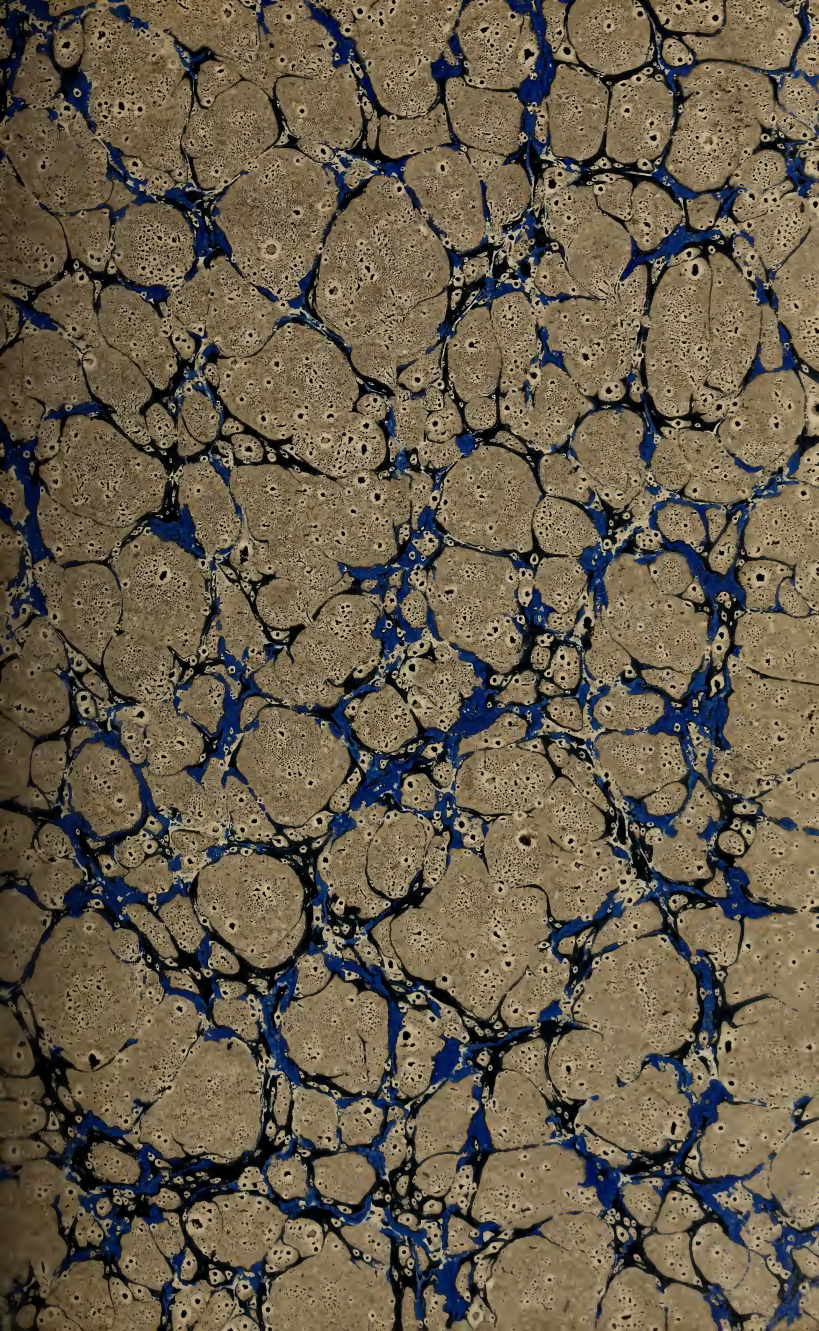




RB75736



Library
of the
University of Toronto



THE

Rent Vail of the Temple;

O R,

ACCESS TO THE HOLY OF HOLIES,

BY THE

DEATH OF CHRIST.

A S E R M O N,

Preached on MATTHEW xxvii. 51.

Immediately after the Administration of the Sacrament of the LORD'S SUPPER, at *Carnock*, the 12th day of July, 1719.

By MR. RALPH ERSKINE,

Minister of the Gospel at DUNFERMLINE.

Mark xv. 37, 38. *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.*

Heb. x. 19. *We have boldness to enter into the holiest, by the blood of Jesus.*

P A I S L E Y:

Printed by J. NEILSON, for G. CALDWELL, Bookseller.
M,DCC,LXXXIX.

THE HISTORY OF THE

REIGN OF THE

EMPEROR

OF THE

ROMAN

EMPEROR

OF THE

ROMAN

EMPEROR

OF THE

ROMAN

EMPEROR

OF THE

ROMAN

EMPEROR



S E R M O N

O N

MATTHEW 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 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 on the back of a feast, such as many of you have been celebrating. 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 connection of this verse with what went before in the particle. And, intimating the time of this miracle, that it attended the death of Christ, ver. 50. *When he had cried with a loud voice he gave up the ghost.* This loud cry signified that his death should be public, 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. liii. 10. Death being the penalty for the breach

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, 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 were the miracle most to be noticed, as containing somewhat most mysterious and significant therein, Mark xv. 37, 38. where we have the very same words, *Jesus cried with a loud voice, and gave up the ghost, the vail of the temple was rent in twain, from the top unto 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 were rent in twain, like the vail of the temple. It is remarkable how the Evangelist describes the manner in which the vail of the temple was rent, shewing what a full and entire 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 to the

bottom, an entire rent. But what was the meaning of all this? what did the rending of the vail 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 vail of his flesh; the literal temple did as it were echo to the cry, and answer the stroke by rending its vail. 2. The rending of the vail of the temple, signified the revealing of the mysteries of the Old Testament; the vail of the temple was for concealment, it was extremely dangerous for any to see the furniture of the most holy place within the vail, 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. iii. 13. But now at the death of Christ all was laid open, the mysteries are unveiled, so that he who runs may read the meaning of them. 3. The rending of the vail 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. ii. 14, 15. Just as two rooms are made one, by taking down the partition-wall. 4. The rending of the vail did especially signify the consecrating and opening of a new and living way to God: the vail kept off people from drawing near to the most holy place, but the rending of it signified that Christ, by his death, opened a way to God for him-

self, 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 entered once for all into the holy place, in token of which the vail was rent, Heb. ix. 7. and downward to ver. 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 vail, 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 in 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. x. 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 vail.* We have now free access to come with boldness to a throne of grace, to a God in Christ, Heb. iv. at the close. The vail 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 the rending of the vail signified, 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 entered within the vail, Heb. vi. 19. Nothing can obstruct or discourage our access to God in his grace and glory, for the vail is rent: Now I am to touch a little at the special mystery here represented. *Behold, the vail of the temple was rent in twain from the top to the bottom.*

Obfer. *That Chrift by his death hath rent the vail that interpoſed betwixt God and us, and obſtructed our acceſs to him.* He gave up the ghoſt, and behold, the vail was rent, 1 Pet. iii. 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 vail 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 of this ſubject, ſhall be, to ſhew,

I. What is that vail that interpoſed betwixt God and us.

II. How the death of Chriſt hath rent that vail.

III. In what manner is the vail rent.

IV. For what end is the vail 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 win near to God: but ah, they are complaining, they have miſt their mark, why? they apprehended a vail betwixt them and the glory of God, and thought it impoſſible to win thro' the vail; but (may be) you wiſt not that the vail 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 vail was rent from the top to the bottom, you would have gone in more boldly to the moſt holy place; and yet if you will believe that the vail is rent, I can promiſe, that you ſhall not miſs a ſight of his glory through the rent vail; did I not ſay unto thee, *If thou wouldſt believe, thou ſhalt ſee the glory of God?* But I proceed in the method propoſed.

I. Then,

I. Then, what is that vail that interposed betwixt God and us? Not to speak of the vail of Old Testament shadows and ceremonies, now rent and removed by the death of Christ, there are some vails that in a special manner obstructed our access to God, and they may be reduced to these three, The vail of a broken covenant, the vail of God's injured attributes, and the vail of man's sin. 1. The vail of a broken covenant, or law of works; the covenant, or law 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, and 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 vail that separates betwixt God and us, a vail that neither men nor angels can rend, and yet a vail that must be rent, otherwise we die and perish for ever, and this vail is the harder to be rent, because of the following, namely, 2. The vail of God's injured perfections, particularly his incensed justice and injured holiness. Justice, infinite justice, was a black vail that obstructed our access to heaven, for God became an angry God, a God filled with fierce wrath against the sinner. God hath set this 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 vail 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 righteousness every way commensurate to the extensive precept of the law, will satisfy an infinite holy God: an 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 vail that cannot be rent by us, especially considering, that there is a third vail, and that is the vail of sin on our part. This is a separating vail betwixt God and us, Isa. liv. 2. *Your iniquities have separated betwixt you and your God.* Now, before we can win near unto God, this vail 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 the 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 vail betwixt God and us, that, unless it be removed,

B

there

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 vail that must be rent by an arm of Almighty power, for it is a vail and a 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 this web, this vail of enmity. There is a power of unbelief, that is another vail, 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 vail, when he gave up the ghost, behold the vail was rent. 1. By the death of Christ, the vail of a broken covenant was rent in twain, so as we might win to God through the vail 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 covenant forfeited by us? Well, Christ rent this vail, by redeeming the forfeiter 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 sinners 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 vail of a broken covenant was rent. 2. By the death of Christ, the vail 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. v. 2. This offering being through the eternal Spirit, it was of infinite worth and value, here the altar sanctified 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 the vail. But now, as Christ hath satisfied the justice of God, by enduring the penalty and threatening 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 through 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 vail was rent*. But, 3. There is the vail of sin on our part, how is this rent by the death of Christ? Why, the Lamb was sacrificed to rend and remove this vail. *Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh 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 sin*, and that both meritoriously, and efficaciously ; for by his death the power of sin is broken fundamentally, seeing by his death he purchased the Spirit, which in due time he pours out, and hereby actually removes the vail

on our part, which he had done fundamentally and virtually on the cross. By this purchased Spirit he rends the vail of darkness and ignorance: *The God who commanded light to shine out of darkness, shine into the heart, &c.* All the light of nature; reason, education, and human literature cannot rend this vail, till the man receive the Spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of Christ. By this purchased Spirit he rends the vail 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 iv. 16. 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, rent in twain. By this purchased 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 take with 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 ii. 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 can 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. God's heart was set upon a reconciliation betwixt him and us, and therefore his hand rives 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 and 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 all and complete salvation, taking entirely 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 reached to the top of the vail, 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 the vail, 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 vail, and rent it from the top. The rent begins at the top, but it does not stop here: For, 4. The vail is also *rent to the bottom*, the bottom of this vail 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 vail to the bottom? According to the lamentation of one Joannes Seneca upon his death-bed: *We have here, saith he, some that will go to the choir for us, some that will play for us, some that will mass for us, some that will pray for us; but where is the one that will go to hell for us?* But, O happy believer, Christ is one that hath gone down 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 vail. But there is yet more here, he not only rends the vail at the top and at the bottom, but, 5. From the top to the bottom all is rent, both the top and the bottom, and that is betwixt the top and the bottom, all the impediments betwixt heaven and hell are removed. Though heaven be purchased, and hell vanquished, yet there might be something in the earth, something in the world betwixt heaven and 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 the 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 vail was rent in twain from the top to the bottom.*

The Fourth thing. For what end was the vail 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 vail 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 vail of the temple was that which parted betwixt the *holy place* and the *most holy*, and which kept off people for drawing near to the *most holy place*. The vail was for concealment, and none might enter within the vail 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. ix. 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 vail into heaven, the true *holy of holies*, carrying in with him the blood of his own sacrifice, Heb. b. ix. 11. *Not by the blood of goats and calves, but by 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. xvi. 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 vail of the holy of holies*, then was the atonement actually made: though the blood was shed without the camp, yet the atonement was not made till it was brought into the holy place, Lev. xvi. 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. ix. 24. *For Christ is not entered into the holy place 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 perfected 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 no more sacrifice to succeed, all was finished in that respect: but yet all was not done until the true vail being rent as well as the typical, the blood of Christ was carried into the holy place within the vail, 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 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 vail was, not only that he might make a way with himself as our Priest into 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 vail, Heb. vi. 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 steadfast, entering into that within the vail, whither the forerunner is for us entered, even Jesus, made an High-Priest for ever after the order of Melchisedeck.* Heb. x. 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 vail, 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, through his flesh offered as a propitiatory sacrifice, by which, as by the rent vail, 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 vail by which our High-priest hath entered into the holy place. Heb. iv. last verse. *Seeing then that we have a great High-priest that is passed 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. x. 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 brought within the vail? *Answ.* In a word, it lies not only in the first application of grace, and change of the man's estate, 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. iv. 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, *if any man hath not the Spirit of Christ he is none of his*; but there are some singular outpourings 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 in you, and shall be in you,* John xiv. 17. This access to God within the vail, 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. lxxvii. 4. That your hearts have been so bound and straitened, that you could do nothing, and say nothing before the Lord, sit as dumb and oppressed, all dark above, all dead within, and all doors shut upon you? But behold, you have quickly found the two-leaved gates cast open to you, your hearts enlarged, and mouths wide opened 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 the xliv. of Isaiah, 3d verse, *I will pour water upon him that is thirsty, and floods upon the dry ground.* Also this access to God within the vail, is sometimes experienced in sweet communion and fellowship with God. *Truly our fellowship is with the Father, and with the 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, although the word be full of suitable and savoury 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, though you cannot express it, yet you relish and understand some sound words about it. It may be, you feel it sometimes at a communion-table, sometimes in a barn or byre, sometimes in the fields, or under a bush, as Nathaniel did under the fig-tree? but what you felt, you cannot make the world understand, only when the Lord directs the minister to speak somewhat suitably to it, then you are ready to think, O it is just like the thing I felt 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 (Nathaniel) 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 vails 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 it is 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 comfort like puddle water*, loathsome and unsavoury 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 ye might enter within the

vail into 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. xii. 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 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. xiii. 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 communion will say to perfection, I give place to you; when short-passing blinks will say to uninterrupted everlasting joys, I give place to you? Little wonder then, 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

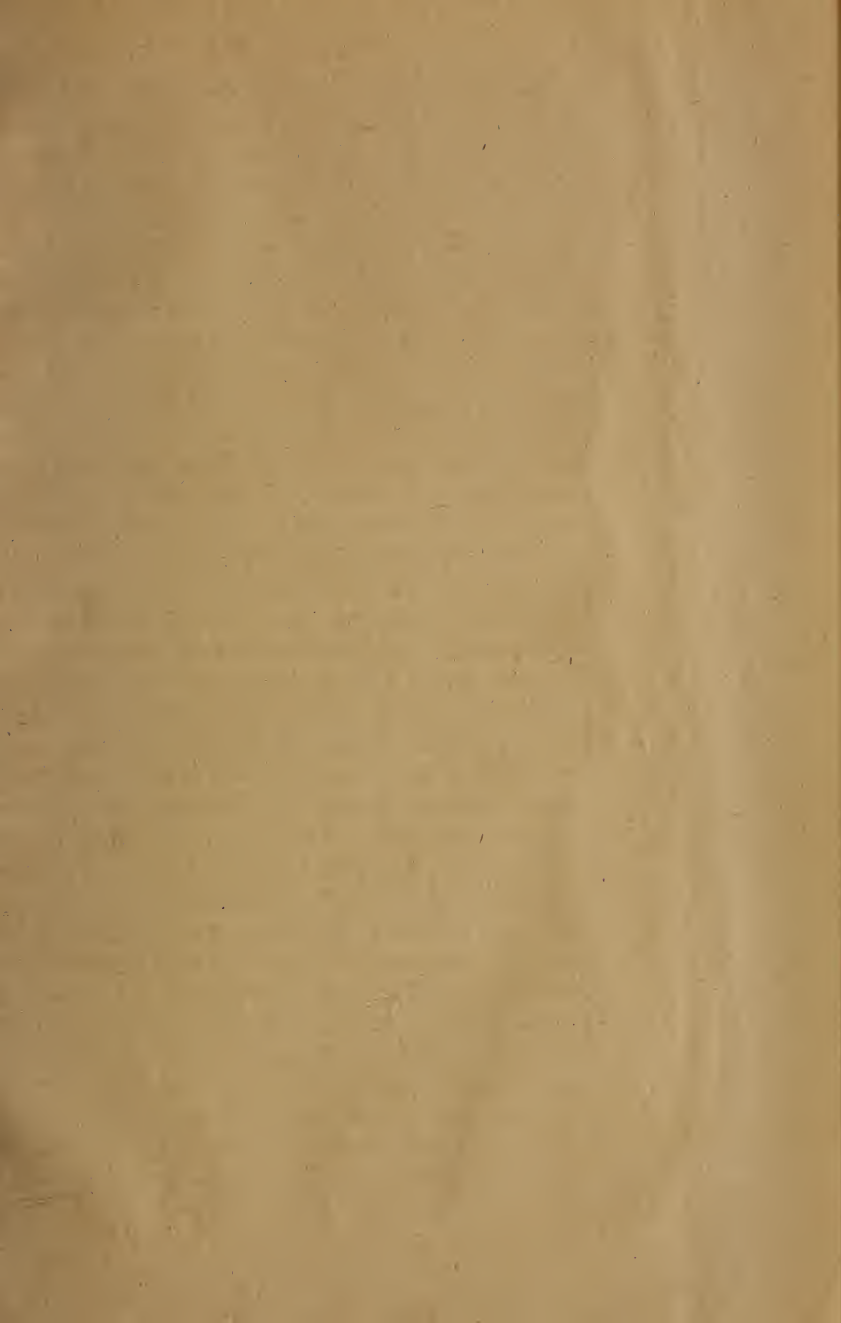
blood of Jesus. Thus you see the two great ends for which the vail was rent, namely, that way might be made for Christ's entering into the holy of holies, and so for our entering in through him, and after him. But I come now to the

Fifth thing, viz. the Application. Is it so, that Christ hath by his death rent the vail 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 vail, that he might enter into the holiest for us. The apostle says, that Christ loved us, and how does he prove it? Eph. v. 2. *He gave himself an offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweet-smelling savour*, this favoury and sweet-smelling sacrifice was the *offering of incense*, and where was the incense offered under the law? Why, it was offered within the vail. God tells Moses, that Aaron should take his handful of sweet incense beaten small, and bring it within the vail, Lev. xvi. 12. Now Christ having given himself an offering and sacrifice to God, without the camp in this world, he rends the vail, and goes to heaven, and offers himself as incense within the vail. 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 vail. 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 vail; our faith should not tarry on the cross, but we should carry it further, even after Christ, within the vail, 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 sure and stedfast, as it might be, except it enter within the vail, Heb. vi. 19. As the apostle says of patience, *let it have its perfect work*, so we may say of faith, let it have its perfect work; let us follow Christ within the vail, and view him, not only shedding his blood, but entering into the holy of holies within the vail, and sprinkling his blood upon the mercy-seat, and before it, Lev. xvi. 15. The priests under the law sprinkled the mercy-seat, which was within the vail, all over; and when Christ went into heaven within the vail, he did that in substance, which the priests 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 no further 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 vail, our High-Priest entered into the holy place, and sprinkled the mercy-seat with his blood, by which act mercy and justice are actually met, and kiss each other. 2. If the vail of the temple be rent, hence we may see the glory of the New Testament dispensation, beyond that of the Old; the vail 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 behold the glory of the Lord, as in a glass, which helps the sight as the vail hindered it; and that the vail of the temple was rent, it may give us ground further to expect, that the vail 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. iii. 15. 3. If by the death of Christ the veil be rent, that 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, saith 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 asked 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 heathens, is all the title that a great many have to eternal life. Others, they hope to win 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 and pray, and hear, and the like, and 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 false righteousness is so far from being the way to heaven, that true holiness itself, is but the business that peo-

ple 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. ii. 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 through 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 struggling ; 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 wit, 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 is vindicated, sin is expiated. Will you go to heaven this way, man, 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, man, woman, lass, lad, whosoever hears me, to you is the way to the holiest made patent, 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



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 either to come to Christ, and employ him to rend these vails on your part, that is 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 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, and perhaps not I. I answer, Some shall be saved, and why not you? wherefore are not all that hear this 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 vail, and so stand aback 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 vail is rent for you all, so far as that God calls and commands you all to come into the holiest by by this way, this new and living way consecrated through the vail; 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 vail, 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 vail is rent, and the way patent; you have nothing to do yourself, for you cannot rend any vail; all that you have

to do, is to consent that Christ should rend all vails betwixt God and you, for he will be a complete Saviour, he will not leave a rag of the vail 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 vail be actually rent from the top to the bottom, with respect to you, try whether or not you have gone in within the rent vail of the temple, to the holy of holies. The vail was rent fundamentally, when Christ gave up the ghost, it was rent formally, when he entered into the holiest. The vail is rent objectively, in the preaching of this gospel, and now the question is, if the vail be rent subjectively, and so as you have the actual saving benefit of it in your own person. It is not enough that the vail is rent doctrinally for you, so as you have liberty to go into the holy place, but whether is the vail rent effectually to you, and in you, so as you have stepped into the holiest by the rent vail. And,

1. If you be a believer indeed, to whom the vail is savingly rent, then you have got a humbling sight and sense of the vail that interposed betwixt God and you, and have seen yourself to be without the vail. Did you ever see such a vail of wrath on God's part, and such a vail of guilt on your part? such a vail of a broken law, incensed justice, and injured holiness, on the one hand; and such a vail of sin, darkness, unbelief, and enmity on the other hand, as hath made you to despair that ever the vail would be rent by you, or any creature in heaven or earth, and made you to see yourself lost and undone, crying out, *Men and brethren, what shall I do to be saved?* Did you never see your sad state, as having a black vail standing up betwixt God and you? folks exercise about religion is suspi-

cious, if they never saw the vail. 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 vail that was betwixt him and you? the effectual rending of the vail begins here, namely, at a humbling sight of the separating vail, the man sees himself without the vail, and so within the flood-mark of God's wrath.

2. If the vail be effectually rent in you, then you have seen the glory of him that rent the vail, and the glory of God through the rent vail, something of the glory of God in Christ. The apostle tells us, Heb. x. 19, 20. *That Christ's flesh*, that is, his human nature, is the vail for us to enter by to the holy of holies, that is, heaven, or God's presence, God's face; so that in this 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 vail 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 rending of the vail on God's part, and on yours, the glory of his death in the value and virtue of it; in the value of it, for rending of the vails that hindered God's access to you; and in the virtue of it, for rending of the vail within you that hindered your access to God? have you felt something of this virtue in rending the vail of darkness and ignorance that was upon your understanding, and shining in upon you with the light of life?

the effectual rending of the vail makes a man see some glory that is within the vail, have you seen God's glory then thro' the rent vail, and that God's glorious attributes are all glorified to the highest in this way?

3. If the vail be effectually rent, then you have cast *the anchor of your hope within the vail*, Heb. vi 18, 19. After your soul, like a weary vessel tossed upon the waves of conviction, fears, terrors, could find no rest, God hath brought you at last into this haven of rest, to cast anchor within the vail, *you have fled for refuge to the hope set before you, which hope you have as an anchor, sure and stedfast, entering into that within the vail, whither the Forerunner hath entered.* Whether 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 of justice as 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 entered 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, *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 loves 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, knew 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. xvi. 22. The true lover of Christ can say, *Amen*, let them be even cursed 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. v. 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 for ever hereafter, saying, *Salvation to our God that sits upon the throne, and to the Lamb for ever 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 you have got into the holiest in part, and if you will have patience, yet a little while and you shall win 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 matter 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 entire in the

unregenerate; and though 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! they are remaining vails within the believer, while here, though 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 am sure, believer, your heart will be saying, O that the curtain were drawn, O that the vail were rent in 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 for sin more than all the thunders of Sinai, or flames of hell. *They shall look on him whom they have 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 heart, otherwise their hearts would rend for the sins of others, and of the generation: *Set a mark upon the forehead 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 chastise 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 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. ix. 1. *O that my head were waters, and mine eye a fountain of tears, that I might weep day and night for the slain of the daughters 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 of 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 the top to the 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 duly rent for the rents of the

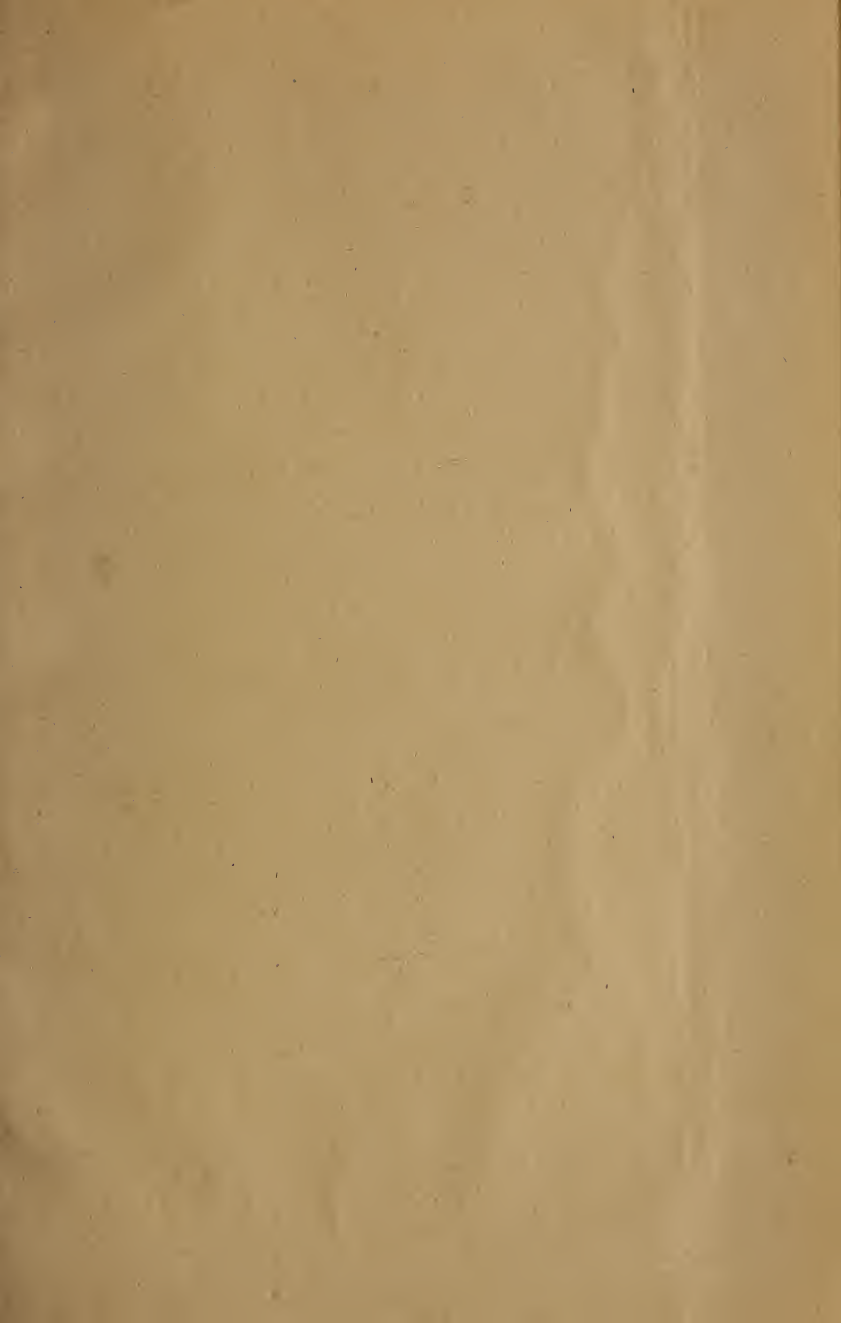
church, and the sinful causes thereof; and I hope the Lord will help such to be regular in the way of their dissenting, from whatever they reckon upon solid grounds to be the defection of the day they live in. But that I may not digress too far, I am telling you, that if the *vail* be effectually rent with you then there is some things that 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, that the glory is so far departed. In a word, *if the vail be rent with you*, your heart 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, roivings, wanderings, worldliness, and such like, that you will 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 are there some things your heart will be rent for. 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 win 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 vail, entered into the holiest with blood, and believers are daily to be 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 vail 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 has got his heart within the vail.* 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 vail is rent*, the man's heart is rent from the law: *He that is married to Christ is divorced from the law*, Rom. vii. 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 challenge him, he sends it to Christ for a perfect obedience; if the penalty challenge 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 that God may damn him for 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 vail is effectually rent*, the man is rent from self; it is 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, nor 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 exercise about salvation hath landed in conversion, he is always exercising himself to godliness, and 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, who 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 vail*, 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 vail betwixt God and you*.

Use third. For terror to unbelievers, who tho' they hear that the *vail is rent*, and so a free access to the *holy of holies* proclaimed, yet they are not at all con-



cerned 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 will you answer that challenge, John v. 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 sinner 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 are 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 assure 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 veil 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 through the rent veil? 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 are neglecting the gospel, and slighting the Son of God, you are 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 generation 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 upon 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 heart is disjoined from them, you separate from them in your choice, your affections, your disposition and conversation: But ere long, there shall be another kind of separation, you that will not come in among them thro' the rent vail now, there shall be a vail hung up betwixt you and them, that shall never be rent, yea, a 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 in pieces, will eternally 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 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 will 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 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, while you hear the vail is rent, and nothing to hinder you.

Use Fourth, for consolation to believers, to whom the vail is so effectually rent in twain, that from the marks given, they may conclude they have made some entrance within the vail, by coming to a God in Christ, and casting their anchor within the vail. - I have a word of comfort to say to you, though perhaps you are still complaining of many vails that separate betwixt God and you; yet a little while, and you shall have a triumphant entrance ministered unto you, into the holy of holies above, whither the Forerunner hath for you entered; for *behold, the vail of the temple was rent in twain, from the top to the bottom, therefore you shall come unto Zion with songs and everlasting joy upon your heads, you shall obtain joy and gladness, and sorrow and sighing shall flee away*, and then all vails shall be rent and removed for ever. I will tell you, for your comfort, of a few vails that then shall be rent, for the rending of the vail of the temple, promises the rending of all vails in a short while. 1. Then, the vail 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 vail 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 trailing a body of sin and 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 will say, Farewel with all your hearts, and glory to God that we shall never, never meet again. Blessed be God, we shall never see your face again.

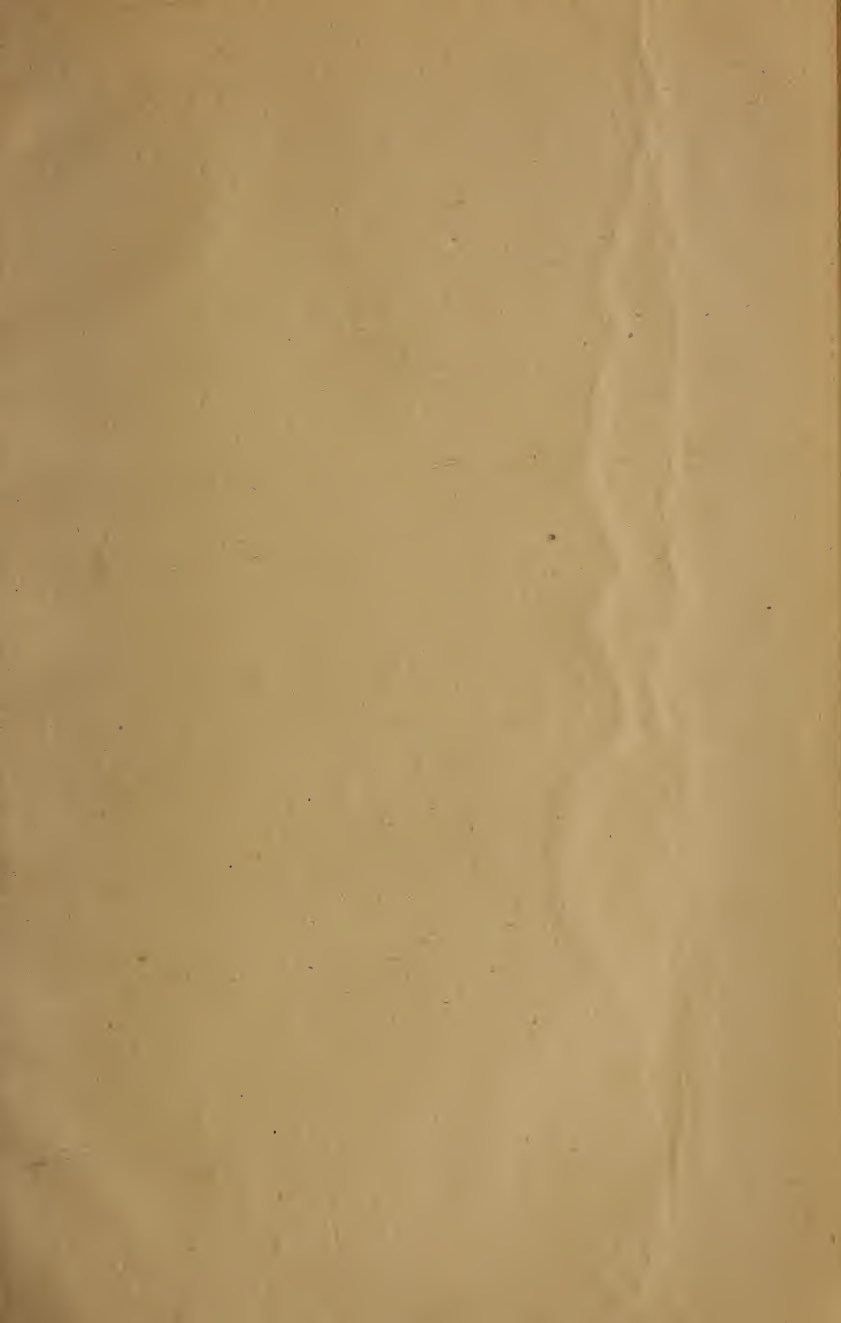
2. Then shall the vail of *darkness* and *distance* be rent in twain, for then darkness will give way to light, glorious light, and distance will give way to presence, glorious and everlasting presence. Now you say, I cannot see him, he is far away, but Christ says, *Father, I will that these whom thou 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 wing and flee away, never to return again, for *the face of the covering shall be entirely removed*, Isa. xxv. 7, 8.

3. Then shall the vail of *ordinances* be rent in twain; now the view we have of God's glory, is mediate, through the intervention of means and ordinances, any glimpse we get of his beauty, is through the dim glass of duties and ordinances; for *now we see through 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. xxi. 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, and not his back parts, or the skirts of his garments only.

4. The vail of *scanty enjoyments* will be rent in twain, the vail of passing blinks and interrupted views. The life of the saint here, is most-

ly 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 blink and away, your desires are but increased thereby, and your melancholy wants remain unsupplied; but within the vail all desires shall be satisfied, all wants shall be supplied, for *in his presence there is fulness of joy, and at his right hand are rivers of pleasures 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 tarries 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 some time, than, alas, he is gone, Song v. 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 confusions 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 vails 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 give 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 eclipses 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 yet, yea, there may not only be clouds, but rain, and perhaps a terrible shower of wrath is coming, many things look like it; but tho' 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 bode good to the church. It says that he will rear up a more glorious temple, such as is promised, Isa. liv. 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 agates, and thy gates of carbuncles, and all thy borders of pleasant stones.* Why, what is the meaning of all this? See it, ver. 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.* It is 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 trysted with another kind of tempest before it come to pass; for see how the promise is ushered in, *O thou afflicted, and tossed with tempests, 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 graces 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. 7. The vail of *infirmities* will be rent in twain. Here believers have infirmities on their bodies, that have no small influence on the actions 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. iv. 13. Then that scripture shall be fully accomplished, *Isa. xxx. 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, an 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. v. 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 win to 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. Though light be the most pleasing thing to the eye, yet the meridian brightness of the sun cannot be looked 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, though 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, fulness of joy at God's right hand for ever and ever. 10. The vail of *weariness* shall be rent in twain, here we soon weary of praying and preaching, we soon weary of sermons and sacraments.

I doubt not but many here may be wearied to the heart with this day's work. Indeed little wonder that the carnal heart 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 has a wearying body of death about him, he wearies of ordinances, he wearies of God's service: But in heaven within the veil, they shall serve him without wearying or fainting, Rev. xxii. 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 will be toiled 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 trouble and trials will be rent in twain: *There remains a rest for the people of God.* The veil of sorrow and anxiety shall be rent in twain, for *all tears shall be wiped from their eyes, sorrow and sighing shall flee away.* The veil 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 veil of wandering thoughts and vain imaginations will be rent in twain, you shall not have a wrong thought or conception of God throughout all eternity, for all your heart-plagues, lusts and corruptions, that you have been wrestling with all your days, will leave you, and I am sure you will leave them with such pleasure and satisfaction, and be so glad to part with them, that you will 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 well is me, that now I am quit of you for ever. And I cannot but say, that they who now have a glad heart to think of a 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 possessed of within the vail.

Use Fifth, for Exhortation. All I shall now say, is this, if the vail 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. vi. then the voice cried, Come and see; so when the vail is rent, O come and see, come and see. Turn aside and see this great sight, the vail of separation betwixt God and us rent in twain from the top to the bottom. What was to be seen within the vail of the temple you are told, Heb ix. 4, 5. *There was to be seen the golden censer, the golden pot, the ark of the covenant, the tables 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 vail 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 vail, that we might see heaven and the glory of it. 2. *Come take* the pot of manna which was within the vail, as you see in that forecited text, which signified Christ the bread of life. Now that the vail 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 vail 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 vail is a proclamation of pardon upon a jubilee-day. In the year of jubilee, the priest entered within the vail 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 vail, enters the holiest, issues out his proclamation of indemnity, and claims pardon of debt. Many a dyvor drowned in debt is on this green: but, behold, the cry is. *Go forth, ye prisoners of hope.* Here is a pardon in this pot of manna, if you will but take it; yea, there is life to your souls, and death to your sins in this pot of manna, if you will take it. *Object* But you will say, I cannot take what is offered to me. *Answ.* 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 are willing to take Christ, though you can do nothing, and willing that Christ should take you? Do you know what it is to believe? 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 see his own utter weakness, saying, *Not that I am sufficient of myself to think any thing 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 are called to take Christ, you are called to take and employ the power of God to do all things that you are called to do, but cannot do of yourself; this power of God is in your offer, and you may give employment to it, Isa. xxvii. 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 will 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 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 the top to the 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 wondering 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 in to 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 in*, the door is open, the vail 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, sorcerers, whoremongers*; but to all the dogs that are without the vail, we, in God's name, proclaim liberty to come in and get what will save you and sanctify you. You will 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 vail 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 vail of God's wrath, and divided the Red-sea of divine vengeance, that you might pass through. Have you a mind for heaven, man, woman? here is the way, it lies

through the rent vail; 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 vail*, 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 thro' *the vail that is rent*. Christless souls, who will satisfy *Justice* and *Holiness* for you? these porters will never be bribed by you: Therefore, O come and *enter by the rent vail*, 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 vail. 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 vail of the temple was rent in twain from the top to the bottom*. Behold, the vail 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*.

F I N I S.

