him as to your Lord: Ye have surrendred 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 that know his name will love him, and put their trust in him; but you are alienated from the life of God through 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 darkned mind is enmity against Christ, and is not subject to the righteousness of Christ.* Thus ye 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 of sin, under the power of security and heart-obduration, having no favour of Christ about you; under the power of a fordid 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, 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, yet put him off with trilling 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 *Shechem* 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,* tho' ye should follow the Devil to hell. But O, may I

yet bespeak you in the name of Jesus? And, O Jesus, may I beg thy leave to be thy spokeman, 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'll 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'll tell you what is his *lamenting word* over you; O *Jerusalem, Jerusalem; O Dumferline, Dumferline, 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 horribly afraid; for my people have committed two great evils, they have forsaken me the fountain of living waters, and hewen 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*, and 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'll 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 for ever! Nay, since the last communion here one of our dear helpers in this presbytery, from whose lips you used to hear the joyful sound, 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 & 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 a 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 *farewel word!* *I go my way, and ye shall*

shall see me no more, till he come in the clouds of heaven, & every eye shall see him; and then you'll come to that word with it, who live and die with a heart never engaged to him; you'll 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 ventured 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 words* or his *intreating word;* he would fain 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 may all 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'm looking to you, and ye are looking to me; and if ye be not looking on me, ye that are behind the pillars and galleries there, I hope ye are hearing me: And therefore, in the view of that awful day, when we shall see and hear at another rate, before the flaming tribunal, I take witnesses here, in presence of the great God, and all this numerous company, that I'm giving you a new offer of Christ, *as an engager* to do all for you; and that if you'll 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 you go away without him, and live and die without him, we shall be witnesses against one another at the great day of his appearance. *O now is the acceptable time, &c.* 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, & 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,* Jud. 11. 2. *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 my friends, 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 have 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, & his grace magnified for ever? O then, I hope, the day of salvation is begun, that shall be celebrated with joy to eternity. Therefore, let me close with a word, in the next place,

2dly. To you *whose hearts are engaged to the Lord Jesus*, whether you 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. 10. 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 ye afraid you come short of heaven? So ye may indeed, unless Christ *had engaged to bring you there*; but if ye lay stress upon *his engagement*, there is no fear. Are ye afraid 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 trust 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, to 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 own name, then you may approach with boldness.

If you think of *engaging in your own name and person*, and of 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

5 But let gallant faith come in and say, *Christ hath engaged*, and therefore I have nothing to do but to trust to 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'll go into 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 measure of it; for believers are permitted only sometimes, as it were, *to wash his feet with their tears*, like *Mary*, though at other times they may be allowed *to lie 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, formerly you have been 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.* 13. 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 keeps your soul in life, tho' you don't get 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 really 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 accomplisheth his promise according to your need, and 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 do 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 bony 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, & all earthly glory and gallantry, when they get near to God! Surely, if you have attained 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 neighbour, 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 see thee, therefore I abhor myself, &c. 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're 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 knit 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 engag'd 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 tho' 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 does go its round: but, when faith keeps fast hold of Christ's engagement, then there is profitable service and acceptable 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 get to 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'll 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 hold of his engagement, and when faith is like to lose the hold, 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 thro' faith to 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 dependance 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?*

The



The gradual Conquest : Or, Heaven won by little and little.

Two SERMONS preached at *Carnock*, July 3d, 1727.

By the Rev. Mr. RALPH ERSKINE.

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, O I find my enemies to be yet strong and mighty, *iniquities prevail against me*, and I fear I shall never attain 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 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 observe two things, (1.) *Israel's* enemies described ; they are called *nations*, because of their multitude and power. (2.) *Israel's* conquest, *The Lord thy God will*

will

will put them out before thee by little and little. Where you may observe both the glorious conqueror, and the manner of the conquest.

1st, 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^{dly}, 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. 23. 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:

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. 1. Inquire who are the true *Israel* of God. 2. Speak a little of the heavenly *Canaan*, which they will be brought to the possession of. 3. Inquire what nations of enemies they have in their way. And, 4. Speak a little of the conqueror, *the Lord their God*. 5. The manner of the conquest, his putting them out before them *by little and little*. 6. The reason of this gradual conquest. 7. Make application. 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.

FIRST HEAD.

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

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 scared; they get enlightning grace, and others are left in the dark; they get renewing grace, and others are left in their enmity; they get perswading and enabling grace to believe, others are left in their unbelief, and remain children of disobedience and unperswadableness: *This people have I formed for myself, &c.* 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 bricks without straw: He has 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 acquainted 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 threatning of the law, and been made to *seek 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 acquainted 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 invisable hand, and by
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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 in 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, &c.

6. The true *Israel* of God are people acquainted 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 always seekers and beggars.

SECOND HEAD.

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*.

(1.) In its *Types*. The types of the heavenly *Canaan* were manifold. 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*. Tho' all the pleasant orchards and comely things in the world were united in one, they could not come that long time 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

nothing but a shadow of it. 3. The *Sabbath* was a type of this heavenly, happy, and eternal sabbath of rest. Indeed it is but a restless rest the Lord's people have here; when they rest in the Lord at any time, their rest is soon disturbed: Even tho' they can say at times, *Return to thy rest, O my soul, for the Lord hath dealt bountifully with thee*; How soon does the devil, and 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,

(2.) We may consider this heavenly *Canaan* in its *Epithets*, as,
 1. It is called a *House*, John 14. 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 a brave house will it be, when the father of the family will in the midst of the house, and all his children about him, all his elect gathered together from all 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. 12. 2. that, For the joy that was set before him, he endured the cross, &c.* That same joy the saints are to enter into; *In thy presence there is fulness of joy, &c.* 3. It is called *life, eternal life*, Rom. 6. last. *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 lie 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. 4. 18. *The Lord shall preserve me to his heavenly kingdom.* Yea, such a kingdom, that here all the subjects are kings. One said of *Rome* once, that it was *Respublica Regum*, a common-wealth of kings, it is true of heaven, it is a common-wealth 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.

(3.) 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.* The first part of it is the *vision* of God, 1 Cor. 13. 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. 2d part of it is *likeness*, which follows upon the former, 1 John. 3. 2. *We shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is.* This is the native fruit of beholding Christ, to be thereby brought to conformity to him, 2 Cor. 3. last. 3d 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 4. 18. O what flames of love will burn in heaven! Every saint will be a flame. 4th part of it is *satisfaction*, which proceeds from the rest, Psal. 17. last. *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, &c. Isa. 35. 10.*

(4.) 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. 4. 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 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 a *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. 1. 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.* 1. 9. and *Tit.* 1. 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.* 1. 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 the 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*.

THIRD HEAD.

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*, *ψ. 1.* 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 like 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 *Affyrians* 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 dissensions: There was *Saul's* house against *David's*, and *David's* against *Saul's*; *Israel* against *Judah*, & *Judah* against *Israel*;
Manasses

Manasses against *Ephraim*, and *Ephraim* against *Manasses*; nations thus both without and within, & 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 thro' grace they possess on earth. In allusion therefore to the seven nations here, that God cast out before *Israel* of old; I shall shew seven of these nations of spiritual enemies & 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 thro' 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. 1. 21. and these vain thoughts lodge within the walls of *Jerusalem*, Jer. 4. 14. O *Jerusalem*, wash thine heart from wickedness; how long shall vain thoughts lodge within thee? These nations lodge within, and take bed and board of you, and eat up the sap of your souls; therefore, when *David* says, *Psal.* 119. 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'm 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 believe, they that are exercised and bound for heaven, will find a need of almighty power to put out this nation before them, tho' there were no more: And indeed these vain tho'ts are like the flying posts to the rest of the nations that may be named. But then,

2. There is a nation of *worldly cares*, which Christ compares to *briars* and *thorns*, that choke the seed of the word, *Mark* 4. 19. and *Luke* 8. 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 miss 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 beat the world out of their heart with a rod of correction, *Isa. 57. 17. For the iniquity of his covetousness was I wroth, and smote him* : 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 forwardly 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. 43. 6, 7*. The soul is over-set and overwhelmed oftentimes with these. 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. 2. 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*, *Psal. 43. 1. Judge me, O God, and plead my cause against an ungodly nation* : This is a nation that many times suppress and bear 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 lett 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 *Heretick*, 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 *Heretick*, by corruptness of doctrine ; and the *Hypocrite*, by pretences of holiness.

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.* 13. 33. How many great kings did the Lord give into the hand of *Israel*? such as *Og* king of *Basban*, *Sihon* king of the *Amorites*. *Psal.* 136. 18, 19, 20. *Psal.* 135. 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.* 6. 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.* 2. 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 bro't down, and haughtiness of man made low, *Isa.* 2. 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 & working for the throne. It is a king that all the world adore. (4.) *Death* is a mighty king, therefore called the *king of terrors*, *Job* 18. 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* remov'd, which is *sin*. See *1 Cor.* 15. 54, 55, 56, 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, & some of them have mighty giants in their armies; particularly these three, king *Sin*, *Satan*, and *Self*, have powerful armies to fight their hellish battles. And there are,

6. A nation of *deceitful lusts* in the heart; so called, *Eph.* 4. 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'll travel through the camp of your heart, you'll see an armed regiment of giant-like lusts: There you may see *grim-faced ignorance*, armed with the devil's black livery: There you may see *curst Atheism* and *Unbelief*, armed with lies, and blasphemies, and bitter invectives

tives against heaven: There you'll see *cruel enmity*, armed with a bloody sword of forcible opposition unto God and Christ: There you'll see *subtile hypocrisy*, armed with fraud and flattery: There you'll see *brassen-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 believers, 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 omisions, and commissions. Here breaks out *intemperance* and *inso-briety*, in eating, drinking, and using of the comforts of life; there breaks out *idle words*, *vain talking*, *unprofitable conversation*: Here appears *negligence* in duty, or *carelessness* and *indifferency* in hearing, reading, praying, communicating; and there appears *mis-spending* of time, sabbath and week-days both, wasting our precious opportunities, and misimproving our talents, without endeavouring 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 have a list of them, *Gal. 5. 19, 20, 21*. Another list of the names of the soldiers of this army you may read, *2. Tim. 3. 1, 2, 3, 4, 5. &c.* *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, &c.* Now these are 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 centinel at the door of the heart, to keep out all heavenly messages, and exclude all proposals of peace with heaven; the nation of

ungodly

ungodly men continually guarding the out-works of hell, and playing their 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, making daily and hourly excursions out of the camp of hell, and incurſions upon their opposites and antagoniſts, 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 by them; they are ſtill giving battle to *Israel*. Now, O thou that art bound for the celeftial *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 policy, and 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 before thee by little and little*

FOURTH HEAD.

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*.

(1.) *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 here he takes that name, when he perfects what he had begun; ſo we find him making himſelf known by this name, when he ap-

appears to perform what he had promised to *Israel*, *Exod. 6. 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 begun, 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*; may 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 that law that *sin* had violated, and appeasing that 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 bro't it forth; all which requires a new creation, more great and glorious than the first, and belongs to none but *JEHOVAH*. This same 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 great 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. 1. 4. S. Which is, and which was, and which is to come,* Thus he is the *I AM THAT I AM*, as he is called, *Exod. 3. 14.*

The *Alpha* and *Omega*, the *first* and the *last*, the first without beginning, and the last without end. O but they that have such a glorious general to follow, need not fear to take the field against the nations! He is JEHOVAH.

(2.) *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. 7. 6. For thou art a holy people to the Lord thy God: The Lord thy God hath chosen thee to be a special people unto himself, above all people upon the face of the earth*. He made known his mind with respect to the way of salvation to them, and they to others, *Psal. 147. 19, 20. He shewed his word unto Jacob, and his statutes and his judgments to Israel; he hath not dealt so with any nation*. And, having taken them visibly into a covenant-relation, he establishes his covenant with them and their seed, *Deut. 10. 15. The Lord had delight in thy fathers to love them, and he chose their seed after them*. And thus he said to *Abraham*, *Gen. 17. 7. I will establish my covenant between me and thee and thy seed after thee, to be a God to thee and to 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 thro' 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 *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 2. 39. and that *to them belong the adoption, and the glory, the covenant, and the promise*, Rom. 9. 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. 11. 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 an head of eminency, but as an head of influence & government. All the common influences shed among the members of the visible church come from his 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 particular, *I will be your God, and ye shall be my people*; which is the fundamental promise. Great are the privileges that belong to the visible church, that 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 2. last*. 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 15. 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, tho' 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

tual 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 thereof 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 their 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 tho' 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 observed, 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, tho' God be called the God of a church or people collectively, which infers many excellent privileges, tho' 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 blessings that are imported in this special relation that he stands

* i. e. They have privileges above others, as *Benjamin* had above his brethren.

stands in to his 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 thro'. *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 husband to cherish 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 have 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*, tho' their enemies be many. 2. His being their God, imports *that he is their shield*, tho' their enemies be mighty.

1st, 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. 8. 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, & to do all their works in them and for them, and to fight all their battles*. Therefore,

2^{dly}, Tho' 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. 84. 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*, Psal. 7. 10. *My defence is of God, which saves the upright in heart*. 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, *Isa. 32. 2. 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*. 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 judgment on their enemies, *Deut. 32.*

31, 32. *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, &c.* Read also ver. 43. and compare it with *Isa. 63. 1, 2, 3, 4. The day of vengeance is in mine heart, for the year of my redemption is come.* O it is a day of 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

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 piece-mail, *by little and little.* To each of these I would speak a word.

First, 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, *ψ. 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 hands, ψ. 24. and Exod. 23. 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, *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 stopp'd 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, Col. 3. 5. Mortify therefore*

therefore your members that are upon earth. (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 5. 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, & 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. 15. 56. *The strength of sin is the law. Sin hath dominion over all that are under the law, and not under grace*, Rom. 6. 14. and that on many accounts, which I cannot now 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, thro' 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, & as unwilling as *Pharaoh was to let Israel go*, tho' 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 favour 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 fortify and 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,

Rom. 8. 13. *If you thro' the spirit mortify the deeds of the body, you shall live.* 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. 4. 6.* When the conquest is actually commenced in a soul, the spirit of God comes & 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 strengthned themselves, and at last out of the world, when he compleats his work of sanctification; for, *He that hath begun the good work, will perfect it*, Phil. 1. 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 compleat extirpation is 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 remarkable 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 thee.* 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 carnal ease, in the midst of these nations, and under the power thereof: They are *alive without the law*, Rom. 7. 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 yet not begun; for they never yet saw them, nor viewed 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

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 to do at all, but just to *stand still*, as it were, and *see the salvation of God*; to stand still, and *see how the waters will divide to let them thro'*, 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 that 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 condemn'd sin in the flesh, and destroyed the strength of it, by nailing the law to his cross*, Col. 2. 14. And however the nations may rally their forces again, and seem formidable and dreadful, yet their strength being broken in this bloody engagement, the believer hath no more to do 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. 12. 11. The great battle is already fought, and the great art of the believer, in all the lesser battles, lies in setting his captain before him, saying, *I'll 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 thro' 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 on my throne, &c.* They are witnesses to his 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. 32. 36. then he steps in, and takes vengeance on their enemies. And indeed the day of power is a day of remarkable for victories over sin, Satan, the world, and the lusts thereof. Do you remember 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 lusts? By thee I have run through a troop, says David, Psal. 18. 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, and fallings and risings, to's and fro's, and changes. Therefore,

Thirdly, The manner of the conquest here express'd 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. 1. It says, that the Israel of God are not to expect that their spiritual enemies will be all vanquish'd at the first onset. Tho' the victory be begun whenever the soul gets in to Christ, and under his colours who is the captain of salvation, yet the commencement of the spiritual war is not the compleatment thereof; nay, there may be many a battle before the war be at a close, and the victory compleat: For tho' the enemy hath got a dead stroke, and tho' the nations of lusts, like the beast mentioned, Dan. 7. 12. have their dominion taken away, yet their lives are prolonged for a season, which occasions the war to be prolonged. 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 holpen with a little help, Dan. 11. 34. and get a little reviving in their bondage, Ez. 9. 8. a little victory at a time, a small advantage against the enemy: But, tho' it be small, yet the day of small things is not to be despised, Zech. 4. 10. for, as we say, many smalls make a great. Therefore,

The Lord's putting them out by little and little, imports, that tho' the several foils be small, yet they are successful; for *by little and little the nations are thus put out and discomfited*: Every new battle tends to the ruining 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 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 strength from heaven, and then he will say, with the psalmist; *Psal. 118. 10, 11. The nations compass 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; 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 enquire, 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'll tell you four remarkable periods of his conquest, wherein you may see four remarkable degrees thereof. 1st 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

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overcame. 2d Period was in the remarkable combat that was betwixt the two heads of the two contending parties on mount *Calvary*, Christ on the one hand, and the serpent on the other; when, *tho' 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, & vanquished the nations of hell by destroying their commander's power.* 3d Period was in the after-game that followed upon this memorable combat; when in his resurrection and ascension into heaven, he dismantled all the garrisons of Satan, *divided the spoil with the strong, led captivity captive*: which laid the foundation for a successful war to all 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. 12. 7, 8.* tho' he continue thus to rally his forces against heaven, and all that bend heavenward to the end of the world. And then comes the 4th 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. 15. 56.* From the first to the last enemy, not one shall be left nor spared from destruction: Then sin, and death that was bro't 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, is it 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.

1st, 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 'em 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, O 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 does 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.* Maybe he brings them to it by some rousing providence, whereby he stops their career in wickedness, and *hedg-es up their way with thorns*, as he stopt *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, while 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 bro't 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 one forward to the camp for war, he brings them into the 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 jaylor, *O 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 *restlessness*, even to a restless endeavour to come out of Satan's camp, and out of that sad condition they see themselves in: 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 were by this time beginning to fight against the nations of their lusts: But, however these means be good in themselves, and a restlessness in the use of them may be wrought under the awaking influence of the spirit of God; yet there is some other field the man must be taken thro',

before

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. 6. 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 *restlessness* 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, *curst is every one that continueth not*, &c. and so all this perfection it requires upon pain of eternal death and damnation. Now, *the commandment comes*, Rom. 7. 9. and tho' *the man was alive without the law once*, and reckoned he was right enough, and bade fair 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 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 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 to be holpen with a little help further, and then his course is compleat. 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 into 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 died with his own blood. Here the man sees *him girding his sword upon his thigh, even his glory and majesty*: By this sword of glorious grace, the sinner is made a willing subject, a willing foldier 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, entitled to a compleat victory over all the nations of enemies in his way, and entitled to all these new recruits from heaven, that are necessary for the gradual subduing of the nations before him, till he get 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 bro't 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,

2dly, *By little and little he carries on the conquest, till the day of death*, when the warfare is accomplish'd. 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

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 us. 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 truly destroyed*, but are living and *lively*, strong and prevalent many times. 2. That they have also many sweet experiences, all their days, of 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 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 conquest may be many times undiscernible, while yet the power of the enemy appears great and formidable, notwithstanding any little advantage gained at a time, and while they find many dreadful fallies and 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. 7. 23. and that you wrestle not against flesh and blood only, but against principalities and powers? Eph. 6. 12.* Does not sad experience witness, how violent your corruptions are, and how impercussly they break thro' every hedge, notwithstanding your being sure to be scratch'd 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 ails you most? and *that your greatest adversaries are 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 hampers you in your flight and motion towards God, & 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, tho' it had been told you? When you formerly got *your feet upon the necks of your enemies*, you could never have thought they would ever so fearful-

ly 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 parly 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 *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 evanish; 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*? &c. 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 aims 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 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 weakning, captivating, vexing and tormenting power? But many *sad experi-*

ences of this sort, and thousands of them in their lifetime, may even the *Israel* of God have, whereby they find, to their cost, 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 *little succours* and *auxiliaries*, 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 bro't to the *field of battle*, as I showed 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 lifetime* this warfare is carried on, who can tell? And how many *little recoveries*, *little revivings*, *little supplies*, *little supports*, *little strengthning 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 win the day*, it 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 lifetime, 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* hearts 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, barrasted 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

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*, *O 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 a fit of the *falling-sickness* and *backsliding*: And the new *communication* of life, and *health* to the soul, makes him start up to his feet again, and pursue the enemy with *more vigour* and *resolution* than ever; like a man that grows stronger after his sickness than he was 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 hold 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, &c.* Why, the *promise* lays hold on his heart, and his heart lays hold on the *promise*, and therein he sees *that the strength of Israel is engaged to carry him thro' the host of his enemies*. And thus, every little hold 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 a crucified Christ, brings along with it a train of artillery for subduing the enemy, 2 Cor. 7. 11. *What carefulness does it work*, says the apostle; *yea, what clearing of our selves; yea, what indignation; yea, what fear; yea, what vehement desire; yea, what zeal; yea, what revenge?* 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 some time he gets a *little resentment* of his own ingratitude, saying, *O do I thus requite the Lord, O foolish and unwise?*

wise? A little holy shame and blushing before the Lord, at the tho'ts 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*, & get glory to thy name. Further, sometimes he gets a little intimation of peace & pardon, a little *springling 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, before 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 blest me*; they get even *power with God himself*, as 'tis said of *Jacob*, *Hos. 1.2.4. He had power over the angel, & 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*, *Rev. 2.26 To him that overcometh, will I give power over the nations*. Sometimes they get a little *anointing of the oil of gladness wherewith Christ is anointed above his fellows*, and then *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 blink 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'll remember thee from the land of Jordan and of the Hermonites, &c.* 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 defeat. Sometimes they get a little *opening of the door of hope in the valley of Achor*, the lively hope of the heavenly *Canaan thro' the resurrection of Christ*: And this hope

is the sinews of the holy war ; for, as *Hope maketh 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 sweet and 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 leaping on the mountains, &c.* 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 hony-comb* ; the more they taste of the hony 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*, & it restores their fainting soul : *All Christ's garments are said to smell of Aloes, Myrrhe & Cassia* ; & 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, and making havock among their enemies, and 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*

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. 'Tis he that rubs off the rust from 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.*

SIXTH HEAD.

The Sixth Thing proposed, was, to give the *Reasons* of the doctrine. It might here be asked, 1. *Why the Lord their God, and he alone, does put out the nations before them?* Why, 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, 2. *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 disposal; and therefore I would offer some particulars for representing the beauty of this method.

1st, *It is by little and little he puts them out,* without destroying them at once, *that by them he may prove his people, Judg. 2. 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 expect 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^{dly}, *It is by little and little that he will put out the nations before Ij-*

rael, 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 & 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 will be 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 more need of *godly sorrow* ; if *death were already swallowed up of victory*, there would be no need of *the desire of death*, nor of longing for heaven ; if *vision were already come*, there would be no need of *faith*, as 'tis a militant grace, fighting its way many times thro' 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,

3dly, 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. 2. 5. So it tends to enhance heaven, and make them prize and value it the more, when it is attained through many difficulties, troubles and oppositions : And by this means they come to have some sweet conformity to their blessed *captain of salvation*, who was *made perfect through sufferings* ; 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 dependant ; 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 dependant

dependant 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. 33. 55. *If they would not drive out the inhabitants of the land, then it should come to pass, that these which they let remain 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.

4thly, *It is by little and little that the Lord puts out the nations before them,* to commend the excellency of the deliverance that we have by Christ. *Tho' 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 offences 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, that we can comprehend 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.

5thly, He delivers 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, tho' 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 conquerer. When *Joshua* had discomfited these five kings that fought against *Gibeon*, *Joshua* 10. he would not slay them instantly, but shut them up in a cave close, intending, when the battle

battle was fully ended, to put them to death openly: So our great general and captain, the Lord Jesus Christ, *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 nations 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 show of them openly, and destroying them utterly.*

6thly, *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. 7. 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.* May be, 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 sweeps it out,* and watches, and prays, and fights better than he did before.

7thly, 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, *Exod. 23. 30. By little and little I will drive them out from before thee, till thou be increased, and inherit the land.* 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.

8thly, 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 follows the text, which we have

have also, *Exod. 23. 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 incompleat. 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 watching and waking. 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 the 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 to see a need to be spiritual, zealous, earnest, and fervent in spirit, serving the Lord. There is also a filthy dumb beast, which 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. 59. 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, &c. 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. 15. 1, 2, &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, that hast delivered, and dost deliver, 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, tho' they may be called all beasts together, yet herein shines infinite wisdom in sparing one beast to destroy another, one corruption to devour 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 hereticks 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. 13. I mean, the Roman Antichrist. And then, why hath a nation of Hereticks, with their 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 for the faith once delivered to the saints? There must be heresies, says the apostle, that they that are approved may

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 darkning 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.

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. 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 premises 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. 2. 12, 13.* then it is as good a reason for warring, and using all the means necessary for accomplishing this *spiritual warfare*, that 'tis 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; & 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 stress 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 bro't 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 greatest 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*, *v. 2d of this chapter* where the text lies, & 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, tho' my lusts be not all destroyed, and tho' I indulge myself in some of the *pleasures of the flesh*; and, I hope, I may have peace, *tho' I walk in the imagination of my heart, adding drunkenness to thirst*, and one sin to another. Say you so, my friends? I must tell you, that *your speech* bewrays you, that you are not a *Israelite* bound for the *heavenly Canaan*; for, *curst is that peace 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, says 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

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 are 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 from his hold, & 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*.

Second use may be for *information*. Many things might here be inferred; as, 1. Hence we may see the *privilege even of a visible church, whom the Lord hath not utterly forsaken, tho' filled with sin*, as it is said, *Jer. 51. 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 mix'd 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 literally, 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 outpouring 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 *solemn covenant of duty and service*. This was a part of *Scotland's glory*, attended with internal displays of the power & glory of God in the sanctuary. To prove the obligation of these covenants upon posterity 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, and 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 a *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 *priviledges of a visible church*; so the special and peculiar privilege of the true *Israel of God*, the church spiritual and invisible, tho' 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 'tis *Deut. 33. last. Happy art thou, O Israel; who is like unto thee, O people saved by the Lord, who is the shield of thy help, & the sword of thine excellency?* And

§. 27. *The eternal God is thy refuge, underneath are his everlasting arms: He shall thrust out the enemy from before thee, and shall say, Destroy them.* What tho' all the nations of the world were against them, outward and inward; the nations of earth and of 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 gave 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 privileges* 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 indissoluble union, intitles them to all *spiritual blessings* and *spiritual 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, tho' 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 of 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, *iniquity 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 tales to tell 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 faint, 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 that 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 nations 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, *O 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 lust- ing against the spirit, as well as the spirit against the flesh*: And when he finds a nation 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, thro' 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 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, fought 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 engaged with his 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. 73. 26. *My flesh and my 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, *Rom. 8. 13. If ye through the spirit mortify the deeds of the body, ye shall live.* And the spirit carries on this work, *1st*, 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 united to him, the sin-killing, soul-quickening virtue of Christ may flow into the believer. *2dly*, 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*. *3dly*, By the excitation of the grace that he hath implanted; which, tho' 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. *4thly*, 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 strengthning 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, tell a believer, exercising faith, that there is sin in such a thing; O it is an abomination. Faith discov-

vers 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; & so to overcome, under the standard of the glorious captain.

Third use is for *examination*. Hence we may see matter for trying of 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 begun? And is the Lord gradually carrying it on?

Quest. *How shall I know that?*

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, & 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 you seen your own utter *impotency* to drive them out of your self? Have you seen them to be such *politick 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 thro' God to the pulling down of 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 thralldom; they are yet *serving the nations, which they ought to be driving out*. They that *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 & salvation lies, & 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 some time 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*
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the wine-press alone, when of all 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. 63.* begin. 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 got 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 knit your heart unto him as the Lord your God, the Lord your captain, the Lord your right confidence, 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, knitting the soul to him, is a great matter; for thus the believer is united to Christ by faith, and the relation constituted, 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 thou 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 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 eccho of faith is, *Amen*, I'll take it on thy word, that thou wilt be my God, *Zech. 13.* last. *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 tho't 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, & 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 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 he dare say it expressly or not; for in Christ they see him

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 1. 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 knit your heart to him as the glorious captain of salvation, so as you have taken on with him? Then thou art intitled to the complete victory: *The Lord thy God will put out these nations before thee.* This mark excludes all those that never closed with Christ by a *particular 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 entred the field of battle, nor closed with the captain.

4. Hath the Lord begun *to put out the 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 you 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 those, 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 perhaps taking you captive, yea, *and bringing you into captivity to the law of sin that is in your members*? *Rom. 7. 23.* Have you not found your enemies returning with such power and prevalency, that

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 gained, the *Canaanites* prevailing against you? *Iniquities prevail against me*, says *David*. You'll think this is an odd mark; for, says the believer, it is the *prevalency of sin* that makes me fear I am not an *Israelite* bound for *Canaan*. But, stay a little till I further clear it: This mark excludes all those, 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*? *Ans.* 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 uncontrollable, 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 an *habitual power*; but the power of *prevalency* is *occasional* only: And, in a word, the power of dominion is an *entire power*; but the power of *prevalency* is a *broken power*, the head of it is broken, and the back of it is broken, tho' 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 feel 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, both before and after their sinning. But O, 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 you ever 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 allsufficiency*. O 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*

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 those that think they 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 encouraging to those who are saying, in the exercise of faith, *I'll go in the strength of the Lord, making mention of his righteousness, & 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'll 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: Tho' 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 tho', 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. 129. 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 the 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.*

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*.

First, 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*.

1st, 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 tho' their mouth be filled either with *curfing, 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 shap'd for any spiritual discourse, except in *hypocrisy and deceit*, discover a carnal heart. O 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 jailor*, that, while you're 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. O how miserable is this *thralldom* that you're under! for these nations that rule in you and over you now, 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 now you're 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 possess'd of the devil, you'll be driven down into the sea of God's everlasting wrath, and drowned in perdition. But then,

2dly, 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, whomsoever thou art, you that have been a *slave to the devil* all your days, a slave to a *numerous nation of lusts*, that, as sure as God lives, will keep you out of heaven, & 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 drive out the nations before you? Our *Captain-general* hath sent us, as officers under him, to cry in the publick meetings and assemblies of this sort, saying, *Whosoever will, let him come*, and take on to be a foldier 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 5. 23. *Curse ye Meroz, curse ye bitterly the inhabitants thereof, because they came not to the help of the Lord, to 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 foldiers, 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 cloath 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 tho' you have done nothing for 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, *Nb. 6*. 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

tence 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, Isa. 63.* 4. *the year of my redeemed is come; 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. 89.* 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,

2dly, A word of *Counsel*. 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. 2.* 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 counsel in these few particulars.

1. *Put on the whole armour of God;* and go not forth against the nations in your own strength, otherwise you'll 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 your salvation.

2. Search out these nations that are most invisible and hidden; for your greatest danger is from your most secret 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 lies*, then set upon them, and endeavour thro' 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 thro' 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're 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: Remembring, for your encouragement, that the Almighty Captain stands within sight, when you're fighting in the valley; and he waits but a call from you when distressed 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 biases. 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 1. 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 18.*

1. 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 fear'd 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'll have them to fight with, as long as you're on this side of heaven: Enemies will up again, and therefore you must up again, and *press forward* to a compleat victory. As *the body of sin and death* remains while you're here, so, whatever particular lust you have been troubled with, you cannot expect a full and final victory over it while here, even tho' 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 partial denying of his master, tho' not in the same degree; as when *Paul withstood him to the face*, Gal. 2. 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, tho' 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; 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? tho' now, behold, Adonijah usurps the throne: Hast thou not said, grace shall reign, & 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: Tho' you have no strength, no might against this great multitude; yet, let your eyes be towards 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.*

The Rainbow of the Covenant surrounding the Throne of Grace.

Being the substance of some SERMONS preached at the Sacrament of Muchart, June 23, 1728.

By the Rev. Mr. EBENEZER ERSKINE.

REV. iv. 3.

— *And there was a rainbow round about the throne, in sight like unto an emerald.*

NOT to stand in the entrance of this discourse, we may observe here three things, which *John* saw in the vision. 1st, A Throne set in heaven, in the close of the second verse. 2^{dly}, The glorious majesty that sat on the throne, who was like a *Jasper* and *Sardine-stone* for brightness. 3^{dly}, The canopy of the throne, a rainbow round about it in colour like an emerald. I understand the whole of

of this to have a respect immediately to the church militant here upon earth, and the glorious dispensation of the grace of God under the new-testament œconomy : and that which inclines me to understand it in this view is because this vision is prophetic, and has a respect to things that were to be done afterward, as you see in the first verse. *Come up hither, and I will shew thee things that must be hereafter*, that is, things which are to be transacted *in the church* in the succeeding ages and generations of the world ; and therefore by the *throne* here that was *set in heaven*, I understand the *throne of grace*, to which we are invited to come with *boldness for grace and mercy to help in time of need*, Heb. 4. 16. The throne which hath justice satisfied, and judgment executed upon the son of God for its basis and foundation, *Pf. 39. 14. The throne of God and of the Lamb*, from which proceeds *a pure river of water of life, clear as crystal*, Rev. 22. 1. And *this throne* is said to be *set in heaven*, not as if God's *Throne of grace* were only in heaven properly so called ; for we find the church militant on earth frequently expressed by *heaven* in scripture. *Heb. 12. 20.* She is called the *heavenly Jerusalem*, to wit, *the church*. *1 Pet. 2. 8.* the *heavenly nation* ; and therefore by *heaven* here we may understand *the church of God* in general ; and it is so called to shew that the hearts of believers, even while here upon earth, are in heaven, *they are desiring a better country, that is an heavenly*, and when they address a throne of grace, they have their eyes upon an exalted Christ, *who is set down at the right hand of the Majesty on high*, and his ministry in the heavenly sanctuary. By *him that sits on the throne*, I understand Christ or God in our nature, not excluding the Father and the Holy Ghost ; for it is *the throne of God and of the Lamb*. *Ezek. 1. 26.* we have the same description of *a throne in a vision*, and we are told that *above upon the throne was the appearance of a man*, which can be applied to none other than *the man Christ Jesus* ; and there is no doubt but it is the same throne and the same person sitting on it, that was seen both by *Ezekiel* and the apostle *John*. As for his posture, he is represented as *sitting upon the throne*. This points at the *perpetuity* of his government, that he is in the *quiet possession* of it, it being for ever out of the power of his enemies to disturb his administration. We are told here further, *that his appearance upon the throne was like a Jasper & a Sardine-stone*. These stones being unknown to us, we shall not take up time in telling you what is said about them by naturalists and some curious interpreters, only we are told, in short, the *Jasper* is a bright transparent stone, representing to the eye a variety of the most vivid or lively colours ; the *Sardine* is said to be red. The scope is plainly

this, to point out *the admirable and inconceivable glory and excellency of an exalted Christ*. Such is *the brightness of the Father's glory* shining in him now when he is upon the throne, that all the precious things on earth put together are but faint shadows and representations of his divine glory and excellency: *The brightness of the Jasper and the redness of the Sardine stone* are put together, to shew that he is *white and red*, white in his divine, red in his human nature, white in his holiness, red in his suffering; the bright and glorious perfections of God shining thro' the rent vail of his human nature, do as it were receive a tincture of red from the vail, thro' which they are transmitted. *Isa. 63. 1.* he is said to be *glorious* and yet *red in his apparel*, and his *appearance in the midst of the throne is as it were of a Lamb slain*, having the sprinkling of his blood about him, which was shed upon mount Calvary, and which cries for *better things than the blood of Abel*.

But now I come to that part of *John's* vision, which I have principally in view, and that is the *canopy of state* which covers the throne, and *him* that sat on it, in the close of the third verse. *And there was a rainbow round about the throne, in sight like unto an emerald*. Where again observe, *1st*, The covering of *the throne*, it was very stately, *like a rainbow*. *2dly*, The circuit of this covering, it was *round about the throne*. *3dly*, The colour of it, *it was like an Emerald*.

Here I conceive there is a manifest allusion to *God's covenant with Noah, Gen. 8*. When God called back the waters of the deluge from off the face of the earth, he made a promise, and bound himself by covenant, *That he would never destroy the earth any more by water*, and in token of his faithfulness in this matter he *set his bow in the clouds*. With allusion to this, *God's throne of grace*, or his mercy seat, from which all the promises of the covenant do proceed, is said to be *surrounded with a rainbow*, to signify that as *God deals with his people in the way of a covenant*; so *his faithfulness in that covenant is established in the very heavens*, and this bow surrounding the throne is said to be in colour like *an emerald*, that is, of a green colour, to signify that his covenant, by virtue of the faithfulness of him that sits upon the throne, is ever the same, *without any shadow of turning*; *the fashion of this world withers and passes away, but the word of the Lord, his word of grace and promise, it endures for ever*.

The doctrine I take notice of from the words is this, *That God's covenant of grace, and his faithfulness ingaged therein, is like a beautiful rainbow surrounding the throne of grace, for the encouragement of our faith and trust in him that sits on it*.

In discoursing on this doctrine, I shall, through divine assistance, do these things following, (1.) Offer a few thoughts concerning *the covenant of grace or promise*. (2.) Concerning *the faithfulness of God* engaged in this covenant. (3.) Take a view of *this covenant* under the similitude of a rainbow in colour like an emerald surrounding the throne of grace. (4.) Speak a little of *that faith or trust* which the sight of this bow of the covenant should beget in us. (5.) Apply the whole.

The *first* thing proposed is to offer a few tho'ts concerning *the covenant of grace and promise*. And,

1. I remark, that the occasion of the covenant of grace, like that of God's covenant with *Noah*, was a deluge of wrath, which broke out upon *Adam* and all his family, for the breach and violation of the covenant of works. This is what is pointed at *Ezek. 16. 4, 5, 6, 7, 8*. Where you see that that which gave occasion to God's entering into a covenant of grace, is that miserable estate man had brought himself into by sin. *When I passed by thee, and saw thee polluted in thine own blood, thy time was a time of love, I spread my skirt over thee, and covered thy nakedness: Yea I swore unto thee, and entered into covenant with thee, saith the Lord, and thou becamest mine.* Here it may readily be asked, what is that state we are reduced unto by the breach of the first covenant? I answer, in short, it is a state of sin; original sin like a contagion has over-run all men, and *the whole man from the crown of the head to the soul of the foot*: It is a state of alienation and estrangement from God; *we are alienated from the very life of God, through the ignorance that is in us*; like the prodigal we have gone into a far country, and care not for returning to our father's house: Yea, more, it is a state of enmity and hostility against God; *the carnal mind is enmity against God, we are enemies in our minds by wicked works*: It is a godless and a hopeless state, therefore said to be *without God, and without hope in the world*: It is a state of worse than *Egyptian* darkness: we are not simply in the dark, but *we are darkness itself; once ye were darkness*: It is a state of impotency and weakness, *for when we were without strength, in due time Christ died for us*: It is a state of bondage and captivity to sin, Satan and the world; we are led captive by these potent enemies: It is a cursed and condemned state, *we are condemned already, and the wrath of God abideth on us*: It is a state of death, we are dead spiritually, under the power of sin, and lying upon the very borders of eternal death. Now this is the condition we are reduced unto by the fall, upon which account we may well take up that melancholy song, *The crown is fallen from our head, wo to us that we have sinned*; however infinite mercy and love takes occasion from this miserable

miserable and ruined estate of man to enter into a new covenant, even a covenant of grace, in order to his deliverance.

2. *Remark*, that the *rise and spring of this covenant of grace* was not foreseen faith or good works, or any thing else in the creature, but only the free and surprizing love of God, *Joh* 3. 16. *God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him, might not perish, but have everlasting life*, *Jer*. 31. 3. *I have loved thee with an everlasting love, therefore with loving-kindness have I drawn thee*. This love of God to lost sinners was altogether, and *absolutely free*, free in opposition to merit, free in opposition to constraint; it hath no other cause, but *only the freedom of his own will*, *Eph*. 2. 4. And as it is free, so it is *superlatively great, love that passes knowledge*, love which bath a *height and depth, a breadth and length* which can never be fathomed, or found out; it is distinguishing love that take hold of man when it passed by angels that fell; it fixed upon some of *Adam's family*, when it passed by others.

3. This covenant of grace, in the original make and constitution of it, was *transacted with Christ* as a new covenant-head, a publick person representing all the spiritual seed, which the Lord hath given him; for, sirs, you must know, that since the fall of man, God never entered into any covenant with him directly and immediately; but only by the intervention of a surety and mediator. Hence in our *larger catechism*, in answer to that question, with whom was the covenant of grace made? The answer is, *That it was made with Christ, and with the elect in him as his seed*. Hence it is that we read of *Grace given us in Christ before the world began*. In this covenant there are some things that relate particularly to Christ himself *as surety and redeemer*, and some things in it that relate *to the members and seed of Christ*; the Father having promised sufficient furniture and through-bearing to his Son, both for the purchase and application of our redemption, the Son not only undertakes to *satisfy justice, to fulfil the law, to bruise the head of the old serpent*, but also by his spirit, which he would send into their hearts, *to sprinkle them with clean water, to take away the stony heart, to enlighten them, to justify them, to adopt and sanctify them, and at last to present them without spot or wrinkle or any such thing*; and when all this comes to be revealed and set forth in a gospel dispensation, what is incumbent upon us, but to subscribe to this glorious transaction and plan of redemption, that was laid by infinite wisdom? Thus I say the covenant of grace was originally transacted with Christ, and with us in him and through him; and they who either in print or pulpit ridicule or exclaim against this as a new scheme

of doctrine, they do not ridicule us, but the doctrine asserted by the church of *Scotland* in her standards, which, as it is founded upon the word, so we are bound by solemn covenant to cleave unto it.

4. *Remark*, That the revelation of this covenant of grace transacted with Christ before the world, was made *very early to our first parents in paradise immediately after the fall*, Gen. 3. 15. *The seed of the woman shall bruise the head of the serpent.* Here it was that the grand secret, which lay in the breast of God, did first break forth, when our first parents were waiting with a trembling heart every moment for the execution of the sentence of the broken covenant of works: Behold *glad-tidings of great joy are issued out from a throne of grace*, namely, *that in the fulness of time, the son of God was to take on the seed of the woman, and bruise the serpent's head, to destroy the devil and his works, and redeem man from that gulf of misery into which he was plunged; this was the covenant of grace; and 'tis remarkable that in its first edition it came forth in a promise of Christ*, this was enlarged and explained to *Abram, Moses, David*, and yet more fully opened after the *Babylonish* captivity by *Jeremiah, Ezekiel* and other prophets, till Christ himself actually came, in whom all the old testament *tyyes, prophecies and promises* received their full accomplishment, and having *by his death* confirmed the covenant *with many*, the covenant of grace after his resurrection and exaltation came forth in its last and best edition; namely, in the form of a testament, having the two great sacraments of baptism and the supper appended to it, as full and uncontested evidences of its being confirmed by his death. This glorious charter is now past the seal, and therefore faith may make use of it with boldness.

5. *Remark*, That this *covenant of grace* or testament of our Lord Jesus Christ may be viewed and considered in its *dispensation or exhibition*. God in his infinite wisdom, for reaching the great end and design of a *covenant of grace*, has appointed ordinances, the word, sacrament and prayer, and other proper means, *by which the benefits of his death, and blessings of his covenant, may come to be actually applied to us*, he has authorized ministers to dispence word and sacraments, that by these, as through conduit-pipes, *his grace and fulness* may be communicated to us. And here it should be remembered, that the *covenant of grace* in the dispensation and exhibition of it comes to *every man's door*. It is presented as the ground and foundation of faith in common to all the hearers of the *gospel*, elect and reprobate; we call all and every one to *take hold on God's covenant*, and tell them, *To you is the word of this salvation sent; the promise*

promise, or covenant, is to you, to your seed, and to all that are far off, and to as many as the Lord our God shall call.

6. This *covenant* of grace may be considered in the application and execution of it; and this is either initial, progressive or consummate. 1. I say there is the initial application, or the soul's first entry into the bond of the *covenant*, or rather the spirit of the great new *covenant* head taking hold of the poor soul, and the soul at the same moment taking hold of the *covenant* by faith receives it as a good and sufficient security for that life and happiness, which was lost by the sin of the first *Adam*. This is in scripture called *the day of espousals*, wherein the soul does as it were sign and subscribe the marriage-contract, saying, *I am the Lord's*. 2. There is the further improvement of this *covenant* of grace, for the soul's daily supply in a way of believing, whereby it is made to *grow in grace and in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ*. This is called a *drawing water with joy out of the wells of salvation*. The believer finding himself under this and the other want improves the promises of the *covenant*, as they are suited and adapted to his case. And thus the work of sanctification is daily advanced, *they shall go from strength to strength*. 3. There is the full execution of the designs of this *covenant*, when the soul is brought to glory, and *presented faultless before the presence of God, without spot or wrinkle, or any such thing*. *When Christ who is our life shall appear, then shall we appear with him in glory*. At that day the *covenant*, and all the concerns of it, is fully executed and performed, even *the day of Jesus Christ*, Phil. 1. 6. *Being confident of this very thing, that he who hath begun a good work in you, will perform it to the day of Jesus Christ*. So much for the first thing proposed, which was to give you some views of the *covenant* of grace.

The *second* thing was to speak a little of the *faithfulness* of God engaged in the *covenant*, which is here resembled to the *rainbow about the throne in colour like an emerald*. For the illustration of this head, I shall 1. Enquire what the *faithfulness* of God implies. 2. How far this *faithfulness* is engaged in the *covenant*.

For the *first*, I shall clear it in the following particulars. 1. God's *covenant* of grace or promise is no hasty or indeliberate deed, but the result of his eternal purpose and council. Men many times speak before they think, and when they have past their word, they would be content to eat it in again, because they speak frequently before they consider matters truly. But no such thing is incident to God; his promise is nothing else but a revelation of his council and purpose of grace before the world began; and therefore every word he speaks is sure and stable, like mountains of brass which

which cannot be shaken. 2. God thinks as he speaks in his covenant and promise. I remember it is given as the character of a true citizen of *Zion*, that he *speaks the truth in his heart*, *Pfal. 15.* that is, his words and his thoughts agree together, the one is the exact transcript or copy of the other: And if this be the character of the citizens of *Zion*, much more is it so of *Zion's* God and King, *who desires truth in the inward part*: He does not say one thing and think another, he hates all dissingenuity in others, and therefore cannot be guilty of it himself: His words are so much the picture of his heart, that we may lawfully and warrantably look into his heart in and by the words of his mouth.

3. God cannot forget his *covenant* and *promise*. Men will many times make promises, and forget them as soon as they are made; but it cannot be so with God, *he is ever mindful of his covenant*, his mercy and truth is ever before his face; and therefore it is an unjust reflection on a God of truth, to say, or think that he has *forgotten to be gracious*. A woman may sooner forget her sucking child, than God can *forget his children*, or his promise made to them; he remembers every *good word* or *thought* of ours, and has a *book of remembrance* for them; surely then he will not, he cannot forget his own *word of promise*. 'Tis true *Isa. 43. 26.* we are commanded to *put him in remembrance*; and accordingly *David, Psal. 119. 49.* says to God, *Remember the word, upon which thou hast caused me to hope*. But this is not to be understood, as if God needed to have his memory helped by us; but only to put us to our duty, to quicken us to faith and fervency in prayer, according to the direction, *Ezek. 36. 37.* *For these things will I be enquired of by the house of Israel, that I may do it for them.*

4. God cannot *change his mind*: our unbelieving hearts are ready sometimes to suggest, that when God made the promise, he might have thoughts of *grace and love* in his heart, but perhaps now he has altered his way of thinking; his thoughts have taken another turn: but this cannot be, for he is *of one mind*, and *who can turn him?* There is no variableness, or so much as a *shadow of turning with him*, *he is the same to-day, yesterday and for ever.* *Psal. 102. 25, 26, 27.* *Of old thou hast laid the foundation of the earth: and the heavens are the work of thy hands: they shall perish, but thou shalt endure; all of them shall wax old as a garment; as a vesture shalt thou change them, and they shall be changed. But thou art the same, and of thy years there is no end.* Whatever changes there may be in his carriage towards us, yet there can be no change in his heart, consequently no *change or alteration in his covenant*.

5. As God never *changes his mind*, so he never *broke his word*;
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he always performs what he promises. Many a time the believer has found him better than his word, but never worse than his word. This is what *Joshua* observed in his last speech to *Israel*, *Josh. 23. 14.* *And ye know in all your hearts, and in all your souls, that not one thing hath failed of all the good things which the Lord our God spake concerning you, but all are come to pass to you, and not one thing hath failed thereof.* As if he had said, I appeal to your consciences, if he has not been a faithful God in performing his promise to you. Thus you see wherein the *faithfulness* of God consists.

For the second, to wit, *How far the faithfulness of God is engaged in the covenant of grace?* I answer, it is so far engaged, that he has given all the security that it is possible for God to give. For, 1. his covenant is subscribed, even with his *own blood*. God, as it were, dips his pen in the *heart blood of his own Son*, & therewith subscribes the covenant. Hence the blood of Christ is called the blood of the testament. *This is the New Testament in my blood.* 2. The covenant of grace is not only subscribed but attested by a glorious Trinity in the capacity of three witnesses, *1 John 5. 7.* *There are three that bear record in heaven, the Father, the Word, & the Holy Ghost: and these three are one.* 3. It is a sealed bargain, sealed with the oath of God, wherein he hath pledged his very life for the performance of it; he gave his oath to the covenant-head, *Psal. 89. 35.* *Once have I sworn by my holiness, I will not lie unto David.* He gives his oath to the seed of Christ, *Heb. 6. 17.* *God willing more abundantly, to shew to the heirs of promise the immutability of his council, confirmed it by an oath.* It is sealed with the death of the testator, *Heb. 9. 16, 17, 18.* It is sealed with the sacraments of *baptism and the supper*, which are like the delivering of earth and stone upon an indentment: and that moment that a sinner takes hold of it, he seals it upon the heart by his holy spirit, *Eph. 1. 13.* *In whom after ye believed, ye were sealed by the Holy Spirit of promise, which is the earnest of our inheritance.* 4. This covenant or testament has the faithfulness of God so far engaged in it, that for further security it is registred in heaven among the antiquities of *the land afar off*, *Psal. 119. 89.* *For ever, O Lord, thy word is settled in heaven,* registred upon earth, *in the volume of his book*, which is a more sure word of prophecy than an immediate voice from heaven; and therefore, *we do well to take heed to it, as to a light shining in a dark place.* This much for the second thing proposed.

The third thing in the method was to take a view of this covenant of grace, and the faithfulness of God engaged therein, *under the similitude and representation of a rainbow* surrounding the throne in colour like an emerald. And here I shall endeavour to do these

three things. 1. View the covenant under the similitude of a rainbow. 2. Enquire why *this bow* is said to be round about the throne. 3. Why it is said to be in colour like an emerald.

1. I say, I shall view the covenant of grace under this metaphor of the rainbow in the text. 1. Then *the rainbow* was of God's setting, *I have set my bow in the clouds*: So the covenant of grace is of God's making. *I have made a covenant with my chosen. Hear and your soul shall live, and I will make with you an everlasting covenant, even the sure mercies of David. I will make with them an everlasting covenant, that I will never turn away from them to do them good.* Beware of thinking that the covenant is of your making. It is indeed our duty to *take hold of God's covenant*, and to come under engagements, through the grace thereof to observe all the duties commanded in the law; but do not think, that your engaging or promising and covenanting do make or constitute the covenant of grace. No, it is God that both makes the covenant, and leads our heart and hand in taking hold of it, and in engaging to these duties of obedience, which are consequential unto our being in covenant with the Lord, *Heb. 8. 10. This is the Covenant that I will make with the house of Israel, I will put my law into their mind, and write it in their heart: and I will be to them a God, and they shall be to me a people.* The covenant of grace is as much of God's making, as the forming of the bow in the clouds, which cannot be done by the hands of men.

2. The bow was set in the clouds upon God's smelling a sweet favour in *Noah's sacrifice*, as you will see in the close of the 8. and 9. chapters of the book of *Genesis*: So here, upon Christ our blessed *Noah* his engaging to make himself a sacrifice to justice in our room and stead, and God smelling a sweet favour in his death and satisfaction thereupon, *God sets his bow of the covenant in his church.* O sirs, if it had not been for the satisfaction which our surety offered, this bow of the covenant had never appeared in our heavens.

3. God's bow in the cloud is a security against the waters of the deluge, *that they shall never return any more to destroy the earth*; and indeed the bow in the heavens is a greater security against it, than the sands and rocks wherewith it is surrounded: so the covenant of grace, founded upon, and sealed with the blood of the lamb, is a glorious security against the devouring deluge of divine wrath, that it shall never return to destroy any soul that by faith flees to Christ, and takes shelter under the covert of his blood and righteousness. Whenever a man sees the rainbow, it yields him peace and safety against the fears of another deluge, tho' never such hurricanes or tempests were blowing out of the heavens; tho' the

sea were roaring and its waves swelling, as tho' it would swallow up the dry land, yet the sight of God's bow in the clouds, puts us out of fear of an universal deluge: so here, whenever a poor soul by faith takes a view of the bow of the covenant surrounding God's throne of grace, it yields him peace; he is made to see, that whatever be God's dispensations, whatever be the appearance of his providences, yet the deluge of his vindictive wrath having spent itself upon the surety, justice itself becomes the sinner's security, by virtue of the covenant of grace, Isa. 54. 9. For this is as the waters of Noah unto me; for as I have sworn that the waters of Noah should no more go over the earth: so have I sworn that I would not be wroth with thee nor rebuke thee.

4. The rainbow (as naturalists think) is just a reflection of the beams of the sun; and it is the sun that gives being to the rainbow; for take away the sun out of the firmament, there would be no rainbow in the clouds: so here, it is Christ the *sun of righteousness*, that gives being to the covenant of grace; he is the very life and substance of it; *I will give thee for a covenant of the people.* All the promises of the covenant, what are they but just the rays of grace and love, flowing out from Christ, *the brightness of the Father's glory.* All the promises are in him, and in him they are yea and amen; Take away Christ, and the promise is not, the covenant is not.

5. Altho' the *arch of the bow* is high above us, reaching to the heavens, yet the extremes of it stoop down to the earth, and comes near to every man, yea, one would think, wherever he is, or whatever place of the world he is in, still the end of the *rainbow* is pointing towards him: just so it is with the covenant of grace; altho' the great covenant-head be in heaven, yet the covenant itself stoops down to men upon earth. *Rom. 10. 6, 7, 8. Say not in thine heart, who shall ascend into heaven? (that is to bring Christ down from above) or who shall descend into the deeps? (that is to bring up Christ again from the dead.) But what saith it? The word is nigh thee, even in thy mouth, and in thy heart: that is, the word of faith which we preach.* By the *righteousness of faith* spoken of in the 6th verse, some of our best interpreters do understand the covenant of grace, which is so called, because therein God brings near his righteousness to us; yea the covenant of grace, in the dispensation of it, like the bow in the clouds, points to every man saying, *To you is the word of this salvation sent.* The covenant is indefinite, no man's name is mentioned, no man's name excluded; but as it were a blank left for every man to put in his own name by an applicatory faith.

6. God's *bow in the clouds* is very extensive, reaching from the
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one end of heaven to the other: so God's covenant of grace is a large and wide covenant. Tho' all *Adam's* posterity were gathered together, there would be room for them within the arches of the rainbow. God's covenant of grace is a large and wide covenant; there is room in it for you, room for me, and room for all mankind; God's voice is to every one to take hold of it, for every one to come within the circuit of it: *Ho every one that thirsteth, come to the waters; he that hath no money, let him come.* You that have spent your money for that which is not bread, and your labour for that which profiteth not, you are called to take hold of it, *Isa. 55. 1, 2.*

7. As the rainbow is a security against an universal deluge, so it is a prognostick of a refreshing shower of rain to the thirsty earth: so this bow of the covenant that is surrounding the throne of grace, as it secures against vindictive wrath, so it prognosticates, yea gives the greatest assurance of the rain of the spirit's influences. It is an article of the covenant, *I will be as the dew to Israel, and he shall grow as the lillie, and cast forth his roots like Lebanon: I will come to them as the rain, as the latter and former rain unto the earth.* As it seldom or never fails, that if a man looks upon the rainbow, but a shower follows it in a little; so it never fails, that if a man looks by faith to the bow of the covenant, and the faithfulness of God in it, but some refreshing rain of the dew of heaven falls on his soul, *Eph. 1. 13. After that ye believed, ye were sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise.* *John 11. 40. Said I not unto thee, that if thou wouldest believe, thou shouldst see the glory of God?*

8. The visible and sensible appearance of the rainbow is but of a short continuance, commonly it appears for a little, and then evanishes; so the sensible and lively views that the believer gets of the covenant of grace, in its beauty, order, freedom, fulness and stability, are commonly but of a short continuance; *it is a rare hour and a short stay*, said one of the Ancients.

9. Altho' the rainbow disappear, and that for a long while together, yet we do not conclude upon that account, that God's covenant with us is broken, or *that the waters will return again to destroy the earth.* No, the remembrance of the rainbow set in the clouds, tho' a man has not seen it but once in his life; I say, the very remembrance of the bow makes us easy, and persuades us *that the deluge shall not return again:* So here, whenever God discovers this bow of the covenant surrounding the throne of grace, when he has determined thy soul to take hold of it, altho' thou dost not see it in such a sensible manner now as thou hast seen it formerly, yet the very remembrance of this covenant may make thy soul easy against the fears of wrath, because the veracity and faithfulness of

God in the covenant, is the same *without any variableness*, however matters may be with thee, as to thy present sense and feeling. Thus you see, in what respect God's covenant is resembled to the bow which he has set in the clouds.

For the second question, *Why this bow is said to be round about the throne?* I answer, 1. This signifies the glorious Majesty of a God of Grace in Christ; for, as I told you, it is represented as a canopy of state covering the throne, which is a badge of majesty. O sirs, *honour and majesty are before the face of a God in Christ*, his throne of grace is incircled with the glory of grace, grace lies scattered about the throne on every hand; and this shews his glorious greatness. 2. The *rainbow* its being set round about the throne of grace, perhaps may signify this, that there is access to the throne of grace on every hand, or from every quarter. Whatever part of the covenant you look to, whatever article, whatever promise you cast your eye upon, you will still find it leading you directly to a throne of grace, for grace to help you, *Ezek. 36. 37. for these things* (to wit for the blessings promised) *will I be enquired of* (at a throne of grace) *by the house of Israel, that I may do it for them.* 3. The throne of grace is said to be surrounded with the *rainbow*, to shew the stability of every promise, or of every act of grace, that is issued out from a throne of grace: every part of the covenant is sure; *every promise of it is more firm than the pillars of heaven*, the faithfulness of God is in every promise; and therefore *one jot or tittle of it cannot fall to the ground.* 4. It is said to go about the throne, to shew the connection that there is among all the parts of the covenant. As every part of a circle leads to another part of it, so the covenant of grace connects one blessing with another, one blessing draws another after it; effectual calling brings justification, justification brings adoption, sanctification, perseverance, and increase of grace, and grace brings glory with it hereafter: As when you take hold of the least link of a chain you bring the whole chain with you; so here, if you have one blessing you have all; if you receive Christ, you have all in him, he brings all along with him.

5. The rainbow about the throne may signify, that there is no access to a throne of grace, no ground for faith to stand upon in its approaches to the throne, but only by virtue of the covenant, and the faithfulness of God engaged therein. It is folly for people to think of coming to a throne of grace, *for grace and mercy*, while they overlook and neglect God's covenant, and his veracity pledged therein.

A third question was, *Why this bow of the covenant is said to be in colour*

colour like an emerald? I shall not stay on this; only in one word, I think that it points at the perpetuity of the covenant, it is always the same like an ever-green, it never withers or decays. O sirs! this world is withering, it is waxing old as a garment, the fashion of it is passing away; you yourselves are withering, your beauty, strength, stature, and other excellencies, are fading like a moth; your frame, perhaps, will wither in a little, however agreeable it may be; tho' you were upon mount Tabor, beholding Christ in his glory, yet that will not last; in a little your prosperous state, and your mountain that seems to stand firm, may be shaken through the hidings of the Lord's countenance. But here is what may be relief under all; God's covenant is in colour like an emerald, continually green, without any decay. I think it very remarkable, that when God is sending Moses to the children of Israel, in order to bring them out of the land of Egypt, he puts him in mind of the covenant that God made with Abraham, in which he said, that he would bring them out of Egypt. Well, what way does God take to confirm the faith of Moses, and the children of Israel concerning his faithfulness? He bids tell the children of Israel, *I AM hath sent me*; as if he had said, do not think that I have forgotten my covenant and promise to Abraham. No, *I AM WHAT I AM*: I am the same this day that I was four hundred years ago, when I spoke to Abraham upon this head, and my promise is as fresh with me; as it was that day I made it, *Heb. 10. 23*. There, says the apostle, *faithful is he who hath promised*. So it reads in our translation; but in the original Greek, the words may be read, *faithful is he who is promising*. We are not to look upon God's covenant and promise as a thing that is past and out of date; no, he is a promising God to us, as much as when the promise first past out of his blessed lips: It is an ever-green, it is in colour like an emerald; he is ever mindful of his covenant; and as justice and judgment are the habitation of his throne, so his mercy, wrapt up in a word of truth, is still going before his face. This much for the third thing in the method.

The fourth thing in the method was to enquire a little into the faith and trust, which the consideration of all this should beget in us; and for clearing of it, I shall go no further than the representation made in the text. *What do you think when the rainbow appears in the heavens?* the same you are to do with relation to the bow in the covenant, and the faithfulness of God engaged in it.

I. When the bow appears in the heavens, you behold it, you look upon it with your eyes, for it is a beautiful appearance; you consider and enquire for what end there is such an appearance in

the heavens. Now the same you are to do with God's *covenant of grace*, the bow that he hath set in the heaven of his church, about his throne of grace which he has reared up. It is absolutely impossible that ever you can reap any benefit by God's *covenant* unless you behold it, consider it, and study to know and understand it; there must be an uptaking of the secrets of the *covenant*. And this is the first thing that ever God does, *when he is to bring the soul within the bond of his covenant*, he enlightens the mind with the knowledge of Christ, the great *covenant* head: He makes the man to think upon and consider the fulness, freedom, the comely order and stability of the *covenant*, as a *covenant of grace and peace*, having all our salvation wrapt up in it.

2. When a man sees the *rainbow* in the heaven, and knows that it is a token of God's *covenant* with mankind, *that the waters shall not return to destroy the earth*, he assents to the truth of the *covenant*, or promise of God, he believes that it is true, that God made such a promise, and that God who promised such a thing will not break his word, *but that he will make it good*: So here when you see the bow of the *covenant of grace*, and the veracity of God, pledged therein; when you see it sealed with the oath of God, and the blood of his eternal Son, your duty is to assent to the truth of God pledged in the *covenant*, because he has *faithfulness for the girdle of his loins, and truth for the girdle of his reins*: O will the soul say: *I see every promise of God to be true, it is impossible for him to lie; and therefore I set to my seal that he is true.*

3. When a man sees the *bow in the cloud*, he concludes that he himself in particular is safe from the waters of the sea, that they shall not overflow him; he rests upon the veracity of the promiser; and so makes himself easy against the fears of a second deluge: So here when we see God's *covenant* like a bow surrounding his throne, we should rest with assured confidence upon it as a good security for our everlasting happiness, for peace, pardon, grace and glory. The *covenant* is God's charter for eternal life, and the soul accordingly takes it, and says, *This is all my salvation, that he has made with me in Christ an everlasting covenant, and in this will I be confident: Indeed if God can break his covenant, I am undone, I will sink in the mighty waters of his wrath; but God's covenant cannot be broken: It stands fast for ever; the mountains shall depart, and the hills be removed, but the covenant of his peace shall never be removed; and therefore I am sure, God will not betray me, his covenant will not deceive me: And all this is just what is called a taking hold of God's covenant, Isa. 56. 4.*

The fifth thing proposed is the use of this doctrine. All the use

I make of it at this time is in these few inferences. *Is it so that God's covenant of grace and his faithfulness engaged therein is like a rainbow surrounding the throne, for our encouragement to trust him? Then,*

1. See hence the *amazing glory and beauty of the throne of grace*, to which we are invited and called to come. Every thing in and about this throne has glory, beauty and majesty in it; he that sits on it is like the *Sardine and Jasper Stone*; they that behold him, or who are about the throne, are so dazzled with his glory, *that they cry day and night, Holy, Holy, Holy is the Lord God Almighty, which was and is, and is to come*, Rev. 4. 8. *they worship him, and cast their crowns down before his throne, saying, Thou art worthy to receive glory, honour, and power; for thou hast created all things, and for thy pleasure they are and were created.* O how majestick is the appearance of a God in Christ! how majestick is his throne, high and lifted up! how majestick is his retinue filling the wide temple of heaven and earth.

2. See hence the *ground* that the assurance of faith goes upon in drawing near to a throne of grace. Why, it goes upon the ground of the divine veracity pledged in a *covenant of grace*; it sees this bow about the throne, & this gives the man courage and confidence; *Abraham's faith builded its assurance here.* Rom. 4. 20. *He staggered not at the promise through unbelief; being fully persuaded that what he had promised he was able to perform.* If you were putting up that petition, sirs, to God that he would hem in the waters of the ocean, and bind up the *fountains of the great deep*, that the waters might not return to overflow the earth, I am persuaded that you would ask it with full assurance of faith, *nothing doubting* his veracity in granting you that petition, because God has promised that *the waters shall no more return to destroy the earth*; and he has set his bow in the cloud as a token of his veracity in that matter? Well, I am sure you have as firm a ground to build your faith upon when you draw near to a throne of grace, to ask of him things agreeable to his will, things promised in the covenant of grace, *peace, pardon, and salvation* through a redeemer, you have the veracity of the same God pledged, not only his veracity but his power, his holiness and other perfections; yea, sirs, God's covenant of grace that is made with us in Christ is more firm than God's covenant with *Noah*; for, as you have heard, this *covenant of grace*, is attested by the *three that bear record in heaven*, it is sealed with the oath and blood of God, and registered in the volume of his book; and therefore at any time when you go to a throne of grace for any mercy, keep your eye upon the *bow of the covenant*, & the *faithfulness of God* pledged therein, that so you may hope and trust and believe without staggering.

3. See hence the way how to be *supported* and *relieved* under all *pressures of trouble* of whatever kind, whether from without or from within. My friends, you have been at a *communion table*, and I hope you have been *upon the mount with God feeding upon fat things full of marrow*; now we are about to part, we are going out again to the wide world, & God knows what deep seas, what tempestuous waves and storms from earth and hell may be abiding us: Well, whatever may befall you, I give you this advice, to keep your eyes always upon the *rainbow of the covenant about the throne* of which you have been getting a sensible seal in the *sacrament of the Lord's supper*, especially in the cases following, and you shall find wonderful relief and support, as *David* did to his experience, *Psal.* 27. 13. *I had fainted, unless I had believed to see the goodness of the Lord in the land of the living.*

1. Then perhaps, poor believer, a *storm of vindictive wrath* in appearance may blow from heaven, which will startle thy conscience to that degree, that thou shalt be made to cry thro' a sense of guilt, and the impressions of God's anger on thy soul, *The arrows of the Almighty are within me, the poison thereof drinketh up my spirits, the terrors of God set themselves in array against me.* Well, if that happen to be thy case, as I know not but it may, look to the *rainbow of the covenant about the throne*, and there you shall see the faithfulness of God engaged, that *vindictive wrath* shall never touch thee. Read for this *Isa.* 54. 7, 8, 9, 10. There you see the oath of God is past, that the deluge of vindictive anger shall no more return to destroy thee; and what more would thou have? will *unbelief* dare to charge God with *perjury*?

2. Perhaps, believer, a *storm of trouble* from the world may blow upon thee, times of publick calamity may come, *days of persecutions for righteousness sake*, or if that fail, a storm of personal trial may be abiding thee; trouble in thy name, in thy estate, in thy family or relations; the storm may blow so hard as to sweep away all that is dear to thee in a world. Well, say you, what shall I do in that case? Why my advice to you is to cast the eye of faith upon the *bow of the covenant*; and there thou shalt find what will cheer and keep up thy heart; there thou shalt find thy covenanted God in Christ promiseth his sympathy in all thy troubles. *Isa.* 63. 9. *In all their afflictions he is afflicted.* *Psal.* 103. 13. *As a father pitieth his children: So the Lord pitieth them that fear him.* There you shall find him engaged to go through the fire and water with thee, *Isa.* 43. 2. *When thou passest thro' the waters I will be with thee.* There you will find him engaging himself by covenant to carry thy head above, *Isa.* 41. 10. *Fear not for I am with thee, I will help thee, I will uphold*

hold thee with the right hand of my righteousness. There thou shalt find him engaged to bring thee safely through all thy troubles: *Many are the afflictions of the righteous, but the Lord shall deliver him out of them all.* Thou shalt find that *thy light afflictions, which are but for a moment, shall work for thee a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory.*

3. Perhaps a storm from hell may be abiding thee, *principalities and powers, and the rulers of the darkness of this world*; the armed legions of the bottomless pit, like the *bulls of Bashan*, may ere long be pushing at thee. Well, in this case look to the throne of grace, and to the bow of the covenant that surrounds it, and thou shalt find what may, and will relieve thee; you will find that Christ has, according to the first article of the covenant, *bruised the head of that serpent, spoiled principalities and powers, triumphed over them, and made a show of them openly on his cross: he has destroyed death, and him that had the power of death.* There thou wilt find him engaged to stand by thee as thy leader & commander, to *make thee tread Satan under thy feet shortly*: And by faith acted upon this covenant, thou art assured of the *victory*; yea, that thou art a conqueror, *and more than a conqueror through him that loved thee.*

4. Perhaps, believer, thou may in a little find the strong man of *indwelling sin*, like *Sampson*, after his locks were cut, recover strength, and begin to rage in thy soul, inasmuch that thou shalt be made to cry with the apostle, *Wretched man that I am, who shall deliver me?* Well, in that case look to the throne of grace, and the bow of the covenant, and thou shalt find God engaging himself to *give grace and mercy, to help thee in this time of need.* Rom. 6. 14. *He has said, sin shall not have dominion over you.* Micah 7. 19. *I will subdue their iniquities.* Ezek. 36. 25. *From all their idols, and from all their filthiness will I cleanse them.* Isa. 59. 19. *When the enemy shall come in like a flood, the spirit of the Lord shall lift up a standard against him.*

5. Perhaps in a little Satan and corruption together may give thee a *trip*, and lay thee on thy back, and as it were tread thee in a mire, so that *thy own cloaths shall abhor thee*; and what shall be done in that case? Well even in that case look up to the throne, and behold the exalted prince that gives repentance and remission of sin, that he may lift thee up again, and by the blood of his covenant bring thee out of the pit wherein there is no water. Take a view of the bow of the covenant and thou wilt find written upon the arch of this bow, *That tho' thou hast lien among the pots, he will make thee like the wings of a dove covered with silver, and her feathers with yellow gold.* Listen to his voice that sits upon the throne, and thou wilt hear him saying, *tho' thou hast played the harlot with many lovers, yet return again to me, saith the Lord.*

6. Perhaps a black and melancholly night of desertion may overtake thee in thy way ; God may hide, and thou be brought to cry with the church, *The Lord hath forsaken, and my God hath forgotten.* Well, *tho' thou walk in darkness and see no light, yet trust in the name of the Lord, stay thy self upon him by virtue of the covenant as thy God ;* for here he is engaged, *That he will be thy God for ever ;* that he will *never leave thee nor forsake thee* as to his real presence ; and that *tho' weeping may endure for a night, yet joy cometh in the morning : For a little 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 have mercy on thee, saith the Lord thy redeemer.*

7. Perhaps you may fall under the melancholly fears and apprehensions, that thou shalt be so left of God, as to prove an *apostate* in the end. Well, look up to the bow of the covenant about the throne, and thou wilt find security against that also. Phil. I. 6. *He that hath begun the good work in thee will perform it until the day of Christ. The righteous shall hold on his way, and he that hath clean hands shall wax stronger and stronger.* Grace and glory are connected by the covenant so inseparably, that they can never be divorced. *Psal. 84. 11. The Lord will give grace and glory.*

8. Perhaps you may in a little fall under a melancholly deadness and indisposition of heart ; *the spices of the garden*, that seem now to be sending out *their smell*, may wither, and thou may be crying, *I am a dry tree :* Well, in that case look up to the throne of grace, and thy glorious head sitting on the throne ; and thou wilt see thy life in him : *Our life is hid with Christ in God ; because I live, ye shall live also ; after two days he will revive us, and in the third day we shall live in his sight. I will be as the dew to Israel, and they shall revive as the corn.* Hof. 6. and 14. Chapters.

9. Perhaps the terrors of death may shortly take hold on thee, poor believer ; the dark curtains of the grave, and the shadows of the land of forgetfulness, may begin to stretch themselves upon thee : O ! what shall be done in that case ? I answer, even in that case look up and take hold of the bow of the covenant surrounding the throne ; as *David* did when his latter end was approaching, *Tho' my house be not so with God ; yet he hath made with me an everlasting covenant, ordered in all things, and sure : And this is all my salvation and all my desire.* The same holy man, *Psal. 23.* viewing the covenant, and God engaged to be with him in death, cries out, *ver. 4. Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, yet will I fear no evil : For thou art with me, thy rod and staff shall comfort me :* See a sweet promise of the covenant to this purpose, *Hof. 13. 14. I will*

will ransom them from the power of the grave: I will redeem them from death: O death, I will be thy plague; O grave, I will be thy destruction.

But after all you may perhaps say, these things may yield excellent support and relief to the believer that has taken hold of God's covenant, and got within the arches of the bow; but I fear I am none of these. An answer to this leads me to the last use of the doctrine; which I do not design to enlarge upon at present: Only let me exhort and call all hearing me, whether believers or unbelievers, to put this matter out of doubt, presently without delay, by taking hold of God's covenant, here represented by the rainbow surrounding the throne in colour like an emerald. Sirs, you cannot lay hold on the natural rainbow with the hands of your body; but when you see it you may lay hold on God's covenant with Noah by an act of trust or believing, that God, according to that covenant, will deliver you from a deluge of water: Well, do the same in the present case; take hold of God's covenant of grace, and his faithfulness therein engaged through Christ for your deliverance and freedom from the deluge of eternal wrath, which threatens to swallow you up for ever and ever. But I go no further at present.

S E R M O N II.

At *Abernethie*, Saturday and Sabbath July 5th and 6th 1728.

REV. iv. 3.

— *And there was a rainbow round about the throne, in sight like unto an emerald.*

I Proceed to the last use which I designed to make of the doctrine, viz. In a way of exhortation. Is it so that the covenant of grace and the faithfulness of God engaged therein is like a rainbow round about the throne, in colour like an emerald? Then my exhortation to all hearing me is to answer the design, and improve this manifestation and display of the grace of God: Why has he set the rainbow of his covenant round about his throne? Is it not to encourage sinners, who are far off, to come & enter in within God's covenant, and take hold of his faithfulness pledged therein, that they may obtain grace and find mercy at a throne of grace to help them in time of need? Sirs, when you see the bow in the clouds, you remember God's covenant with Noah, and believe that you are safe

safe against the second deluge of water, not for any good deed done by you to deserve such a thing, but because of the veracity of God pledged in his covenant with *Noah* : So when you see the bow of the covenant about a throne of grace, improve it as a security against the deluge of wrath, which was stopt and recalled upon the satisfaction and death of Christ : Improve it, I say, for this and all the other blessings, that lie wrapt up in the large bosom thereof.

But that I may set this exhortation in a clearer light, I shall endeavour, through divine assistance, 1. To shew what the *rainbow of the covenant of grace* is a sign of. 2. Shew what it is to improve *this rainbow of the covenant*. 3. What are these blessings or privileges that lie within the circle of this *rainbow*, and of which the soul comes to be possessed, either in part or in whole, that moment that it takes hold of God's covenant. 4. Who they are that may *warrantably* come within the compass of this *rainbow*. 5. Roll away some impediments or stumbling stones, that lie in the way of the sinner, and which have a fatal influence to discourage them from taking the benefit of the *rainbow* of the covenant which is about the throne. 6. Offer a few advices, in order to your improving the rainbow of the promise or covenant, for your safety against the *deluge of wrath that threatens you upon the account of sin*.

The *first* thing proposed is to enquire *what this rainbow of the covenant is a sign of?* You know the rainbow in the visible heavens is a sign of something; and so is this spiritual rainbow of the covenant. As,

1. It is a sign that the first covenant is *broken*, and that the wickedness of man was great upon the earth; for which cause the fountains of the great deep of God's wrath were opened like a mighty sea, sweeping all *Adam's* family to the bottomless pit. When we see the bow in the heavens, we remember the flood of *Noah*, which was sent to take vengeance upon the old world for their sin; so when we view the rainbow of the covenant, we should remember the flood of divine wrath and vengeance, that is broken out against the whole family and race of mankind. O sirs, the broad flying roll of the curse of God is gone forth over the face of the whole earth, because of the sin of man, *Gal. 3. 10.* *Cursed is every one that continueth not in all things, written in the book of the law to do them.* Remember this when you see the bow of the covenant of grace round about the throne of grace.

2. This rainbow of the covenant is a sign that a ransom is found out, and that the sacrifice of our great *Noah* is accepted; that God has smelled a sweet savour in the death of our Lord Jesus Christ.

You

You know the rainbow was set up in the heavens, after God had accepted of *Noah's* sacrifice ; and when we see God's bow in the clouds, we remember this : so, when we look upon a covenant of grace, we ought to remember the death and satisfaction of Jesus, as the very ground and foundation of God's dealing with sinners in a way of grace. When we behold the covenant, we should behold the blood of the covenant, behold the red streams of this rainbow, *Zech. 9. 11. By the blood of thy covenant, I have sent forth thy prisoners out of the pit wherein there was no water.* I have read that in *Holland*, where most of their country is taken off the sea by strong dykes, if the sea at any time happen to make a breach, whereby the country is in danger of being laid under water, any man that observes the breach, is by the law of the country ordered to stop the breach, if possible, tho' it were with his most valuable packs of goods, and he has reparation from the community, O sirs ! sin has made a breach for the inundation of God's wrath, to break in upon the whole race of *Adam*, & the breach was so wide, and the current of wrath so rapid and strong, that it would have swallowed up and swept away the whole creation of angels and men, if they had been cast in to stop it. The glorious Son of God, perceiving that nothing else would do it, cast his own body into the breach ; *he redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us.* Let us remember this when we remember the bow about the throne.

3. The bow of the covenant as it is set up in the heavens of the visible church, is a sign that *the deluge of God's wrath is recalled*, and that God is a God of peace towards sinners, through the atoning blood of the Lamb. Sirs, *I bring you glad tidings of great joy*, the waters of the deluge of God's wrath are so far abated and fallen, that *the olive-branch* is brought forth to your view by God's ministers. We preach *the gospel of peace*, and bring *glad tidings of good things* to you ; we tell you, in the name of God, that he is so well pleased with the ransom that he has found, that he declares *fury is not in him*, that tho' he was angry, *his anger is now turned away* ; and if you will not believe his word, take his oath for it, in which he has pledged his very life, *Ezek. 33. 11. As I live, says the Lord, I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked, but rather that he turn from his evil ways and live.*

4. The rainbow in the clouds is a sign of God's faithful promise, that no man shall be ruined by an universal deluge. Indeed, if a man will stand within the sea-mark till the waters of the sea overflow him, there is no help for that ; God's faithfulness in his covenant with *Noah* stands firm, tho' the man perish : so here the rain-
bow

bow about the throne of grace, is a sign of God's faithfulness in a word of promise, that no man shall perish who will take the advantage of the dry land that stands before him in the gospel. Indeed, if a man will by unbelief stand still within the sea-mark of God's wrath till he perish, there is no help for that; but the faithfulness of God in the covenant of grace stands firm, and shall not be made of none effect through his folly: But I say, *whosoever believeth* or taketh hold of the faithfulness of God, pledged in his covenant, *shall not perish but have everlasting life*; the deluge of wrath shall never touch him. This much for the first thing, namely, What this rainbow about the throne, *in colour like an emerald*, is a sign of?

The second thing was to enquire, *What it is to improve this rainbow of the covenant?* I answer, as it is well expressed in our *Confession of Faith*, chap. 14. sect. 2. at the close, *It is to believe in Christ, or to accept, receive, and rest upon him alone for justification, sanctification, and eternal life, by virtue of the covenant of grace.* This is a very material expression, & I fear little observed by the generality of people; a resting upon Christ by virtue of the covenant of grace. As we rest upon a man by virtue of his word or promise, so we rest upon Christ by virtue of the covenant and the promises thereof. It is observable here in the text, *that the rainbow is round about the throne*, and him that sits on it; so that there could be no coming to the throne, or *Christ sitting on it*, without coming within the rainbow; so there is no coming to Christ, no true believing in him, but by virtue of his word of grace, and promise in a covenant of grace. And this is one main difference between true saving faith, & the presumptuous faith of hypocrites. Hypocrites, by a presumptuous faith, will indeed lay hold on Christ and salvation; but in the mean time, they do not receive Christ and his benefits as they lie within the *rainbow*, they do not receive and improve him by virtue of the covenant of grace. The covenant of grace, or the promise of God in Christ, is his testament bond or disposition, wherein he assigns and makes over himself, *his righteousness, his spirit, his fulness*, and all the blessings of his purchase: Now true faith receives and rests upon Christ by virtue of this covenant of grace. I defy you either to fasten your faith or trust upon God or man, without a word of promise to ground your faith upon. If I should bid you trust or believe your neighbour, or any substantial man for a sum of money that you stand in need of, you would ask me, why, what ground have I to trust him? Has he promised to give it, or lend it to me? If he has not promised to do it, there is no ground of trust; and you would think that I were but mocking you, when I bid you trust him for it, unless he had put

his

his word. So here, when we bid you believe in Christ, receive him, or rest upon him for salvation, your eye must immediately be turned to the word of grace, or promise, and his faithfulness engaged in it; for it is by virtue of that, that we receive him, or improve and apply him to our own souls: Hence believing in Christ is expressed by a *taking hold of God's covenant*, Isa. 56. 4. Which expression plainly implies a fastening on the veracity or faithfulness of God pledged in the covenant. And how far the faithfulness of God is engaged in the covenant of grace, I shewed in the doctrinal part of this discourse. He has subscribed it as a party, he has sealed it *with his oath, and the blood of his Son*; he has attested it in the capacity of a witness, he has consented to the registration, yea, has actually registred his bond, that we might ** have the more speedy diligence upon it* at a throne of grace. Now, I say, faith is a taking hold of God's faithfulness thus pledged in the covenant, it is a resting upon his veracity, it is a trusting to him, that he will be as good as his word, because *it is impossible for him to lie*; it is a *setting to the seal that he is true*, and a saying with David, *God hath spoken in his holiness, I will rejoice*. O sirs! faith in Christ by virtue of his word of grace and promise, is one of the plainest and clearest things in the world, if the devil and an unbelieving jealous heart, working together, did not darken and obscure the account we have of it in the word. What is plainer than to trust the word of an honest man, or to rest on him by virtue of his word? So here believing is a resting on Christ, or a trusting in him by virtue of his covenant, or word of grace: But the legal proud heart of man has such a strong bent after salvation, *by doing or working for life*, that nothing else than the mighty power of God can bring the sinner to quit and renounce *all his works and righteousness as filthy rags*, and to take salvation and eternal life by trusting or believing the bare word of a promising God in Christ. But I shall not enlarge further upon this at present.

The third thing proposed, was to enquire what are *these blessings or privileges* which lie within the circuit of this rainbow of the *covenant*, and of which the soul comes to be possessed either in part or in whole, that moment that it takes hold of the *covenant*. The very naming of these blessings may serve as so many motives or arguments, to persuade you to take hold of the *covenant*, to come to a throne of grace by virtue of the *rainbow* that surrounds it. And here a field of matter presents itself to view, so large and copious, that 'tis *impossible for the heart of man to conceive it*, far less can the tongue of man tell it or express it in words, for all the blessings of heaven and eternity lie within the wide circuit of this *rainbow of*

** This is a law term used in Scotland.*

the covenant, which surrounds God's throne of grace. All grace whatsoever lay originally in the heart of God; but, as it lies there, it is inaccessible by sinners, for *who hath known the mind of the Lord?* Well, because that grace that is in God's heart is inaccessible by us, therefore he brings it yet nearer to us, by taking a piece of our nature, uniting it to the person of his eternal Son, & calls it *Christ, Messiah, Immanuel, God-Man, or God-with us*: And makes *all the fulness of the God-head*, all the grace that is in his heart to dwell there that so we might not be afraid to come to one in our own nature for grace and mercy to help us. But that our faith might yet have a greater advantage, he does not rest there: But he brings all the grace that is in Christ into a promise or a covenant of grace, pledges his faithfulness in the strongest way imaginable, in the promise or covenant, that so unbelief might have nothing to object. Unbelief might be ready to say, It is true there is enough of grace in Christ, but alas he is in heaven, and he has carried all his grace to heaven with him; and the throne on which he now sits is so high that I know not how to get at him. But, says the Lord, O sinner, say not so, think not so; for all the fulness of Christ is nigh thee in the rainbow of my covenant. I give thee a word of faith, a faithful word of promise, lean to that, rest on that, and Christ, and all that is in him, and all the grace that is in my heart shall come along with it into thy soul. What is it, O sinner, thou wants, but thou may have it, either in title or possession, by resting on the veracity of him who has set his bow in the clouds?

I shall instance in a few of the many blessings that are to be had by taking hold of God's covenant, or by believing in Christ by virtue of the covenant.

I. Would you have *Jehovah* Father, Son and Holy Ghost to be thy God, even thy own God, to be *the strength of thy heart, and thy portion forever*? Well, come within the rainbow by taking hold of God's covenant, or trusting the word of a promising God in Christ, and it shall be so: For this is the leading article of the covenant, *I am the Lord thy God. I will be their God, I am thy shield & thy exceeding great reward.* O sirs, you lost your claim to God by the first covenant, and while in a state of nature, under a covenant of works, you are without God in the world: But here is a God in Christ coming back again in a new covenant, a covenant of grace and peace. O take him at his word, and take him in his word, for *faithful is he that hath promised.* Let thy soul say to the Lord upon the covenant ground and grant, *This God is my God for ever and ever*: And he *shall be thy God even unto death*, because he has said it in his covenant. But, say you, must I not first close with Christ

Christ before I can claim the Lord as my God? I answer to close with Christ, is nothing else but to take a God in Christ as thy own God, by virtue of the covenant of grace and promise wherein his faithfulness is more deeply engaged than ever it was in God's covenant with *Noah*, whereof the rainbow is a perpetual and standing sign. But, O, say you, I am afraid it would be presumption for me to claim a God in Christ for my God, upon the covenant-grant, *I will be their God*. I answer it is so far from being presumption, that it is rebellion against the authority of the great God interposed in the very first command of the moral law, not to know and acknowledge him, & trust in him as God and as thy own God; and till thou take him as thy God in Christ, thou art living in open rebellion against the authority of heaven; and will thou adventure to be a rebel against God to avoid the danger of presumption and so rush upon the thick bosses of heaven's buckler. O that I could persuade you to obey the first command of the *moral law*, as it stands in a subserviency to the *covenant of grace*, contained in the *preface of the ten commandments*, which teaches us to believe that he is the Lord our God and redeemer, upon the ground of his own faithfulness pledged in these words, *I am the Lord thy God*. O sirs, if you can but find in your hearts thro' grace to obey the first command in the law, you will find it easy to obey the rest; and if you can but find in your heart thro' grace to believe this first and leading promise of the covenant of grace, *I am the Lord thy God*, you will find it easy to lay claim by faith to all the subsequent promises of the covenant; for it should be remembered that the first promise of the covenant, and the first command of the moral law, are inseparably linked together.

2. Take hold of the covenant, and come within the arch of this blessed bow that goes round about the throne, and there thou shalt find a sealed pardon of sin, an indemnity, an act of oblivion for all thy sins, tho' they be innumerable as the stars, and great and heinous like the lofty mountains, *Heb. 8. 12. I will be merciful to their unrighteousness their sins and iniquities will I remember no more*. So *Jer. 31. 34*. View him that sits upon the throne within the rainbow, and thou wilt hear him saying, *I even I am he that blot out thine iniquities for mine own names sake, and will remember thy sins no more*. O condemned sinner, trust a God in Christ for this, by virtue of his covenant, or by virtue of his promise, *For the Strength of Israel will not lie nor repent*.

3. Thou art by nature an alien, a stranger, a foreigner, a child of hell, would thou fain come back again to God's family, and have a God in Christ as thy father? Well, view the rainbow, come within

within the circuit of it, and there thou shalt find this; *I will be to them a father, and they shall be my sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty. To as many as received him, by virtue of this covenant-grant, to them gave he power to become the Sons of God, even to them that believe in his name, John 1. 12.*

4. Wants thou a *principle of spiritual life*, who art by nature dead in sins and trespasses? Well, believe in the Son of God, by virtue of the covenant, and thou shalt have it; *For, says Christ, John 11. 25. he that believeth in me, tho' he were dead, yet shall he live. Would thou have thy spiritual life more abundant? New quicknings under the languishings of grace? Well, this is within the rainbow of the covenant. Thy life is hid with Christ in God; and he has said, that thou shalt revive as the corn, and grow as the vine.*

Again wants thou to have thy *heart sprinkled from an evil conscience*? Here it is to be had, *Ezek. 36. 25. I will sprinkle them with clean water, from all their idols and filthiness will I cleanse them.*

Would you have the *power of sin* broken in thy soul? Take hold of God's covenant, or believe in Christ by virtue of the covenant, and thou shalt have this also. *Micah 7. 19. I will subdue their iniquities. Rom. 6. 14. Sin shall not have dominion over you, for ye are not under the law but under grace.*

Would thou have thy *stony heart softened* and turned into a heart of flesh? This also lies within the rainbow of the covenant, *Ezek. 36. 26. A new heart also will I give them, a new spirit will I put within them; I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh, and give you a heart of flesh.*

Would you have the *spirit of God* within you as a spirit of wisdom and revelation, as a quickning, guiding and sanctifying spirit? Well, this is within the covenant also, *Ezek. 36. 27. I will put my spirit within them, and cause them to walk in my statutes.*

Would you have *protection against all enemies and dangers*? This also is to be had within the circuit of this rainbow. *The man, Christ who sits upon the throne, is a hiding-place from the wind, and a covert from the tempest.*

Would thou have *strength to encounter thy enemies*, strength to grapple with difficulties, and to manage thy work & warfare: This is within the rainbow of the covenant, *Zech. 10. 12. And I will strengthen them in the Lord, and they shall walk up and down in my name, saith the Lord. Isa. 41. 10. I will strengthen them, I will help and uphold them with the right hand of my righteousness.*

Lastly, Would thou have *grace* to keep in the *Lord's way* to the end, till the *good work be perfected*? Well, this is in the covenant. *The righteous shall hold on their way, and he that hath clean hands shall wax stronger*

stronger and stronger. He that hath begun the good work in you, will perform it to the day of Jesus Christ. All these and innumerable other blessings lie within the circuit of this rainbow, which goes round about the throne of grace.

The fourth thing proposed was to enquire, *who are they that may warrantably come within the compass of this rainbow? Who are they that may take hold of God's covenant?* An answer to this question is the more necessary, that it is one of the main engines whereby the devil keeps sinners under the power of unbelief, to tell them that God's covenant and promise belong to others and not to them. Will the poor sinner be ready to say, Indeed if I were a believer, I might confidently come within this rainbow, & intermeddle with Christ and the blessings of his covenant: But till then I must not presume to meddle; and thus I say sinners are many times discouraged from coming to Christ to take hold of his covenant. But, sirs, allow me to tell you, that none are excluded from coming within this rainbow, or from coming to Christ who sits on the throne of grace by virtue of this covenant of grace, but only they who exclude themselves by their unbelief. Every one hath free liberty to look to the natural rainbow, and improve the faithfulness of God in his promise as a security against an universal deluge; so every soul that hears the gospel is allowed to look to the rainbow of the covenant of grace, and improve it as a security thro' the satisfaction of Christ against the deluge of divine wrath due to him for sin.

Quest. *What is it that may warrant and encourage a lost sinner by faith to lay hold on the faithfulness of God engaged in his rainbow of the covenant that is about his throne?*

Ans. 1. God commands you to lay hold on his covenant, 1 Joh. 3. 23. *This is his commandment that you believe in the name of his son Jesus Christ.* Now when God bids you believe in Christ, he bids you believe in him by virtue of the covenant of grace, or by virtue of the free promise of life thro' Christ to perishing sinners. O essay it in the strength of him, that commands you; the very first command, as I was saying, warrants you, yea obligeth you to have a God in Christ, and none other, as your God. Now this command is to all & every one, & if it were not so, it would needs follow that there are some, in whom unbelief were no sin; for where there is no law, there can be no transgression: But depend upon it, sirs, that unbelief is your sin, and the great sin upon which the sentence of condemnation will run against you at the great day; & if unbelief be your sin, then it is your indispensable duty by the command of God to believe in Christ, or to trust in him for salvation, by virtue of his faithfulness engaged in the bow of the covenant that is about the throne of grace.

2. Let the extent of the rainbow encourage & warrant you to come within it. The natural rainbow reaches from one end of the heaven to the other: But O sirs, the grace of God in a covenant of grace is much wider and larger, for it reaches forth its arms to clasp every creature in its bosom, *Mar. 16. 16. The voice of a God of grace, is to men and the sons of men to take hold of his covenant*, to improve his faithfulness in the rainbow against this the deluge of his wrath. *Isa. 55. 1. Ho, every one that thirsteth come to the waters, and he that hath no money: Let him come. O why do you spend your money for that which is not bread? and your labour for that which profiteth not?*

3. The rainbow of the covenant is pointed towards you in particular, and if you will but look to it, you will see the end of it coming close to your very hand. *Acts. 2. 39. The promise is to you and your seed, and to all that are afar off*; to you is the word of this salvation sent. Art thou a sinner, far away, like the prodigal? Well, see the rainbow about the throne pointing to you. *Isa. 57. 19. I create the fruit of the lips; peace, peace to him that is afar off.* So *Acts 2. 38. Art thou a polluted sinner, black like the Ethiopian, spotted like the Leopard?* Well, see the rainbow of the covenant pointing out its grace to you, *Psal. 68. 13. Tho' thou hast lien among the pots, yet thou shalt be as the wings of a dove.* Art thou sinking under the load of sin, as a burden heavier than thou can bear? Well, see the bow of the covenant reaching grace and mercy to help thee. *Cast thy burden on the Lord, and he will sustain thee.* In a word, whatever be thy condition, if on this side of hell, thou wilt find still the bow of God's covenant stretching out its hand to thee, and accommodating itself to thy condition and circumstance. Altho' the arch of the bow be high, yet it stoops down to every man; tho' the throne be high and lifted up, and he that sits on it be exalted, yet the bow that is about his throne bows itself down to thy very hand, that thou may climb up to Christ by it in a way of believing: *And therefore say not in thine heart, who shall ascend to heaven to bring Christ down from above, or who shall descend to the deep to bring him up from the dead, for the word is nigh thee, even in thy mouth and in thy heart, that is the word of faith which we preach, Rom. 10. 6, 7, 8.*

4. It is most pleasing to him that sits on the throne of grace to see a lost sinner come within the circuit of his rainbow for safety. You cannot do a thing that is so pleasing to God as to believe in Christ by virtue of the covenant. *John 6. 28. This is the work of God, that you believe in him whom he has sent.* He speaks as if this were the only work; and indeed it is so much the only work of a sinner, that without it, it is impossible to please him; and with it every thing ye do is pleasing, your persons and your sacrifices are accepted

accepted upon his altar. O sirs, will you not do a thing that is so pleasing to him that *made you*, him that *preserves you*, him that *provides for you*, him that *shed the blood of his heart to redeem you*; never was the fond breast of a tender-hearted mother more glad to be sucked, than the Lord is to see a sinner come within the bow of his covenant *for grace and mercy to help in time of need*.

5. The nature of the throne, and the nature of the rainbow invites and encourages your faith and trust. The throne is of the nature with the rainbow, the throne is a *throne of grace*, and the covenant a *covenant of grace*. What sort of a throne is a throne of grace? It is a throne for beggars, divors and bankrupts to come to, that they may get whatsoever they want freely; it is a throne that stands by outgiving, by giving liberally to all *without upbraiding*. What sort of a covenant is a *covenant of grace*? The very name of it tells you what is its nature; a *covenant of grace* can be nothing else but an *absolute free grant of all the riches of grace that lie about the throne of grace*. If any thing were required of us as a *condition* of our taking or receiving the *blessings of the covenant*, it would that moment *cease* to be a *covenant of grace*. But, say you, *is not faith the condition of the covenant*? Answer, I will be loath to *condemn* that way of speaking, because worthy men have used it, & do use it in a *sound sense*: But, sirs, I would have you to *remember* that when it is called a *condition*, all that such worthy learned men mean by it, is only this, that you can have no *saving benefit or advantage* by Christ unless he be received; you can have no benefit by God's *covenant* or promise, unless you believe the *promise* to be true, and believe it with *application* to your own souls. Faith is just such a *condition* as shews the *inseparable connection* between one thing and another: As if you should say to a beggar there is your *alms* on the *condition* that you *take it*; there is *meat* on the *condition* you *eat it*; there is a *good bond* for a *sum of money*, on *condition* that you *trust him* that granted it. Or, as if I should say to one, thou shalt have the *benefit* of the *light of the sun*, on *condition* thou *open thine eyes* to see it. Or the ground will bear you, on *condition* you lay your *weight upon it*: Now such a *condition* of the *covenant of grace* is faith; it is just a taking what is freely given without money and price: and let it be remembered that itself is one of the *blessings promised* in this *covenant*. Now, I say, let the nature of the *throne*, and the nature of the *rainbow* of the covenant encourage and warrant you to come and trust in a *God of grace*. I make but a supposition that a great and rich king should *erect a throne* in the *open field*, and emit a *proclamation* for all *beggars, bankrupts* and *people in wants and straits* to come to his throne, and they shall get whatever they needed: O what a gathering would

there be! With what *confidence* would *needy* people flock thither, and ask what they wanted, especially if the *king* had sworn by his life that they should be served? Well, this is the very case: The *throne of grace* is a throne only for the *needy*, for *rich folk are sent empty away*, and the bow about the throne is just the *faithfulness* of God engaged in a free promise, that come to him who will, *he will in no wise cast them out*. O then take the *advantage*, and trust his *promise*, and you have the thing promised, for his promise is as good as payment.

6. Will you but take a *view of the name* of him that sits upon the throne within the *rainbow*, and let that encourage your faith, hope and expectation. O sirs, *they that know his name will put their trust in him*; his name that *sits on the throne is a strong tower*, to which the sinner may flee, and to which the saints do flee and are safe: See what his name is, *Exod. 34. 6.* his name is *the Lord, The Lord God JEHOVAH EL*, the strong God, *able to do for thee exceeding abundantly above what thou can ask or think*: He *stretched out the heavens, and laid the foundations of the earth, and does whatever pleases him in the armies of heaven, and among the inhabitants of the earth*, and therefore is able to do for thee whatever thou askest of him, *yea, more than thou can ask*. *Abraham* by faith stayed himself upon the power of a promising God *without staggering, Rom. 4. 20.* Again his name is *merciful*, and therefore may thou say, will he not answer his name, and extend mercy, considering that misery is the only proper object of mercy, and I am wretched; miserable, blind and poor, and naked. *David's* faith found footing in this name of a God in Christ, when he could not stand before the bar of the law, *Psal. 130. 4.* *But there is mercy with thee that thou mayest be feared*. Again, his name who *sits upon the throne within the rainbow* is *gracious*, and it is the very nature of grace, as I said, to give and to give freely: Grace is that attribute of the divine nature which shall be celebrated thro' eternity; this world is but a theatre on which he designs the manifestations of his grace. May not this encourage thee to go within the *circuit of the rainbow*, and ask grace and mercy to help thee in time of need. Unbelief indeed will tell thee, *That the Lord has forgotten to be GRACIOUS*; but it is not so, for he cannot forget his own name. Unbelief will tell thee that thou art unworthy of his grace, and this will hinder thee from succeeding; but that cannot be neither, for grace is most grace when it is extended to the most unworthy. Thus, I say, draw *encouragement from the name of him that sits upon the throne within the rainbow*.

7. It is for the *honour and glory of God*, that you improve the *rainbow of the covenant* for your security against the deluge of wrath, and

and for obtaining the blessings that lie within the bosom thereof; hereby ye glorify his power, being perswaded, that he is able to *make good what he has promised*; hereby you glorify his holiness, which is pledged to the great *covenant head*, and give thanks at the remembrance of his holiness; pledged in the *covenant to him and his seed*: Hereby you glorify his justice by acquiescing in that righteousness or justice, which is the foundation of his throne; hereby you glorify his mercy, and join with him in saying, *Mercy shall be built up for ever*; hereby you glorify his truth and faithfulness, *by setting to the seal that God is true*: In a word, you give him the glory of your salvation, saying, *Salvation to him that sitteth upon the throne, and to the lamb for ever and ever*; the language of faith is, *Not to us, not to us: but to thy name be the glory.*

Thus you see that there is *noble encouragement*, and the *best warrants* in the world for *believing*, or coming within this *bow of the covenant*: O then, sirs, for the Lord's sake, and for your own soul's sake, flee in within the rainbow, that is about the throne; believe in Christ by virtue of the covenant of grace and promise; and if after all you will not comply, I declare in the name of God, that the *bow of God's covenant* shall stand you in no stead. The *faithfulness of God* that is engaged to save the sinner that believes, or takes hold of his covenant, is engaged to damn the soul that continues in unbelief; for as he *that believeth shall be saved, so he that believeth not shall be damned*. The fountains of the great depth of God's wrath will inevitably sweep you away: And he who is the God of salvation has said, *That he will wound the head of his enemies, and the hairy scalp of them that go on in their trespasses.*

The *fifth thing* proposed was to roll away some *impediments, or stumbling stones, that lie in the way of sinners, and which have a fatal influence in discouraging them to take the benefit of the rainbow of the covenant, which surrounds the throne of grace*. There are some things on God's part, that appear as great and strong bars against the sinner, and tend mightily to discourage him from looking either to the *throne* or the *bow* that surrounds it, *viz. the law of God, the justice of God, the holiness of God, and the decree of God.*

1. *The law of God.* O, says the sinner, I am condemned already by God's law, and how then shall I look towards God's covenant, or take hold of it for my safety against the deluge of wrath? *Ans.* If thou had not broken the divine law, thou would not stand in need of the *grace of God's covenant*; the law is so far from being against the promise in the business of salvation, that that moment thou takes hold of Christ by virtue of the covenant or promise, the righteousness of the law is fulfilled in thee; *For Christ is the end of*

the law for righteousness to every one that believeth. Christ was made under the law, to redeem them that were under the law.

2. But O, says the sinner, *the justice of God* is against me, the thro'ts of incensed justice make my heart to tremble within me. *Ans.* The *throne of grace* that is surrounded with the *bow of the covenant* is founded upon justice satisfied and judgment executed upon the surety; and that moment thou comes within the *bond of the covenant*, justice becomes thy friend, assailing thee on the ground of Christ's satisfaction: For God has *set forth Christ to be a propitiation thro' faith in his blood, to shew forth his righteousness for the remission of sins, that he might be just and the justifier of him that believeth in Jesus.*

3. The *holiness of God* sometimes *fears* the sinner to look toward the *throne of grace* or covenant of *grace*. But, sirs, I tell you, that that moment you come within the *bow of the covenant*, you are made *partakers of his holiness*, and the holiness of God being laid in pledge for the fulfilling of the promise, stands up for its own interest in the sinner's behalf. And beside, by the blood of Jesus, the filth of sin is covered from the eyes of unspotted *holiness*, as well as the guilt of it hid from the eye of incensed justice.

4. The sinner is ready to be *fear'd* from taking hold of God's covenant, and his faithfulness engaged therein on the account of the *decrees of God*. O, will the sinner say, it is true, if I were among the number of the elect, I might meddle with God's *covenant*: But alas I think I am none of these, and therefore I need not think of taking hold of Christ by *virtue of his covenant*. But, sirs, let me tell you, that *secret things belong to the Lord, but things that are revealed to us and to our children*: let God's *decrees* alone, you have no more business with them in the matter of believing, than you have to trouble yourself with what they are doing in *Mexico* or *Peru*. Meddle you with the things that are revealed, for these are the things that belong to us and to our children. Now what are the things that are revealed? Christ is revealed, the *covenant* and the *promises* are revealed as the ground of faith, the command of God enjoining you to believe is revealed, God's *good-will to man upon earth* is revealed; these are the things that belong to you, and therefore meddle you with these, and let not the Devil and your own ill heart together brangle and confound you, by telling you that you do not know if you be elected, for that moment you come within the *bond of God's covenant*, you may *know your election*, & that God hath *loved you with an everlasting love*: And no other way can you possibly know it. But besides all this, let me tell you, that God's promise registered in his word, is but an extract of the eternal

nal thought and purpose of his heart; so that by believing his promise immediately you may know that *you are the called according to his purpose.*

But may the sinner say, tho' there be *no bar* on God's part, yet there are *many bars* and *impediments* on my part. I shall endeavour to roll away these also, by answering the following *objections* of *unbelief.*

Objection 1. *I am a poor unworthy creature, I dare not think of meddling with God's covenant.* *Answer,* It is a bastard devilish humility, that keeps you from believing, for the more unworthy you are of the *grace and favour of God,* the more fit you are for *receiving the grace of God* at a throne of grace by virtue of the *covenant of grace;* grace is only calculated for the unworthy sinner, and not for these that think themselves worthy of it.

Object. 2. *My sins are like the great mountains, and I fear the grace of God will never level them.* *Answer.* Take hold of God's *covenant* and you shall find these mountains removed, & cast into the midst of the sea. *Isa. 1. 18. Come and let us reason together, saith the Lord, though your sins be as scarlet and crimson, I will make them white as snow and as wool.*

Object. 3. *I want a law-work, I am not weary and heavy laden, and therefore am not fit to take hold of God's covenant.* *Answer.* If thou think to make a law-work & humiliation a price in your hand to recommend you to Christ, and fit you for him; I tell you, that instead of fitting your self for Christ, you are building up a wall between Christ and you, that you shall never get over. If you see an absolute need of Christ, and that you are undone without him, do not stand to seek more law-work: for that moment you close with Christ by virtue of the covenant of grace, the law hath gotten its end, *Christ being the end of the law to every one that believeth.* It is the weary and heavy laden are called; but that is not to exclude others, who cannot find that disposition in themselves; and they are mentioned in particular in the call, because they are most ready to exclude themselves from having any concern in Christ or his *covenant.*

Object. 4. *I am afraid to take hold of God's covenant, in case I turn away from his commandments, and so render myself unworthy of a covenant relation to him.* *Answer.* If you really take hold of his covenant, the grace of his covenant will keep you in the way of his commandments, *Jer. 32. 40. I will make an everlasting covenant with them, that I will never turn away from them to do them good, but I will put my fear in their hearts, and they shall not depart from me.*

Obj. 5. *I am afraid to take hold of God's covenant, in case that I ne-*

ver be able to bear the cross: I will faint in the day of adversity, for my strength is small. *Ans.* Do not fear that, for he that sits on the throne has said in his covenant, that when thou passest through the water, he will be with thee, and thro' the rivers they shall not overflow thee; when thou passest thro' the fire, thou shalt not be burnt, neither shall the flame kindle upon thee. His presence shall go with thee to the hottest furnace, and unto the deep waters of MARA; and if so, there is no fear but thy head shall be carried above.

Obj. 6. I have formerly endeavoured to take hold of God's covenant; but I have played the harlot with many lovers since that. *Ans.* Renew thy hold of the covenant, for the grace of God's covenant, the rainbow about the throne, is still pointing thee out as it were by name, *Jer. 3. 1.* Tho' thou hast played the harlot with many lovers, yet return again to me, saith the Lord.

Obj. 7. But I have acted as a rebel against heaven, I have been waging war against God, and will ever he allow me to meddle with his covenant, or come within the verge of this rainbow? For *Ans.* see *Psal. 68. 18.* where we are told concerning him that sits upon the throne of grace within the rainbow; He received gifts for men, yea even for the rebellious, That the Lord God might dwell among us. See also, *Isa. 55. 7.* Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts, and turn to the Lord, for he will have mercy, and to our God for he will abundantly pardon.

Obj. 8. I want power to take hold of the covenant, I want power to believe in Christ by virtue of the covenant. *Ans.* He that sits upon the throne with the rainbow about it, is saying, I will give power to the faint, and increase strength to them that have no might; yea, he has said that he will make thee willing by the day of his power; and if he has given thee the will to believe, there is no fear of the want of power; for he that works the will by his covenant, he has ingag'd to work the do also; he works in us both to will & to do of his good pleasure.

Obj. 9. You are always speaking of the bow of the covenant, but I would fain see it; I have seen the natural bow, but the rainbow of the covenant is invisible. *Ans.* It is strange not to see it when you have it in your hand, the old and new testament is the rainbow that I am speaking of; the rainbow is at this moment shining upon you in a preached gospel. O remember that awful word, *2 Cor. 4. 3, 4.* 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 that believe not, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them.

Obj. 10. I am afraid of being one of these, from whom this rainbow is hid, and so am lost for ever. *Ans.* If thou doest not see it, I ask art thou longing to see it? If so I can tell you for good news, thou shalt

see it ere long, *for he satisfieth the longing soul, and filleth the hungry soul with goodness*; and then he that sits on the throne has said, that he will *open the blind eyes, and turn thee from darkness*, that thou shalt behold the *glory of the Lord, and the excellency of our God*.

Thus I have endeavoured to *roll away all the impediments* I can think upon, that you may be encouraged to come *within the bow that is about the throne of grace*. What are you resolved to do? Will you come within the bow of God's covenant or not? I would fain expostulate the matter with you; what will you do in the day of death, if you *come not within this rainbow*? What will you do in the day of reckoning, when standing before the bar of God? *Whither will you flee when rocks & mountains refuse to fall on you to hide you from the face of the lamb*? O sirs, there is no shunning the deluge of divine wrath, but by *taking hold of the covenant and of the faithfulness of God* engaged therein; the whole creation cannot help you, if you do it not, but you must lie under the fiery mountains of God's wrath for ever; *for he that believeth not is condemned already, and the wrath of God abideth on him*.

But I cannot think of parting with you upon mount EBAL or SINAI; and therefore *let me beseech you by the mercy of God, by all the blessings of his covenant, by the blood and bowels of a God of love in Christ, by all the glory of heaven and eternity*, that you come within the compass of the rainbow that is about the throne. O, say you, with my whole soul I would take *hold of God's covenant and his faithfulness* engaged therein, but will you give us your advice as to this matter. An answer to this leads to the

Last thing proposed, which was to offer a *few advices in order to your improving the rainbow of the promise or covenant for your safety against the deluge of wrath*.

1. Study to be firmly persuaded of *your misery and lost state, without Christ*, & while without the confines of the bow that surrounds his throne. Till you see your lost state by the breach of the covenant of works, you will never take hold of a covenant of grace: and therefore be firmly persuaded, that by nature *you are wretched, miserable, blind, poor and naked*: But now if you have come to this persuasion, you must not rest content here, for many have perished in *this place of breaking forth of children*; and therefore,

2. Be firmly persuaded, *that there is relief for you in Christ*, and in the new covenant whereof he is the glorious head; however bad thy condition is there is relief for thee in Christ; *for he is ail in all*. Is thy state a state of sin? Well, Christ is the saviour of none but sinners. Is thy state a state of distance from God? Well, he came to bring us *near by his own blood*. Is thy state a state of

of enmity and war against heaven? Well, his work is to reconcile God and man, to satisfy justice, and to *slay the enmity of the heart*; he *breaks down the wall of partition*, and brings both parties unto one. Is thy state a hopeless state? Well, *he is the hope of all the ends of the earth*. Is it a state of darkness? *He is the light of the world*. Art thou in an impotent state? *He is the strength of the poor, and of the needy*. Art thou in a state of bondage? *He proclaims liberty to the captive, and the opening of the prison doors to them that are bound*. Art thou cursed? *He came to redeem from the curse*. Art thou dead in sin, dead by the law? Well, *he died that we might live*; and though *thou be dead, yet thou shalt live, if you believe in him*. So that I say there is that in Christ which meets with the condition of the sinner, let his case be ever so bad, if he be on this side of hell. Now, I say, be persuaded of all this, be assured of it, that there is help laid upon this mighty redeemer, and that he is indeed able to save to the very uttermost.

3. Be persuaded that the *rainbow, that is surrounding the throne of grace* is pointing to you; I mean that the covenant of grace, or promise of help, relief and rest thro' Christ is left to you, and directed or indorsed to you in particular, and that it belongs to you as a thing you may claim without any vicious intromission. This is absolutely necessary, for I can never trust to a security, which mean time I think or imagine is granted to another man, and not to myself. Can I pursue upon a bond granted in another's man's name, and not in my own? O, say you, *if I tho't I had a right to the covenant or promise of God in Christ, I would believe it, and rejoice*. Well, to establish you in the faith of this, know O sinner for thy encouragement, 1. The covenant and promise is indorsed or directed to thee, as if thou were named by name and surname, like a letter, when it is backed to a man; when he reads the back of the letter, and finds it directed to him, he breaks the seal of it, and *claims* all that is in it, tho' it were a security for millions of gold and silver. 2. Thou hast already gotten *the seal of the covenant in baptism*; and would God allow the seal of his covenant, and yet wilt thou say thou hast no claim to intermeddle with the covenant itself? 3. *God has put his covenant, his confirmed testament in thy hand, as a charter for eternal life, and commanded thee to read it, search it, trust to it for a happy eternity: and yet wilt thou say thou hast no claim to the covenant, no right to take hold of it?* And therefore, I say, be persuaded that you have a *good claim to the covenant of grace and promise; the promise is to you and your seed*. You may readily say to me, that by this means God's promise is made to the reprobate, as well as to the elect in the visible church. I
answer

answer with the learned and pious RUTHERFORD, *That the reprobate hath as good a revealed warrant for believing as the elect have.* If God's covenant and promise were not to all in common within the visible church, and if his *faithfulness* were not *engaged in the promise* tendered to them, how is it possible that unbelievers could be said to make God a liar by not believing his promise, or the record, in which he has given to us eternal life in his Son Jesus Christ. You may again object and say, if God's promises were made to the reprobate, then it would follow that his faithfulness would fail if he did not fulfil his promise to them. I answer, we are to distinguish between the promise in the exhibition of it in the word, and in the effectual application of it by the spirit; in the first of these respects it is made to all without exception of elect or reprobate; and that the promise is not made effectual to the reprobate, will no more infer the want of faithfulness in God, than a man's not marrying of a woman after he has past his promise to her, when yet she refuseth to consent to the bargain.

4. Be persuaded that this *covenant of grace and promise* is a good and noble security, and that it is able to bear thy weight. You heard in the doctrinal part, *how much the faithfulness of God is engaged in the covenant.* Pray do not forget it; he has subscribed it, attested it, sealed it, registered it: In a word he has given all imaginable advantage for believing, and takes off all imaginable pleas for unbelief.

5. Be much in viewing these *great and glorious blessings* that lie within the *covenant*, within the verge of the bow that is about the throne: Of which I gave you an account upon the third head proposed, in prosecuting of this *exhortation.* What thinkest thou of having JEHOVAH, Father, Son and Holy Ghost for thy God, and portion for ever? What thinkest thou of a sealed pardon and indemnity for all thy sins? What thinkest thou of being an heir of God, and a joint heir with Christ? What thinkest thou of the inheritance, that is incorruptible and undefiled, which fadeth not away? Yet all these lie within the circle of the bow of the covenant. Now, I say, keep your eye upon these, that you may be encouraged, or stirred up to press towards the actual possession of these *glorious blessings* by coming within this blessed bow.

6. Take a view of all these *great and glorious blessings*, as lying in the hand of him that sits upon the throne, ready to be given out to every one that believes in him by virtue of the covenant. O hear him that sits on the throne crying to all sinners, to a whole perishing world; *Whosoever believeth in me, shall not perish, but have everlasting life. Whosoever will, let him come, and take of the water*

of life freely. This, I say, be perswaded, that all the blessings of the covenant are ready in his hand to be distributed and communicated to every one that comes to him.

7. Being firmly perswaded of all these things, study to rest, and lay the weight of thy sinking soul upon the *veracity* and *faithfulness* of a promising God in Christ: You know what it is to lay weight upon an honest man's word, who you are perswaded will not fail you; so lay weight and stress upon the *promise of God*, upon his *faithfulness* engaged in the *covenant*, being fully perswaded that what he has *promised*, he is both able and willing to perform. O sirs, trust in him, let his truth be your shield and buckler, for *he is truth itself*: Faithfulness is the girdle of his loins; hang by this girdle, and say with DAVID, *In his word will I hope. Remember the word, on which thou hast caused thy servant to hope.* And if thou do so, thou shalt not be disappointed; *The fashion of this world passeth away, but the word of the Lord endureth for ever.*

8. If you have thus entred within *the bow of the covenant*, go forward to the throne and him that sits on it, whose appearance is like a *Jasper and Sardine stone* for brightness and glory; pursue him at his own throne: plead the actual outmaking and accomplishing of his promise, for this is God's stated and ordinary way appointed in his word, *Ezek. 36. 37.* compared with *ψ. 25, 26, 27.* There God makes a great many promises, and after all he adds, *for these things will I be enquired of by the house of ISRAEL, that I may do it for them*: Only when you come to the throne and plead the promise, take care that you do not expect the *accomplishment of the promise* for your own pleading: But upon the account of his own faithfulness, engaged in his own *covenant of grace*. But, may you say, I have neither skill nor confidence to plead the promise. I answer, it is very true, you have no skill to manage at his throne. And therefore I give you

A 9th advice, put the *promise of the covenant*, which you seek the accomplishment of in the hand of your advocate, that he may plead it for you: *We have an advocate with the father, Jesus Christ the righteous*, and therefore in your approaches to the throne beware of neglecting him; *for he hath made us accepted in the beloved*; depend much upon his skill and his interest in the court. He has his father's ear, and his father's commission to make intercession for the transgressors. The father says to him, *Ask of me, and I will give thee the heathen for thine inheritance, and the uttermost end of the earth for thy possession.* So that however great your suits at the throne of grace are, you have no reason to fear, if you employ this glorious advocate & days-man; and in doing so, do not doubt

doubt of success: *But ask in faith, nothing wavering: Draw near with a true heart, in full assurance of faith.*

10. When you have done all this, you must wait for the accomplishment and outmaking of the promise in a sensible way, *For he that believeth does not make haste.* I will look to the Lord, I will wait for the God of my salvation; my God will hear me. Do not limit the Lord to your time, but wait his time, *For the Lord is a God of judgment, & he waits to be gracious, & therefore blessed are all they that wait on him.* Sirs, if you have but the promise of a man, or bond of a man for a sum of money, you will wait many years before you get payment, and yet you will not doubt of payment, at the end when the time comes; and will you trust and wait on men, and will you not wait on your God continually? O the Lord is good to them that wait on him, and to the soul that seeks him. *The vision is for an appointed time, tho' it tarry, wait for it: For at the end it will speak, and it will not tarry.* See to this purpose, *Heb. 10. 36, 37. Ye have need of patience, after you have done the will of God, that you should receive the promise. For he that shall come, will come, and will not tarry.*

Having thus taken hold of God's covenant, and entred within the rainbow that is about the throne, come to morrow and get the seal of the covenant for the confirmation of your faith, that so you may with the greatest freedom intermeddle with the goods contained in your elder brother's testament. Altho' a man have a good right to an estate, yet perhaps he may be loth to intermeddle till he get infestment. Well, sirs, having taken hold of the good charter, the covenant of grace, I invite you to come and get infestment upon the charter to morrow at God's table, where he invites all his friends to eat and drink abundantly of the bread and wine that he has mingled.

I shall conclude the whole of this discourse by offering a few marks, whereby ye may try whether or no you have really got within the bow of the covenant which surrounds the throne; it is true indeed all the members of the visible church, they bear a relation to the covenant, *to them belong the adoption, and the covenants, and the promises;* you are externally in covenant by virtue of baptism, you are professedly covenanted people. But the question is, *Are you really within the covenant? Have you by faith entered within the rainbow that surroundeth the throne?* The marks that I offer shall be principally founded upon the context in this chapter.

1. Then the spirit of the great covenant-head that sits upon the throne has entred into you, if you have entred within the bow of this covenant, or seen the glory of him that sits on the throne. We find here JOHN was first in the spirit, and then he saw the throne, and the rainbow, and him that sat on it. O sirs, I am persuaded that

that there was never one bro't within the bow of God's covenant, but will be ready to own that it was he that bro't them. *I will cause them to pass under the rod, and bring them under the bond of my covenant.* The apostle PAUL tells us, *Phil. 3. 12. That he was apprehended of Christ Jesus, before ever he apprehended him:* So will it be with you, if you be bro't within the rainbow of God's covenant.

2. You will be much in admiring the throne, and the glory of him that sits on it, who is here compared to a *Jasper* and *Sardine-stone*. I told you in the explication of the words, that this is Christ. O have you seen the glory of an exalted Christ? *All we with open face, beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image.* If you have seen his glory as the glory of the only begotten of the Father, you will be ready to say, *He is indeed white and ruddy, fairer than the children of men.*

3. If so, then you will take great pleasure in beholding the rainbow that is about the throne, and rejoice in it as your security against the deluge of wrath, saying with DAVID, *This is all my salvation, that he has made with me an everlasting covenant ordered in all things and sure;* you will be delighted to think on the freedom of the covenant, the order of the covenant, the sureness of the covenant, and its *emerald colour*, its perpetual greenness, without any variation.

4. When you look to the rainbow of the covenant, it will fill you with expectation of good, when you go to the throne in prayer. The natural rainbow, as I said, is the forerunner of a shower to the thirsty earth; people expect it when they see the bow in the clouds: So when you see the bow of the covenant, it will give you good hopes of a shower of the spirit's influences, and that he will come to you *as the rain, as the latter and former rain upon the earth:* And truly, sirs, one great reason why there are so many hopeless prayers among us, is, because we do not set the eye of faith on the rainbow of the covenant.

5. If ever you was brought within the rainbow of the covenant, you have been stript of your own *filthy rags*, and clothed with the *righteousness* of the son of God; for they that sit upon the throne here are said to be *clothed with white raiment*, *they have white raiment, and they wash their raiment, and they have it white.* Ask have you been made to see all your own *filthy rags*, as a menstruous cloth, as *dung and lofs*, *and have you been made to see Christ not having your own righteousness, but being clothed with the righteousness of God, by the language of thy heart, Surely I have believed in his righteousness, in him will I be justified, and in him*

6. If you have been *within the rainbow*, brought *within the bow of the covenant*, you have had your heart and eyes enlightened, and warmed with the seven lamps of fire before the throne, which are explained to be the spirit with his various influences, *verse 3*. These are compared to *lamps*, because of their enlightning efficacy, and *lamps of fire*, because of their sanctifying, purifying, warming efficacy on the soul. Now try yourselves by this; if you be bro't *within the bow of the covenant that is about the throne*, the spirit has been in you a spirit of wisdom and revelation discovering the things of God to you in a divine lustre; and like fire they have purified you in some measure from the dross of sin, and made your *heart to burn within you*, like the disciples going to *EMMAUS*, and like a lamp they serve to direct you in the way of truth and holiness; the voice of the spirit is, *This is the way, walk ye in it*.

7. If you be brought *within the rainbow of the covenant*, you will be frequently bathing your polluted souls in the sea of glass, that is before the throne, spoken of in the *6th verse*. Interpreters think that there is an allusion here to the large vessels in the temple and tabernacle, in which the priests used to wash themselves before they offered sacrifices, called a *sea of glass*, because of the *transparent purity* of him whose blood it was: They that are come by faith to Jesus the *mediator of the new covenant*, they are also come *to the blood of sprinkling*, in order to the cleansing of their souls *from sin and from uncleanness*; you will see a continual need of this blood to purify your persons and actions from every thing that defiles.

8. If brought *within the rainbow of the covenant*, you will be much taken up in celebrating the praises of God's holiness, and adoring him upon this account. They that are about the throne, *verse 8*. *They cry, Holy, Holy, Holy Lord God Almighty, which was, and is, and is to come*. Now try yourselves by this. Can you love God, adore and celebrate his praises, because of his unspotted holiness and purity, *which cannot behold iniquity without abhorrence*? This I take to be one of the sweetest & surest marks of a true believer and saint, which does distinguish him from all hypocrites in the world. A hypocrite may come the length to love and adore the divine majesty, because of his *greatness*, because of his *goodness*, because of his *mercy*; but I do not think that they can love and praise him, because of his holiness and hatred of sin. No this argues a seraphick and angelick spirit; for the Angels cover their faces crying, *Holy, Holy, Holy Lord God of Hosts*, *Isa. 6*. Now is this the disposition of thy soul? Can thou say with *DAVID*, *Psal. 30. 4*. *Sing to the Lord, O ye Saints of his, and give thanks at the remembrance of his holiness*? And *Isa. 12*. at the close, *Shout, O daughter of ZION, for great is thy holy one of ISRAEL, in the midst of thee*? 9. You

9. You will equally *adore, worship and admire* all the three persons of the ever *bleſſed trinity* as one God. So do they that are about the throne; they cry *Holy Father, Holy Son, & Holy Spirit*, and theſe are but *one Lord God Almighty, which was, and is, and is to come*. Faith takes up God according to the revelation that he has made of himſelf, conſidered perſonally or eſſentially, and it cannot endure any thing that derogates from the glory of any of the bleſſed *three in one and one in three*. You that are not ſtruck with horror at the blaſphemy, that is uttered againſt the Son of God this day in our church, as if he were only a ſubordinate deity, inferior to the Father, you were never yet *within the compaſs of the rainbow that goes about the throne on which he ſits*; for they that have been there they have ſeen him to be the ſame in ſubſtance, equal in power and glory with his eternal father, to be the Lord God Almighty as well as the Father, *the brightneſs of his glory, and expreſs image of his perſon*. And the concerns of his glory will go nearer your heart than any private concerns of your own, tho' your honour were laid in the duſt.

10. If ever you have been *within the rainbow of the covenant that ſurroundeth the throne*, then I am ſure you will be very concerned to have the crown pulled off the head of ſelf, and ſet it upon the head of him that ſits upon the throne of grace, &c. 10. *They that are about the throne, they caſt their crowns before the throne, ſaying, Thou art worthy, O Lord, to receive glory, honour and power*. O ſirs, if ever you were bro't within the rainbow of the covenant of grace, you will *not ſacrifice to your own net, or burn in cenſe to your own drag*, you will not attribute any or the leaſt part of your ſalvation to your ſelves, to your own holineſs, goodneſs, diligence, frame, or any thing elſe; no, no, you will tread every thing under your feet, that dares to uſurp the room of Chriſt, and be ready to ſay, *not unto us, not unto us but to thy name be the glory*. O he is the Lord my righteouſneſs, he is the glory of my ſtrength, in his righteouſneſs will I be exalted, and I reſolve to ſtand an eternal debtor to grace, grace reigning thro' imputed righteouſneſs to eternal life by Jeſus Chriſt my Lord. Worthy, worthy is he to wear the crown, to ſit on the throne, and to ſway the ſcepter for ever: O let King Jeſus ariſe, and let his enemies be ſcattered and flee before him.

