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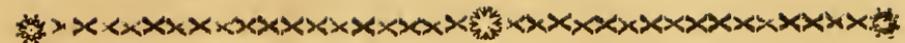
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T H E

PRACTICAL WORKS

OF THE REVEREND

RALPH ERSKINE, *A. M.*

CONSISTING OF HIS

SERMONS and POEMS.

IN TEN LARGE VOLUMES OCTAVO.

VOLUME THE FIRST.



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THE REV<sup>d</sup> M<sup>r</sup>. RALPH ERSKINE,  
Died. 6<sup>th</sup> Nov<sup>r</sup>. 1752. in the LXXIII Year of his Age.

*H. Gavin sculp.*

T H E  
S E R M O N S,

A N D O T H E R

P R A C T I C A L W O R K S,

Of the Late REVEREND and LEARNED

MR. R A L P H E R S K I N E,

Minister of the Gospel in DUNFERMLINE.

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I N T E N L A R G E V O L U M E S O C T A V O .

To which is prefixed,

An ACCOUNT of the AUTHOR'S LIFE and WRITINGS,  
with an ELEGIAC POEM, and large CONTENTS.

*By these he, being dead, yet speaketh.* Heb. xi. 4.

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M D C C L X X V I I .

☞ The following Recommendations of Mr. ERSKINE's Writings, by Dr. Bradbury and Mr. Hervey, were not insert in the folio edition; the Account of the Author's Life, here given, is quite different, and much fuller than the former one; and the Elegiac Poem, subjoined thereto, was not printed with the former edition of his works.

## C H A R A C T E R

O F T H E

## AUTHOR and his WRITINGS.

**I**T is not the Intention of the Editors of the present Edition of the Rev. Mr. RALPH ERSKINE'S *Practical Works*, in ten volumes octavo, to attempt passing any fulsome encomiums on the worthy Author, whose praise is already in the churches, or to launch out into any prolix commendation of his elaborate and valuable writings, which are so universally known, read, and esteemed; but to refer the reader, for his satisfaction relative to these, to what is advanced in the following short Account of his Life and Writings: We shall only here observe, That as he was eminently pious from his youth, had always a conversation becoming the gospel, was endued with every suitable qualification for the ministry, possessed of very popular talents, made the distinguishing doctrines of Christianity the chief subjects of his pulpit-themes, and singularly zealous for the purity of gospel-truth, it is not at all surprising, that he was greatly beloved, much followed by all true Christians, and his writings eagerly read by the religious and devout of every denomination.

The SERMONS and POEMS are already so well known and deservedly admired, both at home and abroad, that it would be superfluous to pass any encomiums on them. Let it suffice to say, in the words of that eminent divine, the late Rev. Dr. BRADBURY, in his preface to a collection of Mess. EBENEZER and RALPH ERSKINE'S Sermons, printed at London in 1738. "The Sermons, saith he, have no need of my re-

“ commendation: the reader 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 thought, a strong force of argument, and a happy flow of words, which are both judicious and familiar: and they have been greatly blessed to the edification of many, especially *the poor of the flock.*”

The same Dr. Bradbury, speaking concerning the poetical compositions of our Author, observes, That as poetry has often no more in it than *great 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: On this account, Mr. ERSKINE'S Gospel-Sonnets, are greatly to be esteemed, 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 favour of divine and experimental knowledge.”

The words of the late justly celebrated and pious Mr. HERVEY are very significant, and truly expressive of the high esteem he had for Mr. ERSKINE'S Writings. “ Was I to read, says that judicious and elegant writer, in order to refine my taste, or improve my stile; I would prefer Bishop Atterbury's sermons, Dr. Bate's works, or Mr. Seed's discourses: But, was I to read with a single view to the edification of my heart, in true faith, solid comfort, and evangelical holiness; I would have recourse to Mr. ERSKINE, and take his volumes for *my guide, my companion, and my own familiar friend.*” †

† Hervey's works in fol. p. 346. and Theron and Asp. dial. 16.

S O M E

A C C O U N T

O F T H E R E V E R E N D

Mr. R A L P H E R S K I N E.

**I**N emitting the writings of great men to the public, it hath been usual to give some account of their Author, that the reader may, in a short compass of reading, learn some of the principal lines of their character. Our Author is already so well known in the churches of Christ, both at home and abroad\*, by his excellent and elaborate productions, that saying any thing of him might have been entirely superceded: and had it not been, that his writings may fall into the hands of some at a distance, and in after-ages, who are not, and cannot be so well acquainted with him as the present, it would have been superfluous to have said any thing concerning him.

THE Rev. Mr. RALPH ERSKINE was honourably descended of very respectable ancestors; his father, the Rev. Mr. HENRY ERSKINE, being one of the thirty-three children of RALPH ERSKINE of Shielfield, a family of considerable repute and standing in the county of Merse, and originally descended from the antient house of MAR. Our Author, and his brother, the Rev. Mr. EBENEZER ERSKINE, late Minister of the gospel at Stirling, were two of the children of the said Rev. Mr. HENRY ERSKINE, who was sometime Minister

\* The greatest part of our Author's works were at first printed in single sermons and small tracts, and well relished; numbers of these have gone abroad, and met with a kind reception: yea. such regard hath the public put upon them, that several of them have undergone a great many impressions; and even some of them translated into other languages: and we have even seen a few of them printed in Dutch.—In the year sixty-four and sixty-five they were collected together, and printed, in a most elegant manner, in two large volumes in folio, in which there was interspersed a great many manuscript Sermons. This handsome Octavo Edition is printed from the elegant folio one, with considerable amendments.

Of the gospel at Cornwall, afterwards at Chirnside\*; a man eminent in his day, and justly distinguished for his piety, and firm attachment to Presbyterian principles: For his stedfast adherence to which, he was subjected to many considerable hardships in the latter part of the last century, during the persecuting period of Charles II. and James VII †.

The Author, of the following sermons, was born at Monilaws, in the county of Northumberland, on Sabbath the 15th<sup>th</sup> <sup>30</sup> March, 1685, at three o'clock in the afternoon; and baptized at Chirnside on the 5th of April, said year, by the Reverend Mr. William Violand. — He gave pretty early proofs of a great genius and fine fancy; and several instances of a pious disposition and a solid way of reflecting on matters. On this account he was, by his parents, early destined for the holy ministry, who resolved to give him a regular and liberal education, in order to qualify him for that important office.

When he had acquired a competent measure of Grammar, and other introductory parts of education, he went to the university of Edinburgh, to complete his studies; where he went through the ordinary courses of philosophy and divinity with success; and made a considerable progress in all the different branches of useful literature: for, he soon became a fine Grecian, an excellent Logician, and an accomplished Philosopher. But after having acquired such a competent measure of knowledge, in these various branches of erudition, he gave himself up to the study of theology, his darling and beloved topic; in which he made great progress, as his productions therein do abundantly evidence.

Having experienced the grace of God himself, he thought it his duty to give himself up to the great work of the ministry, that he might be a happy instrument of bringing others to know these things which he found and experienced to be of the utmost importance. He was abundantly sensible this was a work of great labour

\* *Cornwal* is in the shire of Northumberland; *Chirnside* lies about five miles from Berwick upon Tweed, in the Scotch side.

† See the continuation of Calamy's life of Baxter, p 681.

and diligence; and therefore gave himself up to a course of unwearied study. He was never more delighted than when he could apply himself to the increase of valuable knowledge, without being interrupted: this desire after improvement continued to the last; and he was never seemingly better, than when he thus enjoyed himself.

The ordinary course of philosophical and theological studies being gone through, at the college of Edinburgh, with success; he was, in the providence of God, called forth to appear in a public character; and being well reported of, by all who knew him, for a conversation becoming the gospel, he was accordingly taken upon trials by the Presbytery of Dunfermline: and having finished the usual pieces of trial assigned him, to the entire satisfaction of the presbytery, he was by them licensed to preach, as a probationer, the everlasting gospel, on the 8th of June, 1709. In which capacity he exercised the talents which the Lord had graciously conferred on him, within the bounds of the said Presbytery, both in vacancies and settled congregation, to the great satisfaction of his hearers, both ministers and people, as his certificate from that Presbytery, dated April 4th, 1711. expressly bears.—In this station of life he did not long remain: Providence soon opened a door for him; and he got an unanimous call, from the parishioners of Dunfermline, on the 1st of May 1711. to exercise his ministerial talents and abilities amongst them; which call was approved of by the Presbytery, on the day following, as regularly proceeded in. He went through the usual pieces of trial, for ordination, prescribed by the Presbytery, with approbation: and thereupon they set him apart to the office of the holy ministry, in the collegiate charge of Dunfermline, on August 7th, 1711.

For several years, prior to his appearing in a public character, he was a close student in the various branches of literature, and had made considerable progress therein. Few were endowed with a greater stretch of judgment, and a penetrating disposition of mind; this, joined with a lively invention, and a tenacious memory, enabled him to make great researches after truth, and

easily to investigate what would have been very difficult to others, not possessed of such a depth of thought and clear way of reasoning. These shining qualities, which were the gifts of nature, were conspicuous in him: and being enabled, by divine grace, to improve them aright, he made a more considerable figure, in practising the various duties incumbent on the Minister and the Christian, than many others of his cotemporaries.

Though his natural and acquired abilities justly procured him the title of a learned man; yet he endeavoured to make all his learning subservient to his theological studies, which is more than many can boast of who are much extolled for their literature. For this purpose he carefully and diligently searched the scriptures, had much pleasure in them, retained a vast deal of them upon his mind, as is evident from his quoting these, with facility, to prove every point of doctrine he was discoursing on: He likewise read over, with attention of mind, many bodies of divinity, compared these with the oracles of truth, on which the compilers of them founded them; and had ever at hand the best commentators on the Bible, to see who most reached the mind of the Holy Spirit. This being the case, it is little wonder he made such proficiency in his researches after truth, and that his PRACTICAL WRITINGS have been so much esteemed and admired.

Under the character of a minister of the gospel, having now a pastoral relation to a particular flock, in the church universal, he *determined not to know any thing save Jesus Christ and him crucified*: He was *instant in season and out of season*, in all the parts of his ministerial labours, and gave himself wholly thereunto; exhorting the people under his trust, from house to house, in the way of family-visitation; examining them more publicly upon the principles of our holy religion; visiting the sick, when called; and preaching the everlasting gospel, in which he had a very pleasant and edifying gift. He preached, by turns, with his colleague, every Sabbath and Thursday, through the year; and afterwards, when he had none, for several years before his death, he officiat-

ed alone, very punctually, both on Sabbath and week-day.

He delivered few extemporary productions. His sermons were generally the fruit of diligent study, and assiduous application. For the most part he wrote all; and kept very close by his notes in the delivery, except when the Lord was pleased to carry in upon his mind, in time of preaching, some pat and apposite enlargements, whereof he had no previous study, and to which he nevertheless cheerfully gave way, as coming from HIM, who has *the tongue of the learned*; who knows how to speak a word in season to him that is weary\*; and who says, *It shall be given you the same hour what ye shall speak; for it is not ye that speak, but the Spirit of your Father that speaketh in you*†.—He was blessed with a rich and fertile invention, as appears in the agreeable and entertaining diversity, wherewith his heads of doctrine are every where adorned. The poetical genius, with which he was happily endowed, contributed not a little to the embellishment of his discourses, with a variety of pertinent epithets and striking metaphors.

His gift of preaching was both instructing and searching. Few outshone him in the nervous and convincing manner, whereby he confirmed the truth of the doctrines he insisted on; and fewer still in the warm and pathetic address, in which he enforced the practice of them.

He peculiarly excelled in the ample and free offers of Christ he made to his hearers; and the captivating and alluring methods he used, for gaining their compliance, or their receiving and resting on Christ alone for their salvation, as thus freely and fully exhibited unto them in the gospel. On all which accounts he was justly esteemed, and much followed, as one of the most popular and edifying preachers of his day.—During his time, sacramental solemnities, at Dunfermline, were much crowded; numbers of people, from several parts of the kingdom, resorting unto them; and the Lord was pleased to countenance some of these communions,

\* Isa: l. 4.

† Matth. x. 19, 20.

with signal evidences of his gracious presence and influence, to the sweet and comfortable experience of many.

It appears from what our Author has published, that he was an able, close, and clear reasoner; and could, when he set himself to it, exhaust a subject. His stile was of a medium, between the lofty and combast, being natural, unaffected, manly, and scriptural; and free from meanness and lowness; though indeed he studied much to adapt himself to the capacity of the auditory. There centered in him gravity, without dulness; and smartness, without forthiness; never choosing, in his public appearances, to come to his hearers, with the *intifing words of men's wisdom*; but to preach the truths of the everlasting gospel in their genuine purity, and naked simplicity. He was possess of excellent talents for the pulpit; he had a pleasant voice, free of any disagreeable tone and false pathos: and every unprejudiced person will readily grant, who have any relih for substantial matter, and that *doctrine which is according to godliness*, delivered in an unaffected manner, that he was an agreeable, as well as a faithful, judicious, evangelical preacher.

As to his ministrations in general, it will be readily acknowledged, that he was an able minister of the New Testament. He made choice of the most interesting subjects to preach upon; and it was his peculiar delight to preach *Christ crucified*, and to exalt the doctrine of free grace, through his imputed righteousness. He could *rightly divide the word of truth*; and skilfully parcel out to every one their portion in due season. He was none of those flat, dull, leazy, insipid preachers; but delivered his sermons, with pathetic zeal, fervour, and affection. He was a son of thunder, when he made known the terrors of the Lord to hypocrites, false and carnal professors: and had the tongue of the learned to speak a word of consolation to those who were weary and heavy laden; inviting them to trust in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, and to stay themselves on him as the God of their salvation.

His ministry was very trying and searching; he had  
a peculiar

a peculiar way of addressing himself to the conscience; could easily delineate the soul, and represent the sinner in his native colours. He was a close and hard student to his old-age, took a great deal of pains in the composition of his sermons, and digested them well. When he preached occasionally in other places, abroad from his fixed charge, his ministrations were very acceptable, and often left a deep impression on the minds of the hearers. He was a wise, prudent, learned, and accomplished minister; well understood, constantly inculcated, and strenuously defended the truth as it is in Jesus. In short, he had the testimony of all who had a true relish for the glorious and sublime doctrines of the blessed Redeemer.

It will easily appear to the judicious and experienced reader, in perusing his writings, that he had as dexterous a faculty in ransacking the plagues of the heart, and describing the diversified circumstances of serious and exercised souls, as if they had fully communicated their several doubts and cases unto him; while, in the meantime, he was only unfolding the inward experience of his own soul, what he himself felt of the workings of unbelief, and of the powerful influence of the Holy Spirit, in opposition thereunto; which could not but quadrate or agree, with the operations of the self-same Spirit of God in others; for, *as in water, face answereth to face, so doth the heart of man to man*\*.—No trial or temptation can befall any of the saints, but something familiar thereunto has happened to others before them, as the apostle asserts, when he says, *There hath no temptation taken you, but such as is common to man*†.

This eminent servant of Jesus Christ, being exercised to godliness from his youth, became by the grace of God, a *scribe instructed unto the kingdom of heaven*, whom our Lord compares to *an householder, which bringeth forth out of his treasure, things new and old*‡. Old invariable truths, but new illustrations of them; old experiences, the same with other saints before, but new observations and improvements upon them: so that, with abundance

\* Prov. xxvii. 19. † 1 Cor. x. 13. ‡ Matth. 13. 52.

of propriety, it may be said, that there are few perplexing doubts, or intricate cases, which the saints have, at any time, been exercised with, that are not in some one or other of his sermons, very judiciously solved, and distinctly elucidated, or cleared up.

His conversation was holy and blameless, favourable and refreshing, warm and affectionate, spiritual and edifying. In all things he acted as one that had experienced the grace of God bringing salvation. Many yet alive are witnesses of his pious conversation, and shining deportment. Every one, who had opportunity to mark his actions, can attest, that he lived up to the truths he preached. He desired and affected to be of the party of such as spoke well of, and were for advancing and defending the declarative glory of his exalted Lord; pleading for the sufficiency and freedom of divine grace; for debasing the creature, and exalting holiness.

He was favoured, by his blessed Master, with uncommon degrees of the manifestations of the love of God, and enjoyed the highest measures of assurance. He was much honoured by the Most High, in his public ministrations, in answering the doubts, and solving the perplexing cases of the truly exercised soul; instances whereof his works abound with. He conversed much with those exercised to godliness; and by this means came to be well acquainted with the various exercises of the Lord's people: and he had a particular regard for all such, and took great pleasure in being serviceable to them, however mean their circumstances in the world were. The *rich in faith* were to him the *excellent ones in the earth*, in whom he had *peculiar pleasure and delight*. This, together with the feeling sense he had of these things upon his own soul, justly procured him the character, and induced many to term him, the *experimental preacher*.

He ever had a mighty zeal for the declarative glory of God; a great concern for the Redeemer's interest; and a becoming esteem for the peculiar doctrines of Christianity: he was deeply affected with what injured the first; sensibly touched with any thing that endangered

gered the next; and soon alarmed with whatever encroachments were made on the last. This natively led him, at different periods of his life-time, to be engaged in several controversies, both theological and political: In all which, he conducted the matter with that solidity of judgment peculiar to himself, and with a strength of argument becoming his great mind, and acquit himself in such a masterly manner, as not only to silence his opponents, but procure himself the character of a strong reasoner, an able disputant, and a valiant and heroic champion for the truth.

We find our Author accordingly making several public appearances of this nature. In the year 1720. when the General Assembly injured many gospel truths, by their fifth act condemning a book, intitled, *The Marrow of Modern Divinity*, he appeared undauntedly on the side of those who made a seasonable and commendable stand for these precious truths which were condemned and buried by the Assembly's act. And he not only turned the edge of several of his sermons, preached about that time, against this act, but composed a particular discourse on that subject, wherein he asserted and defended the peculiar doctrines condemned thereby, and clearly red up marches between the law and the gospel\*. Our Author did not satisfy himself with this, but also joined himself with several other brethren, who gave in to the general assembly 1721, a *Representation*, setting forth the pernicious nature of said act, condescending on the particular doctrines wounded by it; which, indeed, had no other effect upon the Assembly, but to induce them to corroborate their act 1720, by another in the year 1722.

When Mr. Simson, professor of divinity in the university of Glasgow, came to be sifted, in a second process before the Assembly, anno 1727, for having vented and taught several propositions repugnant to the supreme deity of the eternal Son of God, our Author was mightily alarmed thereat, and so took part with those

\* Several of these passages may be seen by consulting Vol. I. p. 238. Vol. II. p. 304, 305, 395.—The discourse composed on this subject, may be seen Vol. II. p. 245. intitled, *Law-death, Gospel-life.*

who made a laudable opposition to that pernicious scheme of doctrine; and also testified against it in several of his discourses, preached and published at that time\*.

About the year 1732, when the Church of Scotland became infected with many gross errors and pernicious doctrines, together with her arbitrary conduct, which gave birth to that memorable event, the SECESSION †, our Author did not at first formally adhere to these ministers ‡ who were honoured to be the happy instruments of it; yet he joined with those who favoured their testimony, was of the number of the protesters against any sentence that was passed against them, and kept communion with them. He did not, for some years after the Secession came to be stated, relinquish communion with the present judicatories: but after all means were used to reclaim them, to no purpose, and all expectations failing of their setting about reformation-work, he at last declined them, and formally joined himself, (with some others) to the four Brethren, who had, by this time, formed themselves into a Presbytery, under the name of THE ASSOCIATE PRESBYTERY. This body greatly increased; and were much countenanced by vast multitudes of people, and honoured of the Lord to bring relief to many oppressed congregations, and to publish the important and interesting doctrines of the everlasting gospel to many who heard little or nothing of them.

By this means, our Author had an opportunity put

\* See Vol. II. p. 466, 477.—Whoever has a mind to see Mr. Simson's pernicious and dangerous scheme of doctrine, contained both in the first and second process, and its inconsistency with the scriptures and our standards, may consult the Act and Testimony, p. (*mibi*) 53.—60.

† The grounds on which the Secession was stated, were principally these, *viz.* the prevailing party's carrying on a course of defection from our reformed principles, and refusing to be reclaimed; the prevalency of error in doctrine, partiality in discipline, tyranny in government; restricting ministerial freedom and faithfulness, in testifying against their backslidings; oppressing the heritage of God; imposing sinful terms of communion; and inflicting censures upon ministers for testifying against these courses.—The reader may see a more full account of the commencement of the Secession, by consulting some notes on that sermon, intitled, *The Law of God's House*, inserted in Vol. V.

‡ The ministers who first constituted the Secession were, the Rev. Mr. EBEN. ERSKINE, brother to our Author, with Messrs. WILSON, MONCRIEF, and FISHER.

into his hand, in adorable providence, to preach the gospel to many oppressed congregations, to diffuse his wholesome doctrine more extensively, to bear his Master's message to greater numbers, and spread the fame of the blessed Redeemer among mankind sinners; and brought relief to many poisoned with unwholesome doctrine, who were entertained with little or nothing but harangues on the principles of morality.

In the beginning of the year 1742, a very extraordinary commotion took place at Cambuslang, and some other parts in the west of Scotland, occasioned by Mr. Whitefield's personal ministrations amongst them, and perusing his journals: This affair was looked upon by many, and attested by not a few, as a *work of God*, and a *remarkable down-pouring of the Spirit*.—The genuine nature of this work was, however, by many suspected; and they assigned their reasons for doing so, in several printed papers published at that time\*. Among other reasons for questioning this work, this was one, "That it had a direct tendency to lead off persons from building their salvation *on Christ in the word*, to build on *something wrought in themselves*; and to form an *imaginary idea of Christ*, AS MAN, in the mind; affirming it belonged to, and a great article of *saving faith*." Concerning the above proposition, of affirming an *imaginary idea of Christ*, AS MAN, *was helpful to the faith of his being GOD-MAN*, and an *essential article of saving faith*, our Author wrote an elaborate treatise, intitled, FAITH NO FANCY; or, *a Treatise of Mental Images*: a book singularly valuable, for the clear and perspicuous manner in which he hath handled and established this important point; every way worthy of our Author, and reflected the greatest honour upon him; in regard it hath given the greatest display of his abilities, both as a divine and philosopher, and how capable he was to exhaust any point, when he set himself to it, even in an abstract way of reasoning: a book that effectually si-

\* Whoever inclines to see these, may consult Mr. Fisher's REVIEW of a Preface to a Narrative of the extraordinary Work at Killyth, &c.—See also our Author's Appendix to Fraud and Falshood discovered; and his Sermon, intitled, *The true Christ no new Christ*, in Vol. VII.

lenced all his opponents; and stands to this day unanswered.

The Associate Body, with whom our Author had now connected himself, were become very numerous, both in ministers and people; and were spreading their influence to a considerable distance: the greatest harmony and unanimity subsisted amongst them, until about the year 1746. when an unhappy debate at last came in among them, concerning the *lawfulness of a religious clause in some burgeses oaths*; which, in the issue, terminated in a rent and separation of that respectable body, to the no small grief of the truly religiously disposed. Our Author was of the number of those who maintained the **LAWFULNESS** of said *religious clause*; and accordingly wrote several tracts in defence thereof\*. In the whole of this dispute, he managed the affair with such strength of argument, and force of reasoning, as at once both puzzled and galled his adversaries: and finding themselves unable to answer his arguments, at last pretended to draw forth the sword of Church discipline against him. This he entirely despised, as being improperly inflicted; and used only as a stratagem to strengthen their party.—So much may serve as a few short hints concerning the public transactions in which our Author was engaged.

WE cannot dismiss this account of our Author, without taking notice of another particular concerning him, which constitutes a very material branch of his character. He was not only deservedly esteemed, as a judicious **DIVINE**; but also much respected as a good **POET**: And he hath favoured the world with several excellent productions of that nature, which have all met with a very favourable reception. His poetical talent was employed chiefly on divine subjects; he had no relish and taste for any other. In his younger years, at his leisure

\* Such as, *The lawfulness of the religious clause of some Burgeses oaths asserted:—Fancy no faith; or, a seasonable warning to Seceders, against the sinful constitution of some brethren, &c:—Observations on the conduct of the separating brethren, in two parts:—Fancy still no faith;—* with several other pamphlets.

hours, he composed a piece, which is now intitled, **GOSPEL-SONNETS**; or, *Spiritual Songs*, in six parts. The usefulness of this poetical compend of the revealed principles of our holy religion, for promoting the life of faith, comfort, and holiness, will be experienced, it is hoped, by many of the saints of God, to the latest posterity.—This piece was so well relished, that it hath undergone a multitude of impressions; and the demand for it is as great as ever.

About the year 1738, he emitted into the world his poetical paraphrase upon the whole book of the **SONG OF SOLOMON**; which indeed is an evangelical comment, done in a strain adapted to the New-Testament dispensation, upon that allegorical or figurative part of holy writ.—This performance has likewise been very acceptable, and undergone a variety of editions.

By emitting the above essays, and some smaller poems into the world, our Author's abilities, as a poet, came to be established: And he accordingly had several recommendations of Synod given him, to employ some of his vacant hours in turning all the scripture songs into common metre, of the same kind with the psalms of David. Having complied with his recommendation, he published, in the year 1750, as a specimen of the whole, an intire version of the book of the **LAMENTATIONS**, with the scripture text on the margin, that the reader might see how clofs he kept to the original. To this piece he subjoined a two-fold version of *David's last words*; with a paraphrase on the *first gospel promise* and *great gospel mystery*.—Some time after this he published a short version of the **SONG OF SOLOMON**, adapted to the psalm tunes, along with a new edition of his large paraphrase thereof. To this piece he subjoined two short poems; the first on the *ten plagues of Egypt*; and the next on the *ten commandments*.—**JOB'S HYMNS** made their next appearance in the world, consisting of an hundred short poems, on as many select passages in that book. This piece was prepared for the press by the Author's own hand; but not published till after his decease.—The rest of the **SCRIPTURE SONGS**, in three parts, completed our Author's undertaking. They were trans-

cribed from his short-hand characters, and revised by his son, the Rev. Mr. Henry Erskine, late minister at Falkirk, and published sometime after his death.

Besides these poetical pieces above-mentioned, there were a variety of other small poems written, and some of them published by our Author; such as, *Smoking spiritualized. Scripture authorities for subjecting to, and praying for, civil magistrates.* With several *funeral poems, elegies, epithets, &c.* upon some great and celebrated men\*. — Those who have any appetite for the substantial and solid food of the word, to the nourishment of their precious and immortal souls, and do not want to be starved and decoyed with empty notions and fanciful flights, will readily meet with suitable and agreeable entertainment in the poetical performances of this reverend Author, which are re-published at the end of his sermons.

This faithful and laborious servant of Jesus Christ, laboured successfully in the work of the ministry, and continued publicly useful in his Master's work, till within a few days of his departure; for he preached in his own pulpit on Sabbath the 29th of October 1752. As he always had a peculiar regard for the interesting doctrines of the everlasting gospel; and as his pious soul burnt fervently with a vehement love to our blessed Redeemer: so it would seem, providence so ordered the matter, that his last public exercises here below, were suitable to, and preparatory for the celestial ones. In the latter part of his life, when not engaged in his ordinary ministerial work, he was employed in composing his SCRIPTURE SONGS: And may it not with propriety be said, that this was an agreeable exercise, and highly suitable, as introductory to *singing the song of Moses and the Lamb* †? The last subjects he was directed to handle,

\* We are certain our Author wrote an elegiac poem to the memory of Mr. James Cuthbert; with elegies on Messrs. Alexander Hamilton, Patrick Phlenderlieth, George Mair, James Bathgate, and William Moncrief; with an inscription on the grave-stone of Mr. Wilson and Provost Brown at Perth, and Mr. Balantine at Sanquhar; and epitaphs on Messrs. Boston at Etrick, and Hunter at Gatehall, &c. He wrote also two other poems, viz. The forced marriage of Queen SCOTA, on occasion of the union, MSS and Duntreline's address to King George I. on his accession to the throne; printed.

† It would appear he was some way sensible, and had some presages of his approaching dissolution: for, the very day he had finished these SONGS, we

seem to be his appending his seal to the *whole Christian scheme*, and giving his last testimony to a *religious course*; drawn from these words, *Wisdom's ways are ways of pleasantness; and all her paths are peace*: and his firm expectations of a blessed immortality; from these words, *I know that my Redeemer liveth, &c.*

When he had finished his Master's public work in the world, and been so suitably prepared for the heavenly mansions, he was seized, in the end of the foresaid month, *viz.* October 1750, with a nervous fever, (wherein, nevertheless he enjoyed the exercise of his judgment and senses,) which lasted only for a few days, and at last was the happy messenger of freeing him from the incumbrances of an imbodyed state, and leading him to the world of Spirits, and the regions of eternal bliss and felicity; for, on the eight day of the fever, he fell asleep in the Lord, being Monday Nov. 6th, 1752. in the 68th year of his age, after labouring unweariedly and successfully in the work of the ministry, among his flock in Dunfermline, for the space of forty-two years †, and went to take possession of the kingdom prepared for him; where he now resides in the country of everlasting happiness, beholding, in righteousness, the face of his glorious and exalted Redeemer, whose visits, while on the body, made him glad, whose battles he had unweariedly fought, whose cause he had zealously defended, whose truths he had strenuously maintained, whose gospel he had faithfully published, and to whom he had kept his allegiance, as long as he had his abode in these tents of separation. He now, in the company of angels and archangels, and in concert with the company of saints made perfect, sings the high praises of the mighty Saviour, whose love many times shed abroad in his soul

are told, he said to his spouse, (who had been sometimes before acquainting him, that it was uneasy to her to be so much deprived of his company, by his close application to study;) he had got his public work, he intended for the press, finished; and that she might now expect a little more of his company for sometime, but it would not be long till she should be deprived of it altogether.

† He was buried in the church-yard of Dunfermline, on Thursday the 9th of the foresaid month. His corpse was attended to the place of interment by an inconceivable number of spectators, deeply and justly regretting the loss of so valuable a minister.

while

while here, in his militant state, filled him with heavenly raptures.

When on his death-bed, company was forbid him, by order of his physicians; and therefore few had the benefit of his last advices, and dying conversation: such who enjoyed it, were suitably entertained, and sensibly refreshed. He himself complained, that so few attended him at that time; which, indeed, is the reason why so few of his dying sentiments can be transmitted to posterity.

Our worthy Author affords room for large commendations, and his character was of the highest kind: want of abilities permits not to do justice to so great a man; and attempting to do it, may shew a deficiency of talents necessary for giving an exact portrait of him, at full length. On the one hand, as we entirely despise and abhor that meanness, of giving flattering titles to any man; so, on the other, we are glad, that, on this subject, there is as little occasion for them, as we want inclination to use them.—If Mr. ERSKINE is considered as to his *natural endowments*, he possessed many fine qualities; he had a sweet temper, a clear head, a rich invention, a lively imagination, and a great memory.—If he is viewed as to his *acquired abilities*; he was well acquainted with all the useful branches of literature, being an able scholar, an accurate logician, and a penetrating philosopher.—If he is considered as to his *office*; he was a great and judicious divine, a pious and evangelical preacher, an accurate critic, a profound reasoner, and an able casuist.—In short, he was not only a learned man, but an affectionate and familiar friend, a social companion, a devout Christian, and a *burning and shining light*: he burned with fervent zeal for the truths of the gospel, and was soon alarmed at any attempt to darken, sully, or pervert them; and was a shining example of piety, holiness, and integrity: for, from what we know of him, we have reason to conclude, he kept his allegiance to his glorious Master, Christ Jesus, pled his cause with intrepidity, and honourably finished his Christian course.

By his death, the *church of Christ* lost a great light, a heroic

heroic champion for the truth, and a bold contender for the faith, once delivered to the saints. — The *body* he was last connected with, have been deprived of an useful member, and a shining ornament to their cause. — The *congregation* he laboured among, lost an able and faithful minister, a laborious and successful wrestler, and a painful and diligent instructor. — His *family* and *relatives*, lost a true friend, an affectionate husband, a tender-hearted parent, and a striking pattern of virtue. — His *acquaintances* an *intimates*, and endearing brother, a social companion, and an engaging friend.

OUR Author was twice married. His first marriage was with MARGARET DEWAR, a daughter of the laird of *Lassodie*\*; who lived with him about sixteen years: In which time she bore ten children; five sons and five daughters †. — His second marriage was with MARGARET SIMSON, a daughter of Mr. *Simson*, writer to the signet in Edinburgh ‡, who bore him four sons, and survived himself some few years. — Three of his sons of the first marriage, were ministers in the Association, *viz.* The Rev. Messrs. HENRY, JOHN, and JAMES; the first was ordained minister at Falkirk, the second at Leslie, and the third at Stirling. All of them died in the prime of their age, when they had given the world just ground to conceive high expectations of their usefulness in the Church. One of the daughters of the first marriage was married to Mr. *John Newlands*, merchant in Glasgow, the editor of his practical works. His only child now in life, is ROBERT, a son of the second marriage, a merchant, sometime residing in London.

\* This marriage commenced, July 15th, 1714.

† On the death of his first wife, which took place on Nov. 22d, 1730, he compose the two following verses.

The law brought forth her precepts ten,

And then dissolv'd in grace:

This vine as many boughs, and then

In glory took her place.

Her dying breath, triumphantly,

Did that sweet anthem sing,

Thanks be to God for victory;

O death! where is thy sting?

‡ His second marriage took place, February 24th, 1732.

From the account already given of our Author, the reader will, no doubt, think we should now proceed to give some account of his *religious deportment*; and their expectations on this head, perhaps, may run very high. We are sorry, truly sorry, that we find ourselves unable to gratify our readers in this particular; in regard our Author left no written memoirs of the *religious part* of his life: True, indeed, he left a *diary* behind him, from which something of this kind was expected; but, upon perusing it, it was found to contain only some domestic incidents, and providential occurrences; the publication of which would serve no valuable end.—No question, had the experiences of such a singular man been left upon record, they would have been of great service, and highly acceptable to the truly devout Christian: For he was a man who possessed not only a very extraordinary degree of the most valuable natural gifts and endowments, such as cheerfulness, good-nature, modesty, and gratitude, uniting in him; but remarkable for genuine piety, a heavenly disposition of mind, and well acquainted with vital religion and practical godliness: yea, in him centered all the ornaments of the minister, and amiable qualities of the Christian, without the least affectation, or smallest appearance of vanity. He was a shining instance of the truth and amiableness of Christianity, and an exemplary pattern of spiritual mindedness and sincere devotion.—But, we imagine, from the short hints already given of him, and a careful perusal of his practical writings, the reader will be at no great loss to figure out to himself what the attainments and experiences of such a worthy person must have been; and easily conclude that certainly they were very remarkably.

Before we finish this account of our Author, it will probably be expected we should say something concerning his SERMONS, and other PRACTICAL WRITINGS. These works will speak for themselves. And as the most of them have long ago appeared in the world in single tracts; and of late collected into two large volumes in folio, and elegantly printed; so they have already

ready had their usefulness and praise in the church of Christ: And for us to attempt giving any recommendation to them, would be highly unbecoming so great a man, and offering a real indignity to his worthy memory.—Those of them which have been taken from *manuscripts*, since his death, it is hoped, will be as acceptable as those formerly published in this life-time; as the subjects are of equal importance, the same evangelical spirit breathes through them, and the same soul-nourishing food to be found in them.—Without flattery it may be said, that the whole of his doctrine was according to godliness; that he took pleasure to exhibit the Redeemer in the glory and riches of his grace; made choice of the most apposite subjects for instructing the ignorant, strengthening the weak, comforting the dejected, and for winning souls to the blessed Jesus.—His writings, after properly informing the judgment in the point of doctrine he made choice of to illustrate, contain the most ample and free offers of Christ; the most warm and pathetic invitations to embrace him; and the most winning persuasives to influence the heart to a chearful compliance.—In the whole of his sermons, the reader will perceive a fervent zeal for the honour and cause of Christ, a steady boldness in defending his truths, and a firm attachment to the doctrine, worship, discipline, and government of the church of Scotland.—But as the judicious and intelligent readers will obtain the justest sentiments, and form the best character of him from his writings, we shall therefore recommend a careful perusal of these; sincerely wishing them all manner of spiritual instruction and edification from such a valuable treasure: for by these, *though he be now dead, he yet speaketh.*

GLASGOW August }  
12th, 1763. }

## P O E M,

To the MEMORY of the late

Rev. Mr. RALPH ERSKINE.

*Plangito, Melpomene! ARESKINI funera, clarum  
Cujus ab RADOLPHO sidere nomen habes.  
Scotia mœsta dole: ARESKINO nemo superstes!—  
Scote! is Britannicis contigit altus honos.*

*Eja tamen gaude! ARESKINUS carmine vivit;  
Operibus RADOLPHO fama perennis erit.  
Interea, ARESKINI! animæ pars altera nostræ,  
Te Caledonùm flens Elegia gemit.*

**L**ONG did the muse \* impatient wait to see,  
Some lofty poet describe his pedigree:  
Waiting in vain some able pen to scan,  
The matchless virtues of this peerless man;  
Presum'd, at last, some rude portrait to draw  
Of him, who once could paint without a flaw.  
Such boldness, sure, does much indulgence claim,  
Since lofty flow'rs should decorate his name,  
And brilliant strokes aloud extol his fame. }

SCOTIA! what ground hast thou to drop a tear?  
Thou hast not lost a small, but first-rate peer!  
A peer whose eyes could view celestial bliss,  
And search the wonders in that vast abyss.  
ERSKINE! whose fame to distant climes is known;  
Christ's real friend, and Truth's bold champion.  
His works divine, to future ages shall,  
Speak forth his real excellence to all;  
And sound the praises of Immanuel. }

\* This elegiac poem was not composed till the year 1765, being about thirteen years after Mr. Erskine's death.

O Scottish church ! how much mayst thou regret  
 Thy faithful pastor, and watchman complete !  
 Whose mind could search heav'n's myst'ries most pro-  
 Investigate her truths to all around. [found,  
 Dunfermline too, with sobbing breasts can tell,  
 How great a priest has fallen in Israel !  
 A loss which heav'n made them long feel the smart,  
 Because his message had not gain'd their heart \*.  
 The Associate tribe may well lament the case,  
 That such a herald great did yield his place.  
 He of that number was in high repute ;  
 And to defend their cause was never mute ;  
 And could each prattling scribe with ease refute. }  
 This is not all ; each friend of God can tell,  
 How Zion trembled when this pillar fell.  
 To all he seem'd a blazing star most bright ;  
 Nay, he was a burning and a shining light.

In private life his character's most complete ;  
 Gifts natural, and parts acquir'd, unite.  
 Piety and goodness form'd the early plan,  
 Of future greatness, in this worthy man.  
 His early years with gravity were blest'd,  
 Which made him soon admir'd and much carest'd.  
 A stock of lit'rature adorn'd his name ;  
 His parts, like trumpets great, anounc'd his fame.  
 " His courteous carriage shew'd his gen'rous mind ;  
 " Fond without fraud, and without flatt'ry kind."  
 His pray'rs and praises were of divine stamp ;  
 His walk and practice, all a shining lamp.  
 In converse heav'nly, and behaviour mild ;  
 His words not vain, nor yet his lips defil'd ;  
 His soul sublime, his conscience undefil'd ;  
 Sweetness of temper, friendship most sincere,  
 Of access easy, and deportment fair,  
 Were his endowments ; though to others rare. }  
 Grace and good-nature stor'd his humble mind. }  
 In him the social virtues all conjoin'd ;

\* They were about eight years vacant after his death, before they had again a settled pastor.

“ His soul refin’d beyond the common race,  
 “ Was cultivate by nature, art, and grace.  
 “ He brightly shone, even in his private sphere,  
 “ Ere he possess the ministerial chair.”

Were we to view him in his public station,  
 His match we scarce could find in all the nation.  
 God’s, word’s the sacred source from which doth flow,  
 Knowledge divine to mortals here below :  
 This word he search’d with diligence and care ;  
 Gave to each soul its portion and its share.  
 For, to divide aright God’s word of truth,  
 He was instructed early in his youth.  
 His insight into truth’s abyss was great ;  
 And could explain beyond the common rate.  
 “ Seraphic principles and graces bright,  
 In him conspired to display their might,  
 In public work he taught with solemn awe,  
 The pieceful gospel and the fiery law.  
 Heav’n form’d his mind great gospel-truths to trace,  
 His mouth to sound the silver trump of grace ;  
 To speak the grandeur of the Saviour God ;  
 To blaze his righteousness divine abroad.  
 His view of every sacred line was bright ;  
 Each sermon was a lamp of gospel-light.  
 The holy theme was trim’d with holy bait ;  
 Each word was massy, and each sentence great.  
 His language shew’d a judgment most profound,  
 A deph too great for common lines to sound.  
 His frame was still divine, his words exact ;  
 Saints heard the voice which did their hearts attract.  
 An holy humble course of life he steer’d,  
 That all might see the doctrine which they heard.  
 His presence grave did rev’rence great command,  
 And crave profound respect from every hand.  
 His very look could vanity reclaim,  
 His countenance put levity to shame.”  
 A disputant most bold for truth appear’d ;  
 And ’gainst all errors conqu’ring trophies rear’d :  
 “ His words gave all antagonists a wound,  
 “ Which did them soon convince, or soon confound.

“ His

“ His public spirit was of such a pitch,  
 “ That few in zeal for God were found so rich.”

Hark ! you who remind him, surely will allow,  
 That grace triumphant sat upon his brow.  
 Won't you confess his mind was much refin'd,  
 Beyond the common mass of human kind ?  
 The lovely graces in his bosom found,  
 Diffus'd ambrosial odours all around.  
 His lofty mind, ne'er drench'd in earthly things,  
 With ease could mount to heav'n, with out-stretch'd  
 Spy out the glory of the realms of light, [wings :  
 Unfold the grandeur unto mortal sight.  
 His pious soul, fram'd to surmount the skies,  
 With winning charms did stoop to vulgar eyes ;  
 Diffuse that knowledge giv'n him from above,  
 To all mankind, with fervency and love.  
 Heav'n still indulgent to his pious mind,  
 Display'd her glorious rays purely refin'd.  
 The amazing wonders shew'n to him from thence,  
 He could, with ease, to others soon dispense.  
 Thus heav'n and earth in him, did joyful meet ;  
 Nature and grace their lovely charms unite.

His works now extent\*, happily display,  
 How well he understood the gospel way.  
 Th' attentive reader and judicious mind,  
 In ev'ry page may a rich treasure find.  
 These volumes elegant contain the scheme  
 Of gospel doctrine ; his beloved theme.  
 Christ is the theme, whose robe of righteousness,  
 He publish'd, as the saints adorning dress.--  
 To form just sentiments of this great man,  
 'Tis proper carefully his works we scan.  
 There we will find both law and gospel taught ;  
 The first to rouze, the last with bliss is fraught.  
 He study'd first the sinner's case to shew ;  
 And then presents the balsam to his view.

\* Alluding to that beautiful edition of his *Practical Works*, in two volumes folio, printed *annis* 1764, 1765.

From Sinai's mount he sounds a loud alarm ;  
 And next poor souls with gospel-tidings charm.  
 He could the fairs perplexities well trace,  
 And in all straits afford them great solace.  
 Souls exercis'd concerning sin or grace,  
 May in his works find what will fute their case.  
 There he propounds and solves each case he heard ;  
 To fairs a mighty casuist appear'd.  
 ' A skilful counsellor in each dark case ;  
 A hearty sympathizer in distress.  
 Was ready still at hand, without request,  
 To serve the sick, and succour the distress.  
 His doctrine ev'ry gloomy shade dispell'd ;  
 His exhortations more and more excell'd.  
 This ministerial grace to him was given,  
 To leave on many hearts a seal of heaven.'

Death ! thou devourer of the human race !  
 Must such a champion great to thee give place !  
 May't thee suffice some lesser light to quell,  
 Than strike the pillars of our Israel ?  
 Must *ERSKINE* too ! that man of great renown,  
 Be foil'd by thee, and to the dust brought down ?  
 Must such a light, that blaz'd so far abroad,  
 Be made to yield to thy superior nod !  
 Must such a Christian herald too give place,  
 So well acquainted both with law and grace ?  
 Divinely taught in all the truths of God,  
 And did with freedom publish them abroad ?  
 Yes, yes ! He must !—He's gone !—*Erskine's* no more !  
 Grim death hath snatch'd him to the distant shore !—  
 These hands, elated oft to heav'n in purity,  
 All silent in the tomb now stretch'd doth ly.—  
 Is't possible for our rude quill to tell,  
 How Scotland shook when this great pillar fell ?  
 ' Heav'n sure design'd by such a dreadful blow,  
 No personal, but public overthrow.  
 Lo ! now his death has hid the fulgent light,  
 And wrapt us in the shades of gloomy night !—

Is *ERSKINE* dead ! No, sure : the man of God still  
 Possesses heav'n, in glory still survives. . . [lives.

The blis and glory he proclaim'd around,  
Both now concentre to compose his crown.  
Immortaliz'd, he shines above the sky;  
Regal'd with heav'nly cheer must sumptously.  
The blessed Jesus in those regions high,  
He views, not veil'd; but most conspicuously.  
Eternal blessedness he reaps in store;  
With heav'nly pleasures cherish'd evermore;  
With endless wealth, and righteousness divine,  
A glorious crown, most brilliantly to shine,  
He now enjoys, with robes most pure and fine:  
Yea, God himself, with fulness all-complete,  
Compose that happiness to him most sweet.  
Delightful portion! from all harm secure,  
Refresh'd with rivers chrystaline and pure.  
Such soul-delights to him, shall ever last;  
These joys for which he did so strongly thirst.

AN ACROSTIC.

MUCH fam'd on earth, renoun'd for piety;  
A midst bright seraphs now sings chearfully.  
Sacred thine anthems yield much pleasure here:  
These songs of thine do truly charm the ear\*.  
Each line thou wrotst does admiration raise;  
Rouse up the soul to true seraphic praise.

Religiously thy life below was spent:  
Amazing pleasures now thy soul content.  
Long didst thou labour in the church below,  
Pointing out Christ, the Lamb who saves from wo,  
Heav'n's blessedness on sinners to bestow.

ERSKINE the great! whose pen spread far abroad,  
Redeeming love; the sole device of God.  
Substantial themes thy thoughts did much pursue;  
Kept pure the truth, espous'd but by a few.  
Integrity of heart, of soul serene;  
No friend to vice, no cloke to the profane:  
Employ'd thy talents to reclaim the vain.

\* Alluding to his poetical pieces.

## The CONCLUSION.

Is this the Man whom Heav'n design'd,  
With honours full to load?  
With what enliv'ned souls should we  
Adore and serve our God?

And if we would those blessings share,  
Which makes the saints rejoice;  
All vice abstain, all virtue love,  
And make this God our choice.

Let us for ever bless the name  
Of this exalted King,  
That any of the human tribe  
Heav'n's anthems high do sing.

GLASGOW, April }  
15th, 1765. }

T H E  
C O N T E N T S.

S E R M O N I.

The Sword of Justice awakened against God's Fellow, 25

ZECH. xiii. 7. *Awake, O Sword, against my Shepherd and against the man that is my fellow, saith the Lord of hosts.*

After a brief introduction, clear analization, and succin<sup>t</sup> explication of the words, the following general topics of discourse are treated of, *viz.*

1. The character of the person against whom the sword doth awake, enquired into, 29
2. The nature and quality of this sword opened up. 44
3. The manner how this sword did awake, and the import of it, 52
4. The special hand Jehovah had in calling this sword to awake against this glorious person evinced, 54
5. The reasons of the doctrine adduced, why the Lord of hosts ordered the sword of justice to awake against his Shepherd, 56
6. The application of the subject in fundry inferences, 64
  - (1.) The nature of the sacrament opened, 83
  - (2.) Who stand debarred from it, *ibid.*
  - (4.) Who are invited to it, 89
  - (4.) In what manner believers should come to it, 96

S E R M O N II.

The Rent Vail of the Temple; or, Access to the Holy of Holies by the death of Christ, 104

MAT. xxvii. 15. *And, behold the vail of the temple was rent in twain, from the top to the bottom.*

The words being analized and explained, and their proper signification being ascertained, the following general heads of method are illustrated, *viz.*

1. What that vail is that interposed between God and us enquired into, 108.
2. How the death of Christ hath rent that vail, 110
3. In what manner the vail is rent, 113
4. For what end the vail is rent, narrated, 114
5. Inferences deduced for application, 120

## S E R M O N III.

The best Match; or, the incomparable Marriage between the Creator and the creature, 145

ISA. liv. 5. *Thy Maker is thy Husband.*

The words being viewed in their connexion and scope, and wrapt up in a doctrinal proposition, the following general topics are illustrated, *viz.*

1. That there is a marriage-relation betwixt Christ and believers, proved, 146
2. The nature of this marriage opened up, 149
3. Reasons assigned why Christ comes under such a relation, 156
4. Application of the whole, in sundry uses, 157

## S E R M O N IV, V.

Christ the People's Covenant, 168

ISA. xlii. 6. *I will give thee for a covenant of the people.*

The connexion of the words being traced, viewed in their scope, divided, explained, and summed up in a compendious proposition, the following general heads of method are prosecuted, *viz.*

1. Some remarks offered concerning the covenant in general, 173
2. How Christ is the covenant, and in what respects he bears that name, pointed out, 178
3. For what benefit he is so; and thus shew that he is the covenant of the people, 183
4. By whose authority he is so; and here his divine ordination, and being given of God for that end, are spoken of, 191
5. Some reasons of the doctrine offered, why he is given to be a covenant, and why a covenant of the people, 199
6. Inferences are deduced for the application of the subject, 202

## S E R M O N VI.

The World's Verdict of Christ and his Followers; or, the truly devout ridiculed and reproached by the profane, 249

ISA. viii. 18. *Behold, I and the children whom the Lord hath given me, are for signs and wonders in Israel; from the Lord of Hosts, which dwelleth in mount Zion.*

After a copious introduction, in which the scope of the prophet, both in the preceding and subsequent context, is taken notice of, the proper sense of the words ascertained, an analization and explication essayed, and a doctrinal proposition laid down, the following general topics are handled, *viz.*

- |   |     |
|---|-----|
| 1. Some remarks offered for the explication of the text,  | 254 |
| 2. Some scripture passages adduced for the confirmation of the doctrine,                            | 257 |
| 3. Some marks of reproach enquired into, that used to be cast upon Christ and his followers,        | 263 |
| 4. The reasons assigned, why Christ and his followers are held for signs and for wonders in Israel, | 270 |
| 5. Inferences deduced for the application of the subject,   | 274 |

## S E R M O N VII.

The Vanity of Earthly Things, and Worldly Enjoyments, 290

ECC L. i. 2. *Vanity of vanities, saith the Preacher; vanity of vanities, all is vanity.*

After the Author had pointed out the sum of the discourse, given an account of the penman, an analytical explication of the words, and had observed a doctrinal proposition from them, the following topics of discourse are undertaken,

- |   |     |
|---|-----|
| 1. To consider what it is in the world that is so vain and empty, | 296 |
| 2. Enquire what is imported in its being vain, and vanity itself, | 301 |
| 3. Some arguments adduced to prove that all is vain and empty,    | 304 |
| 4. Some reasons assigned why it is so,                            | 306 |
| 5. The application of the subject in several uses,                | 308 |

## S E R M O N VIII,—XVI.

Self-conceit incident to a Multitude of Professors; or, the Imaginary pure Generation found not washed from their Pollution, 319

PROV. xxx. 12. *There is a generation that are pure in their own eyes, and yet is not washed from their filthiness.*

The words being briefly explained, produce three doctrinal propositions. The FIRST is, *That sin is a pollution and defilement.* From this observation, the following heads of method are proposed, viz.

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## S E R M O N XVII.

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ROM. xii. 2. *Be not conformed to this world.*

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# S E R M O N I. †

## The SWORD of JUSTICE awakened against GOD'S FELLOW.

Z E C H. xiii. 7.

*Awake, O sword, against my Shepherd, and against  
the man that is my Fellow, saith the Lord of hosts.*

**T**HIS text, Sirs, is a very wonderful one, as ever a poor mortal man preached upon; for in it there is a cloud, a black cloud, a cloud of divine wrath and vengeance, a bloody cloud, the cloud of Christ's bloody passion which we are to celebrate the memorials of this day; but, like the cloud that led Israel in the wilderness, though it had a black side towards Christ, yet it has a bright and light side towards all the Israel of God; for this cloud of blood distills in a sweet shower of blessings unto poor sinners: there is a light in this cloud wherein we may see *God, in Christ, reconciling the world to himself.*

This verse presents us with a clear prediction of the sufferings of Christ; and the disposition of his disciples thereupon; *Smite the Shepherd, and the sheep shall be scattered; and I will turn mine hand upon the little ones:* Which our Lord expressly applies to himself, and his disciples, Mat. xxvi. 31. Mark xiv. 27. So that we need not stand to enquire, of whom the

† This was an Action-fermon, preached immediately before the celebration of the Lord's supper at Dunfermline, July 3d. 1720.; and hath now undergone three impressions.

prophet here, or rather, of whom God here speaks; for, the words of our text are the words of God the Father, giving orders and commission to the sword of his justice, to awake against his Son, when he had undertaken to become our Surety. More particularly, in the words you may notice these three things.

1. A solemn *call* and *summons* given to God's vengeance, or vindictive justice, to rendezvous its forces, and march forth in battle array, in all circumstances of terror; *Awake, O sword.*

2. The *party* against whom this dreadful battle is proclaimed, this terrible sword is brandished; must it not be against sinners? nay, but the sinner's Surety: *against my Shepherd, and against the man that is my Fellow*: not against the sheep, but the Shepherd; not against a Shepherd simply, but against my Shepherd: not against mankind, but a man; not against a man simply, a mere man, but the Man that is *my Fellow*; *mine equal.*

3. By whose *orders*, or at whose *instance* this summons to the bloody battle is given; why, it is the *Lord of hosts* that says it: it is he that gives the commission, and orders the sword to be drawn.

Now, the *summons* is very awful, *Awake, O sword, against him*: if he will be a Surety, he must be a sacrifice; if he will be a sacrifice, he must be slain; for, *without shedding of blood, there is no remission.* It is not a charge to a rod to correct him, but to a sword to slay him; for, *Messiah, the Prince, must be cut off, though not for himself*, Dan. ix. 26. It is not the sword of war to which he gives this charge, that he may die in the bed of honour; but the sword of justice, that he may die as a criminal upon an ignominious tree. This sword must awake against him; it must not rest, cannot be quiet nor satisfied, till it be drunk in his heart's blood. It is not called upon to awake and *fright* him, but to awake and *smite* him. Not with a lazy, drowsy blow, but an awakened one; even a horrible, terrible blow.

The *party* against whom the sword is called to awake is very glorious; the description of him here is very magnificent; *Awake against my Shepherd, and against the man that is my Fellow*: described in his office, *my Shepherd*; in his person, *God-man, my Fellow*. Men thrust him through as a foolish shepherd, and God thrusts him through as the good Shepherd, as his own Shepherd, the Shepherd of his own flock, that he might purchase the flock of God with his own blood. As Mediator, he is God's Shepherd, who undertook to feed the flock, and to lay down his life for his sheep: and against *the man that is my Fellow*; or, *the man my Fellow*; the man who is God as well as man, who *thought it no robbery to be equal with God*.

Finally, The Party giving these orders to incensed justice to awake against him is as wonderful; *the Lord of hosts*; that Jehovah that has all the hosts of heaven, earth, and hell at his call: the Lord of hosts; that is, Jehovah, Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, one God, essentially considered, giving a commission to infinite justice to awake against the second Person of the Godhead, considered as Surety and Mediator, God-man.

Now, from the words thus shortly opened, we might observe many doctrines, but I confine myself to this one, namely;

OBSER. *That by special orders from Jehovah, the great God of hosts, the man Christ, his Shepherd and Fellow, did fall a sacrifice to the awakened sword of infinite justice. Awake, O sword.*

When nothing among the creatures could be found to deliver the soul of the sinner, from going down to the pit, God himself *found a ransom*; he found an atonement, Job xxxiii. 24. by setting forth Christ to be the *propitiation, through faith in his blood, to declare his righteousness,—that he might be just, and the justifier of him that believeth in Jesus*, Rom. iii. 25, 26. We sinful creatures, both ministers and people, should all have fallen a sacrifice to the sword of God's wrath and vengeance for ever, because of our sins: but behold

he finds a ransom; he sets forth Christ to be the propitiation. Whenever he is set forth, the sword falls upon him, and awakes against him who was the Shepherd, that the sheep might escape.

I might here premise many useful particulars presupposed in this doctrine, *namely*, That it supposes a *covenant of works broken*, and so justice enraged against men: *A covenant of redemption made*; a counsel of peace between Jehovah and Christ, for man's relief: and, which I reckon much the same with the former, a *covenant of grace established in Christ*; he engaging to fulfil the condition of the covenant of works, which we had broken; to obey the law, which we had transgressed; to satisfy the justice, which we had offended; to bear the wrath, which we had incurred; whereupon the sword of the Lord awakes against him, and all the squadrons of enraged fury march forth against him, with infinite horror and terror: *Awake, O sword, against my Shepherd.*—But omitting all that might be supposed, and presupposed to this doctrine, I shall endeavour to confine myself as closely as possible to the several parts of the text and doctrine, by prosecuting it in the following method; *namely*,

- I. To enquire into the *character* of the person against whom this sword does awake.
- II. The *nature* and *quality* of this sword that did awake against him.
- III. *How* this sword did awake against him; by shewing what may be *imported* in this expression, *Awake, O sword.*
- IV. What *special hand* the Lord *Jehovah*, the Lord of hosts, had in ordering or calling of this sword to awake against this glorious person.
- V. The *reasons* of the doctrine, why the Lord of hosts ordered the sword of justice to awake against his Shepherd, and the man that is his Fellow.
- VI. Draw some *inferences* for the application of the whole, in a suitableness to the work of the day.

I. Who is this that the sword of justice must awake against? The *character* of the person is very great and glorious, in the words of our text, *My Shepherd, the man that is my Fellow*; that is, in short, God-man Mediator; for, being here described in his person and office, I shall touch a little at both in the following order.

1. His divine nature, as God's Fellow. 2. His human nature, the *man* that is my Fellow. 3. The conjunction of both these in one person, *The man that is my Fellow*. 4. His mediatorial office, *my Shepherd*.

*Ist*, Consider this account we have of his divine nature; MY FELLOW, *saith the Lord of hosts*. Let Arians and Socinians blaspheme this wonderful person, here is an article of our creed, that Christ is God's Fellow, God's equal, *Who being in the form of God, thought it no robbery to be equal with God*: and therefore he himself says, John x. 30. *I and my Father are one*. But here consider, 1. Wherein he is God's Fellow: and, 2. Why, as our Redeemer, it behoved him to be God's Fellow.

1. Wherein, or in what *respect* is he God's Fellow? I answer, He is God's Fellow, not as he is Mediator, taking upon him the *form of a servant*, and becoming the *Father's servant* in the work of our redemption; but he is God's Fellow in these six respects.

(1.) He is God's Fellow in point of *nature* and *essence*; Christ is God essentially, as well as the Father, and the Holy Ghost, though personally distinct from both; for, neither the Father nor the Holy Ghost were incarnate, or took on our nature, but Christ the second person of the glorious Trinity: who, though personally distinct, yet is essentially one with the Father and Spirit, John i. 1. *In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the word was God*: And it is sure there is but one God, Deut. vi. 4. *Hear, O Israel, the Lord our God is ONE Lord, one JEHOVAH*. 1 Cor. viii 4. In Christ our Redeemer *dwells all the fulness of the Godhead bodily*, Col. ii. 9. *There are three that*

that bear record in heaven, the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghost, and these three are one, 1 John v. 7. and in the penult verse of that chapter, *We know that the Son of God is come, and has given us an understanding to know him that is true; and we are in him that is true, even in his Son Jesus Christ: this is the true God, and eternal life.*

(2.) He is God's Fellow in point of *property*; even in all his essential properties, which is much the same with the former. Is God omnipotent? so is Christ; he is the *wonderful counsellor, the mighty God*. Is God omnipresent? so is Christ; *Lo I am with you always, to the end of the world*. Is God omniscient? so is Christ; *Thou that knowest all things, knowest that I love thee*, says Peter. Is God unchangeable? so is Christ; *The same yesterday, to-day, and for ever*. Is God eternal? so is Christ; *Before Abraham was, I am*: He is the *King eternal, immortal, the only wise God*. He is God's Fellow in all these respects.

(3.) He is God's Fellow in point of *will* and *consent*; what the Father wills, Christ wills: hence it was *his meet and drink to do his Father's will*, who sent him; *I delight to do thy will, O my God*. It is true, as man, he had a will distinct from his will as God, and so diverse from the Father's will; though yet this did act still in subordination to the will of God; hence when the bitter cup is put to his mouth, he prays, *O my Father, if it be thy will let this cup pass from me: nevertheless not my will, but thine be done*: yet, as God, his will is one, and the same with the Father's will.

(4.) He is God's Fellow in point of *work*; John v. 17. *My Father worketh hitherto, and I work*. Christ's works are not only like unto the Father's, but the same in substance, as flowing from one and the same essence and power; for, *What things soever the Father doth, these also doth the Son likewise*, John v. 19. He acts not as an instrument subordinate; but, as there is an unity in the work, so also in the manner of it; by the same power, wisdom, liberty, and authority; only

only the order of operation being observed: and we find all the works proper to God, ascribed to Christ; as creation, *All things were made by him*: Preservation, *Upholding all things by the word of his power*: Redemption; the donation of the Spirit; raising himself from the dead; the institution of ordinances and offices in his church; and the judging the world: in all these he is God's Fellow.

(5.) He is God's Fellow in point of *honour* and *worship*: all men are to *honour the Son, even as they honour the Father*; they are to believe in him, *Ye believe in God, believe also in me*, John xiv. 1.; they are to hope and trust in him, *Kiss the Son, lest he be angry, and ye perish from the way. If once his wrath begin to burn, blessed are all they that trust in him.*

(6.) He is God's Fellow in point of *happiness* and *felicity*, Rom. ix. 5. *Of whom, concerning the flesh, Christ came, who is over all, God blessed for ever, Amen.* As he was blessed and happy from all eternity in his Father's bosom, being *ever by him, and brought up with him, and being daily his delight; rejoicing always before him; and rejoicing in the habitable parts of the earth, and his delights with the sons of men*, Prov. viii. 30, 31.: So he ever was, and will be, blessed with him. It is true, there was a time when the Son of God was humbled; when this God, blessed for ever, became a curse for us; but notwithstanding, his essential glory was never diminished; as God, he was as happy and blessed on the cross, and in the grave, as ever he was.—Well, thus, *as God*, is he every way God's Fellow. O! how fearfully was he humbled! God's Fellow, and yet a babe, a servant, a sufferer, a sacrifice to the awakened sword of justice. The Governor of all becomes a subject: should an emperor become a fly, it would not be such a humiliation. O! how sadly was the world mistaken about Christ, that took him to be a base fellow, a pitiful fellow! but little did they know that he was God's Fellow. O! how glorious is the love of Christ to sinners! God's Fellow  
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receiving the stroke of the sword of divine justice in their room.

2. Why he behoved to be God's Fellow that was our Redeemer? It was necessary that our Redeemer should be God's Fellow;

(1.) In regard of *merit*: his obedience to the death could not be sufficient to satisfy the law and the Law-giver; to be a full ransom, and a full price of redemption, if it had not been truly and properly meritorious; and this it could not be, if he had not been God's equal, as well as man. Our sins were an infinite evil, and God's justice required infinite satisfaction: now, there could be no satisfaction, of infinite value; but by a person of infinite value; and there is no such person, but God: and therefore our Redeemer must be God's equal, otherwise he could not give the satisfaction required.

(2.) In regard of *power*: our Redeemer must be such an one as could go through all the difficulties that lay in the way of redemption, triumphing over all opposition from God, men, and devils, from heaven, earth, and hell. The weakest of these were too strong for human nature; therefore that our Redeemer might overcome death, bind the strong man, break down the gates of hell, cut in sunder the bar of sin, he must be God as well as man, even God's equal, God's fellow. And that he might be able for the application, as well as the impetration of man's redemption, not only able to *save to the uttermost, all them that come to God through him*, but able to draw poor stubborn souls to himself, by his own power, and make them willing.

(3.) Our Redeemer must be God's Fellow in regard of the *dignity of the work*: his honour and dignity, in being a Redeemer and Mediator between God and men, was too great for any creature, supposing any creature had been able for it; this crown of glory was not fitting for any mere creature's head. An office of dignity, on an unworthy person, is most unsuitable; this dignity was so great, that even Christ himself, though

though God's equal, might not take it upon him, till he was called to it of God, Heb. v. 4, 5.

(4.) Our Redeemer must be God's Fellow, in regard of the *covenant of grace*, which was the ground-work and foundation of all: since our Redeemer was to make a covenant with God for us, it was necessary that he should be with God at the making of it, and know the depths of God's counsel in it, and perfectly know for whom he was to satisfy, and upon what condition. Now, this covenant being as antient as eternity; and seeing God should have our Redeemer by him, to conclude the covenant and bargain with him, who of all the creatures were capable of this? who, of all the creatures *have known the mind of the Lord, and being his counsellor have taught him?* God might have said to all the creatures, as to Job, in another case, Job xxxviii. 4. *Where wast thou when I laid the foundations of the earth? Where were you when the plot of redemption was laid? when the names of my redeemed ones were put in the book of life? But our Redeemer was then by him,* Prov. viii. 30. He becomes our everlasting Father; begetting us, with the Father, in the womb of eternal election.

(5.) Our Redeemer must be God's Fellow in regard of the *place* he was to have in the covenant, with *respect to God*: who among all mere creatures was fit to have all power in heaven and in earth committed to him? Power to bequeath such blessings as peace, pardon, reconciliation, justification, and eternal life; power by his blood to confirm and establish all the promises of the covenant? Christ Jesus did, *through the eternal Spirit*, (that is, his Godhead,) *offer up himself, without spot to God*; and then the apostle infers, *for this cause, he is the Mediator of the new testament*: yea, Christ was to be Surety of this testament; Surety *for God to us*; to make out all the blessings and promises of the covenant to us; and Surety *for us to God*, to satisfy law and justice in our room; what creature was able to do this? or if any creature should

be supposed to be able, was it fit that God should put such a trust in any creature? No.

(6.) Our Redeemer must be God's Fellow in regard of the *place* he was to have with *respect to us*: our Redeemer must be the object of our faith and love; what creature in heaven, or in earth, could be a sufficient prop and foundation for our faith? Had any mere creature undertaken to be our Redeemer, we could never fully have depended upon him, but would always been afraid he had miscarried: therefore it was requisite to quiet our fears, that our Redeemer should be God's Fellow; see Isa. xxxv. 3. *He is God, therefore fear not*: our hearts could never have been at full rest otherwise. I remember, when Israel were going through the wilderness, they were to meet with much opposition; God promises to send an *angel with them*; it is said, *all the people mourned for these evil tidings*, that God himself would not go up; yea, Moses himself was fearful of the mismanagement of a mere angel; therefore says Moses, *If thou go not with us, carry us not up hence*, Exod. xxxiii. 2, 3, 4, 15. And again, ver. 12. *Thou hast not let me know whom thou wilt send*. They thought his sending of an angel, was as good as his sending none at all. Thus, you see, people's fears would never be quieted by the government of an angel, though one of them was able to destroy a whole host in one night: even so, our hearts could never be at rest, though God sent an angel for our deliverance! therefore God sent his own Son, his Fellow, that he might fully trust him, and depend upon him; that we might place all our satisfaction in him, as a full portion, so as to seek no further.—Thus you see, he is God's Fellow; and why, as our Redeemer, he behaved to be so.

2dly, Consider the account we have of his *human nature*, *The MAN that is my Fellow*. Here I would shew you, 1. What *kind* of a man Christ became. 2. Why our Redeemer behaved *to be a man*.

1. What *kind* of a man he became? Why, *The Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us*: Great is  
the

*the mystery of godliness, God manifested in the flesh : He took not on him the nature of angels, but the seed of Abraham. More particularly,*

(1.) He was a *poor* man ; a man very poor and mean in outward respects : poor in his birth ; he was not born of a queen, nor laid in a palace ; but born of a poor virgin, and laid in a manger : He was poor in his life ; several *people ministred to him of their substance* : yea, *The foxes had holes, and the birds of the air had nests, but the son of man had not where to lay his head. Though he was rich, yet for our sakes he became poor.* Let not poor people quarrel at their lot ; Christ, God's equal, was a poor man.

(2.) He was a *distressed* man ; *A man of sorrows, and acquainted with griefs* : a man of the same infirmities with us, except sinful ones : *In all things it behoved him to be like unto his brethren ; that he might be a merciful and faithful High-priest, Heb. ii. 17. ; and, He was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin, Heb. iii. 15.* He was hungry, thirsty, weary, tempted, afflicted, and every way distressed. Let no distressed person think it strange that they are so, since God's Fellow was a distressed man.

(3.) He was a *true* man ; he had a true body and a reasonable soul : his body was nailed to the tree ; they pierced his hands and his feet : his soul was exceeding sorrowful, even unto death. As man he went through all the ages of men ; first, he was conceived ; then, he was a babe ; next, a youth ; and at last, came to the perfect stature of a man. But,

(4.) He was a *good* man, an holy man ; immaculate was the conception of the holy child Jesus : we come defiled into the world, but Christ brought no sin into the world with him ; and all the devils could not make him sin ; for, *The prince of this world could find nothing in him, either of original or actual sin : He was made sin for us, who knew no sin ; but was holy, harmless, undefiled, and seperate from sinners.* Never was there such an holy man upon earth : see Heb. v. 7. *He was heard, in that he feared ; or, he*

was heard for his piety and holiness. Since Adam fell, never was there a man but this, that was heard and accepted of God for his own piety and holiness.

(5.) He was a *wise* man the wisest man that ever was: Solomon was very wise, but behold, a wiser than Solomon is here. He answered the learned doctors, to their amazement, when he was twelve years old: Yea, all that heard him were astonished at his understanding and answers, Luke ii. 47. And sometimes asked questions to which no man was able to answer a word, nor durst ask him any *more questions*, Mat. xxii. 46. and no wonder, for he was the *power of God*, and the *wisdom of God*; and in him are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge: and hence he revealed the glorious truths that were before concealed. He was a wise man indeed. Yet,

(6.) He was a *mortal* man as we are, and he actually died as we must; he was put to a painful and shameful death; and his cursed death, which yet we may call his blessed death, we are to commemorate this day. This man fell a sacrifice to the awakened sword of infinite justice; the Shepherd was smitten and slain, for he was a mortal man; 'if it be lawful to call him a man,' as Josephus, a Jew, said. For,

In a word, he is a *wonderful* man; to all eternity his name shall be called wonderful, Isa. ix. 6. This wonderful man is our peace-maker with God; *This man shall be the peace when the Assyrian cometh into our land*. This wonderful man is our only covert from the furious storm of divine wrath; *A man shall be an hiding-place from the storm, and a covert from the tempest*. But,

2. Why must our Redeemer be a man? Why, for the following reasons.

(1.) He must be a man in regard of the *transaction* between the Father and the Son. Not only was God's truth engaged in the promise, that the seed of the woman should be sent; that to us a child should be born, to us a Son given, and that a virgin should bring forth a son, and call his name Immanuel, God with us, God

*in our nature*; and not only was God, in his infinite wisdom, resolved, in the weakness of our nature, to perfect his own strength, and get the greater glory; and that as *by one man's disobedience, many were made sinners*; so *by the obedience of one, many should be made righteous*; but also, it being agreed between the Father and the Son, in the covenant of redemption, or grace, that the Son should offer up a sacrifice for us; it was also agreed, that there must be *somewhat to offer*, Heb. viii. 3. Somewhat of greater value than all the world; for, nothing could be a sufficient sacrifice for the expiation of sin. If Christ had not been man, he could have had nothing to offer up as a sacrifice to God: God himself provided a sacrifice, as he did a ram in the room of Isaac: *Sacrifice and offering thou wouldst not; a body hast thou prepared me*. This body, this sacrifice, was provided in the counsel of peace; and being thus provided, Christ comes cheerfully to offer it, *Lo, I come; I delight to do thy will, O my God*.

(2.) He must be a man in regard of *us*; he would not have redeemed us, if according to the law, the right of redemption had not belonged to him as our kinsman, Lev. xxv. 25.; and being man, he is fit to communicate to us the things of God in such a way, as we are capable to receive. If God should appear to us immediately, in his terrible glory, we would be afraid of him, as Israel were, and run away from him; and hide ourselves, as Adam did: yea, thus we have a merciful High-priest, that is touched with the feeling of our infirmities. As man he had experience of our afflictions: are we sorrowful? so was he; *Sorrowful, even unto death*: are we grieved? he was *acquainted with grief*: are we in poverty? so was he: are we smitten? so was he: are we deserted? so was he: having a natural likeness to us, being bone of our bone, and flesh of our flesh.

(3.) He must be a man in regard of *justice*: justice required that the same nature that sinned should be punished for sin, and make satisfaction for sin. God

said, *The soul that sinneth shall die*: now, die we must, either in our own persons, or in our Surety, in our own nature. If any angel had fulfilled the law, what had that been to us? if any angel had suffered God's wrath, what had that been to us, to man? Though God allowed the change, or commutation of persons, yet not the commutation of natures; the same nature that sinned must suffer.

(4.) He must be a man in respect of the *devil*; the devil conquered man, and man must conquer the devil: Satan must be foiled by the same nature that was foiled by him; *The seed of the woman must bruise the head of the serpent. For this cause, therefore, the Son of God was manifested in our flesh, that he might destroy the works of the devil.*

(5.) He must be man in regard of *sin*, which must be cured by the contrary antidote. Our sin was pride, Gen. iii. 5.: being but men we desired to be gods; therefore the cure is by humility, wherefore God becomes man. Man broke the law, and man must keep the law: by our sin we transgressed the boundaries of God's law; Christ, therefore, is *made of a woman, made under the law*. Sin defaced the glory of God, therefore he who is the *brightness of the Father's glory, and the express image of his person*, becomes of no reputation; and comes in the form of a servant. Sin is a Deicide, striking at the being of God, seeking his life; therefore he that had a life equal with God's, laid down his life, for the satisfaction of this wrong. *Awake, O sword, against the man that is my Fellow.*

(6.) He must be a man in regard of *passability* or sufferings; *Without suffering, or shading of blood, there was no remission*. He that will save us then, must die for us, and shed his blood for us; which he could not do, had he been merely God; *For God is a Spirit*. He becomes man, that he may be in case to enter the lists with justice: justice could not get at him with one stroak; but as soon as he was man, then, *Awake, O sword, against the man that is my Fellow, saith the Lord of hosts*. But, why could not the sword of justice a-  
wake

wake against him till he was man? Why, as God, sin could not get hold of him; and so justice could not get a hit of him for sin: the law could not challenge him; the curse could not reach him: but whenever he becomes man, our Surety, then they all flee about him; and compass him about like bulls of Bashan. As he becomes man for us, he becomes sin for us; and then he lay open to the curse; and justice took him by the throat; the sword awaked. When Christ saw the dreadful sword of wrath, that was to be thrust through his heart, indeed it put the man to his knees, *Father, let this cup pass from me*; the human nature trembled, and swate great drops of blood, in his proleptic agony: However, the man was God as well as man; and therefore he wrestled through. This might lead me,

3dly, To shew you the need of his being both *God* and *man* in *one person*: *The man, God's Fellow*. The cause of God, and the cause of man is referred to Christ; therefore he partakes of both natures, that he may be faithful to God, and merciful to man: a fit Mediator between God and man, to lay his hand upon both parties, while he partakes of both natures.—Our Redeemer must be both subject to the law, and fulfil the law meritoriously: now, if he had not been man, he could not be subject to the law; and if he had not been God, he could not have merited by fulfilling the law; but now, being God-man, by his obedience, he hath *magnified the law, and made it honourable*.—Our Redeemer was to give his soul an offering for sin: now, if he had not been man, he could not have had a soul to offer; if he had not been God, his soul could not have upheld itself; but must have died when his soul was exceeding sorrowful even unto death: but now, his divine nature did support his human body, and his human soul, under the weight of that burden which would have crushed a world of men and angels.—Our Redeemer must both suffer and satisfy: now, if he had not been man, he could not have suffered; and if he had not been God,

God, he could not have given satisfaction by his sufferings: but, being God-man, his sufferings are dignified with infinite value and virtue.—Our Redeemer must both die for us, and conquer death: now, if he had not been man, he could not have died; and therefore he took on our nature, that he might *taste death for every man*: if he had not been God, he could not have destroyed death, conquered death; but now, *he is declared to be the Son of God with power, by his resurrection from the dead*. There is the man that is God's Fellow. But now,

4thly, Consider the *account* we have of his mediatory office, *My Shepherd*. Here you may a little view,

1. How he comes to be called a *Shepherd*. And,
2. How the Lord of hosts comes to call him *his Shepherd*; *My Shepherd*.

1. Then, how he is called a *Shepherd*. This will appear by noticing a few scriptures wherein he is so designed. He is called the *shepherd of Israel*, Psa. lxxx. 1. He is called the *shepherd of souls*, 1 Pet. ii. 25. *You were like sheep gone astray, but you are returned to the shepherd and bishop of your souls*. He is called the *good shepherd*, John x. 11. *I am the good shepherd*. O but it sets him well to commend himself! *I am the good shepherd; the good shepherd gives his life for his sheep*. He is called the *great shepherd*, Heb. xiii. 20. *Now, the God of peace, that brought again from the dead, that great shepherd of the sheep, by the blood of the everlasting covenant, make you perfect*, etc. He is called the *chief shepherd*, 1 Pet. v. 4. *When the chief shepherd shall appear, ye shall receive a crown of glory that fadeth not away*. He has all the qualities of a good and great shepherd. Does a shepherd take care to *provide* for his flock and feed them? so does Christ; *The Lord is my shepherd, I shall not want. He feeds his flock like a shepherd*, Isa. xl. 11. He feeds them with the bread of life. Does a shepherd *water* his flock? so does Christ; he gives them not only meat for their nourishment, but drink for the refreshment of his weary flock, even the water of life, that flows from below  
the

the throne, through the conduit of the gospel; by which I understand the Spirit, that *well of water springing up to everlasting life*; and the influences of his grace, by which he strengthens, purifies, and comforts his people.——Does a shepherd lead his flock to convenient pastures? so does Christ; *Give ear, O Shepherd of Israel, thou that leadest Joseph like a flock. He leads them to green pastures, and beside the still waters of Gospel-ordinances and promises*: and these pastures are sweeter to them *than honey or the honey-comb*.——Does the shepherd *heal* his distressed flock? so does Christ; his name is *Jehovah-Rophi, I am the Lord that healeth thee*. Is there any here that are poor diseased sheep, plagued with atheism, unbelief, enmity, and pride? plagued with a backsliding heart? what think you of that shepherd that says, *I will heal your backslidings, and love you freely*.——Does the shepherd *seek out* the lost sheep till he find it? so does Christ; *He came to seek and to save that which was lost*.——Does the shepherd take *special care* of the poor tender sheep, that is so far behind that it can hardly follow the flock? so does Christ; *He gathers the lambs in his arms, carries them in his bosom, and gently leads those that are with young*.——Does the shepherd prevent the *straying* of the sheep, and bring back such as go astray? so does Christ; he prevents their total apostacy, according to his covenant, Jer. xxxii. 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*. Hence comes it, that his sheep never go back into perdition, Psal. xxxvii. 24. *Though he fall, he shall not utterly be cast down; for the Lord upholds him with his hand*. Hence comes their recoveries after falls, because this shepherd gathers and brings back his straying sheep. See a sweet scripture to this purpose, Ezek. xxxiv. 11, 12, 13, 16, 23. compared particularly with vers. 16. As this may be a sweet word to poor sheep, that have nothing, and see they have nothing; no good, no grace, no faith, no love, no repentance, no good

qualifications of their own, nothing to recommend them to God, but their want and necessity; and to the weak sheep, that finds he can do nothing, he cannot pray, cannot believe, cannot mourn, cannot communicate, and therefore sees an absolute need of Christ to be their righteousness and strength: so it may be an awakening word to the fat and strong sheep; these that are fat and full in themselves, and think they are increased with goods, and stand in need of nothing; they have a good heart to God; they are not so ill, they think, as some persons: and those that are strong, they think they can pray, and hear, and believe, and communicate well enough; what should hinder them? whereas the poor and weak will be fed with mercy; the fat and the strong, will be fed with judgment. Let the poor weak sheep, though sensible of great strayings, yet conceive hope; this Shepherd seeks that which was lost, and brings again that which was driven away. Was you driven away with a cheek-wind; driven away by the devil; driven away from your Shepherd by temptation and powerful corruption? Why, yet he brings again that which was driven away.—Does a shepherd *defend* his flock from troubles, and such as would make a prey of them? so does Christ; when grievous wolves, whether in church or state, would destroy the poor sheep, whether in their persons or principles; yet *upon all the glory there shall be a defence*: and *no weapon formed against them shall prosper*: for, *There is no enchantment against Jacob, nor divination against Israel*.—Does a shepherd *know* all the sheep of his flock, by his own mark upon them? so does Christ; *The foundation of God standeth sure, having this seal, the Lord knoweth them that are his*. As his sheep hear and know his voice from the voice of a stranger, so he knows them, and calls his own sheep by name, John x. 3. But,

2. How does the Lord of hosts come to call him HIS Shepherd? *Awake, O sword, against MY Shepherd*. Why, he is God the Father's Shepherd in several respects; which I touch at only in a word.

(1.) He

(1.) He is God's Shepherd, because God *made* him so; he has the Father's commission for this effect, John vi. 27. *Him hath God the Father sealed.* Christ was appointed and authorized; he was elected for this effect; *Behold, my servant, whom I uphold; mine elect, in whom my soul delighteth.* He transacted with him for this effect; *I have made a covenant with my chosen.* He formally called him to this employment, and set him up to be a Shepherd, Ezek. xxxiv. 23. *I will set up one Shepherd over them, and he shall feed them; he shall be their Shepherd.* He qualified him for this work, by a supereminent unction; *I have put my Spirit upon him, and he shall bring forth judgment to the Gentiles.*

(2.) He is God's Shepherd, because God *gave him the sheep*, John xvii. 6. *Thine they were, and thou gavest them me:* they were thine by election, and thou gavest them me, to be redeemed by me. This donation of the sheep to Christ is begun in election, and accomplished in effectual vocation; *All that the Father hath given me, shall come to me.*

3. He is God's Shepherd, because God *recommends all his sheep to his special care*, John vi. 39. *This is the Father's will, which has sent me, that of all which he has given me, I should lose nothing.* God has given him the *heathen for his inheritance, and the uttermost ends of the earth for his possession.* All whom he chose to be the objects of his special love, he lodges as a trust in the hands of Christ: he gave him the charge of the sheep, and his instructions are, not only to lose none, no not the least of them, the weakest of them; but to lose nothing: and as he will lose none, no person; so he will lose nothing, no part of the person; neither soul nor body.

(4.) He is God's Shepherd; Why? God *appointed* him to lay down his life for his sheep, John x. 18. *I lay down my life for my sheep; I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it up again: this commandment have I received of my Father.* Christ suffered death, not only voluntarily, but in a way of subjection to his Father, that so the merit of his death

might be every way full and acceptable to the Father. And so again,

(5.) He is God's Shepherd, because God *approves* of his undertaking and work, as his Shepherd, and loves him, for this very reason, John x. 17. He approves of his doing and dying: his soul is delighted in this Shepherd; *Mine elect in whom my soul delighteth*. He openly declares his affection in him; *This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased*. The Lord is well pleased for his righteousness sake.

(6.) In a word, he is God's Shepherd, because God the Father and Christ are *equally concerned in keeping the sheep*, John x. 27,—30. The Father does so intrust Christ with the sheep, as yet he casts not off the care of them; they are in the Father's hands as well as Christ's: *He and his Father are one*; though personally distinct, yet essentially one. The man that is God's Fellow, in this has fellowship with the Father, that the Father's sheep are his sheep; and his sheep are the Father's sheep: and they are equally concerned and engaged in keeping the sheep; only Christ, as Mediator, is engaged for them as the Father's servant and commissioner; *my Shepherd*.—Now, thus much concerning the character of the person whom the sword of the Lord of hosts must awake against: and, O if we had a view, by a saving faith, of this glorious one, God's Shepherd, the man that is his Fellow, God-man Mediator, we could say no less than that *he is white and ruddy, the chief among ten thousands*. The white and red of his infinitely fair face would charm and allure us. Now,

II. The *second* thing, what for a *sword* must awake against this man? Why, in general, it is the sword of God's awful justice; which is metaphorically called a *sword*, because of its terrible, piercing, wounding, killing nature. Now, the strokes of this sword are either mediate or immediate. 1. *Mediate*, by the hands of men; particularly the sword of the civil magistrate: Or, 2. *Immediate*, by the hands of God himself, without the intervention of such outward means.

means. Now, the sword of justice, that awaked against Christ, and smote the Shepherd, is to be considered in both these respects; for his suffering, as our Surety, by the stroke of justice's sword, was both external upon his body, and internal upon his soul.

(1.) There was his external sufferings in his body: and herein justice did strike more mediately by the hand of man, and especially in his severest bodily sufferings; justice did employ and make use of the sword of the civil magistrate. Magistrates have the sword of civil power and authority put into their hands, and they ought not to bear the sword in vain: they are a power which God has ordained, and armed with the sword for the punishment of malefactors; though this be the right use of the magistrate's sword, yet sometimes the magistrate makes unjust use of it; as in this case, when the civil government, Herod, Pontius Pilate, with the Gentiles, and the people of Israel, were gathered together against the holy child Jesus, Acts iv. 27. But whatever injustice was therein, on man's part, yet, on God's part, impartial justice did therein act, while it did thereby bring about the death and sufferings of the Surety, which the hand and counsel of God determined before to be done, Acts iv. 26.

(2.) There were his internal sufferings in his soul; and herein justice did strike more immediately; for, *it pleased the Lord to bruise him, and to make his soul an offering for sin*, Isa. liii. 10. Thus the sword of justice was such as pierced both his soul and body. This two-edged sword was edged with the violence of earth, and with the fury of heaven; it was edged with the curse of the law, and with the wrath of God. But more particularly, what for a sword is this? O rouze up your ears and hearts to hear and consider what for a sword it was that awaked against the man that is God's Fellow!

1. It is a *broad sword*; so broad that it covers all mankind, and hangs over all Christless finners, who would all have fallen a sacrifice to it, unless Christ had  
come

come between them and it. When this sword did awake against Christ, he found it as broad as the curse denounced against mankind, upon the back of our fall in Adam, which you may read, that you may the better understand what the man that is God's Fellow underwent, when he substitute himself in our room, and undertook to suffer the punishment due for our sins, the curse pronounced against Adam, and in him against all his posterity, and which, in all the parts of it, lighted upon Christ; you read of it generally, Gen. ii. 17. *In the day thou eatest, thou shalt surely die; or, dying, thou shalt die;* and more particularly, Gen. iii. 17, 18, 19. *Cursed is the ground for thy sake, in sorrow shalt thou eat of it all the days of thy life; thorns also and thistles shall it bring forth to thee, and thou shalt eat the herb of the field. In the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread, till thou return unto the ground, for out of it wast thou taken: for dust thou art, and unto dust shalt thou return.* Where you see the curse has three parts. 1. The frailties and infirmities that human nature was subject to after the fall. 2. The calamities incident to man's life; *Thou shalt eat thy meat with the sweat of thy brows: thorns and thistles shall the ground bring forth.* 3. Death; *dust thou art, and to dust thou shalt return:* which has in it the death of the soul as well as the body. Here is an abridgment of all the curses of the Bible; and this broad sword must awake against the man that is God's Fellow, and our Surety, for this curse in all its parts seized upon him.

(1.) The first was the *frailties and infirmities* of human nature, a part of the curse? this seized upon Christ at his incarnation; for his body was of the dust like ours, subject to the like infirmities with ours; he took not on him our nature in its prime and glory, but after broken and shattered with the fall, Rom. viii. 3. *He came in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin condemned sin in the flesh.*

(2.) As to the *calamities and miseries* that attended man's life, this part of the curse seized on him also; he eat his bread with the sweat of his brows, when

when he followed the calling of an handicraftsman; and after he entered into his public ministry, he travelled from place to place, watched whole nights in prayer; and thus might be said truly to eat his bread with the sweat of his brows. As for other calamities never one met with more; the world denied him a lodging; the fig-tree denied him figs; he was blasphemed by his enemies, betrayed by one of his disciples, and forsaken by them all.

(3.) As for the *death* threatened in the curse; why *dying*, he *died* indeed; for the sword did run through his body and soul at once, when *he endured the curse, and despised the shame*: his body was sore tortured, and his soul was *sore amazed, and very heavy*, Mark xiv. 33. His bodily sufferings were extremely great, as you may see from the evangelists; and yet as nothing in comparison of his soul-sufferings, while he endured the wrath of God immediately upon his soul.—Here was a broad sword indeed, as broad and extensive as all the curses of the law, all the wrath that the elect deserved for their sin; for God designed not to pass one of their sins, without a satisfaction made to justice, but to sue the cautioner for them all: O but he needed a broad back that could bear the shock of such a broad sword! Well, so he had; for he was God as well as man; *Awake, O sword against the man, My Fellow.*

2. It is a *long* sword: if we may so call it, infinite in length from the point to the hilt of the sword: it is as long as eternity; and this makes the punishment of the damned eternal, because the sword of divine wrath, that pierces them, is so long, that it never can reach to the hilt, in such finite worms as they are. The duration of the wrath and the curse is eternal; because the sinner, being a mere creature, cannot at one shock meet with the infinite wrath of God, and satisfy justice at once; therefore God supports the poor damned creature for ever under wrath; because it cannot, being finite, satisfy infinite justice: but our Shepherd, being God-man, the man God's Fellow; and therefore being of infinite worth and value,

value, of infinite strength and power, was able to satisfy justice, and bear all at once, that which the elect could never have borne. Yet he met with the essentials of that which sin deserves, *viz.* death and the curse; the hiding of his Father's face, and the suspending and keeping back of that consolation, which, by virtue of the personal union, flowed from the Godhead to the manhood; and also, had the actual sense and feeling of the wrath of God; the awakened sword of the justice of God actually smiting him: so that, though men wondered how he could be dead so soon, not knowing what strokes of infinite justice he met with; yet these strokes lighting upon the like of him, the man God's Fellow, was equivalent to the eternal punishments and torments of the damned.

3. It is a *bloody* and *insatiable* sword: this sword of justice was not satisfied with the blood of Sodom and Gomorrah; it was not satisfied with the blood of the old world; it was not satisfied with the blood of bulls, goats, and all the legal sacrifices of old; yea, the blood of the whole creation cannot give it satisfaction, though it were bathed therein; without the shedding of more blood, better blood, there is no remission, no satisfaction to justice, no real satisfaction with God; no salvation of the sinner; therefore, *Awake, O sword, against the man that is my Fellow*: till it be drunk with the blood of this man, it never gets a satisfying draught of blood. Well then, says this man, *Lo, I come*; let justice take a full draught of my blood: well, *Awake, O sword*; let the blood of this man, my Fellow, be shed; shed at his circumcision, shed in the Garden, shed in his being crowned with thorns, shed in his being scourged, shed in his crucifying; well, thus the blood of God's Fellow was shed. What say you now, O sword of justice? Are you pleased? are you satisfied with blood? Yes, I have got my fill of blood; *This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased*; I am pleased and satisfied to the full with his obedience to the death; I have got all the satisfaction I wanted from my Shepherd, and I have no more to demand of him, or his sheep either.

O glory to God, that ever this bloody insatiable sword did awake against one that could give it blood enough, satisfaction enough; and yet,

4. It is a *dreadful, terrible, flaming, and devouring* sword: so it is represented, Gen. iii. 24. where it is said, *Cherubims were placed, and a flaming sword, which turned every way to keep the way of the tree of life.* The least flame of this sword of justice is enough to burn up the whole creation; and, O! how terrible will this sword be for ever to them that live and die in a Christless state! The dreadfulnes of this sword is no where to be seen so lively as in its awaking against the man that was God's Fellow: his human nature trembled at the sight of it; John xii. 27. *Now is my soul troubled, and what shall I say?* He saw the dreadful storm coming, the black cloud arising, and so much wrath in it, that he knew not how to express himself, Matth. xxvi. 38. and Mark xiv. 34. There he cries out, *My soul is exceeding sorrowful, even unto death.* We never hear of one groan from Christ for all his bloody sufferings; when crowned with thorns, scourged, and laid on the cross; *As a sheep before her shearer is dumb, so he opened not his mouth:* but on the first entrance of his soul-sufferings, he fell a lamenting, *My soul is exceeding sorrowful:* the original words are most emphatic, *he was begirt with sorrow;* he was plunged over head and ears in the wrath of God: all the faculties and powers of his soul were begirt with sorrow; *he began to be sore amazed,* Mark xiv. 33. The word signifies the *greatest extremity of amazement,* and such as makes a man's hair stand, and his flesh creep; and it is added, *he was very heavy:* if we consult the derivation of the word, it signifies, *a sinking of spirit;* his heart was like wax melted at the sight of that terrible wrath. But the evangelist Luke has yet a stronger expression, Luke xxi. 44. *Being in an agony, his sweat was, as it were, great drops of blood, falling to the ground; being in an agony, engaged in a combat,* as the Greek word signifies: he had before combated with principalities and powers in the wilderness; but now he is combating with the Father's

wrath. He was in an agony, and swate great drops of blood: all sweats arise from weakness and pressures of nature; therefore a dying sweat is a cold sweat: but never one, but Christ, swate a bloody sweat; and great drops of blood, in such abundance, that it came through his garments, and fell to the ground: and this was all but the first onset, a little skirmish before the main battle; for the main fight was to be on mount Calvary, after they nailed him to the cross; then, on a sudden, the curtain of heaven is drawn, the sun loses his light; he was now combating with all the powers of hell and darkness, and therefore the field he was to fight in was dark. The punishment of loss and sense both was due to us for sin, therefore he suffered both: the punishment of loss, for all comfort now fails Christ; angels appeared before strengthening him; but now not an angel dares peep out of heaven for his comfort; yea, now his God fails him, in respect of his comfortable presence: formerly his heart failed him, in some respects, but now his God; which makes him cry out, *My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?* Never was there such a cry in heaven or earth, before or since: yea, now he suffered the punishment of sense also due to us; for now all the wrath of God was poured down immediately upon his soul: all the sluices of divine fury are opened, and all the waves and billows of his vengeance passed over him. *Darkness was over all the earth:* all things hushed into silence, that Christ might, without interruption, grapple with his Father's wrath, until he cried, *It is finished,* and gave up the ghost.—What think you of this dreadful sword that awaked against our Surety, the man God's Fellow, when he was to expiate our sins?

5. It is a *bright* sword, a *clear*, a *glittering* sword; there is no spot of rust or stain upon this sword; no: the sword is spotless. Justice, holy justice: *there is no unrighteousness with God.* As there is no drop of unrighteousness in the cup of the damned, who are all damned by an act of holy justice; so there was no drop of injustice in the cup of wrath, which Christ,

Surety, drank up to the bottom. Christ had said of old, *Lo, I come*; I come to be cautioner, and enter myself in the room of poor sinners, to pay their debt: justice, indeed, could not have required our debt of him, if he had not undertaken it; but having entered himself cautioner for our debt, he became liable to the payment of it: hence, when Christ saw the sword, and was crying, *Father, save me from this hour*, he immediately corrected himself with a *but*; *BUT for this cause came I into this hour*, John xii. 27. And in the beginning of the twenty-second psalm, which you know is one of the most clear prophecies of Christ's sufferings, after he had cried out, ver. 1. *My God, my God; why hast thou forsaken me?* Which is not the expression of any quarrelling complaint or discouragement, but of sinless nature, when arraigned before the tribunal of God, affected with the horror of divine wrath, and not being able easily to endure that there should be a cloud between God and him; I say, after these words he adds, ver. 3. *But thou art holy*: he cannot complain of injustice; thou art just and holy in exacting all the debt at my hand, which I became surety for: I have all the sins of the elect to answer for; and therefore I justify thee, O Father, in giving me this stroak of thy awakened sword: *Thou art holy; thou art clear when thou judgest.*—It is a clear, bright, spotless, and holy sword.

6. It is a *living* sword: do you think that God is speaking to a piece of cold iron, when he says, *Awake, O sword?* Nay, this sword is God himself, the living God: God's justice is God himself, a just God. Of this living sword you read, Heb. x. 31. *It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God.* They that fall into hell, they fall into the hands of the living God; and there they are an everlasting sacrifice to this ever-living sword. Christ, when he came to satisfy justice, he fell into the hands of this living God; and if he had not been God's equal, God's Fellow, he could never have got out of his hands again. If this sword be a living sword, even the living God, O but it must be a *great* and *strong* sword, as the sword

of God is called, Isa. xxvii. 1. It takes the strength of God to wield it; and so he does here, *Awake, O sword*. It takes the strength of God to bear the blow of it, and so it is here; *Awake, against the man that is my Fellow*. One blow of it given to the angels and seraphims, would have brought them all down from the battlements of heaven to the bottom of hell. *Awake, O sword*: God is here speaking to himself; as if he had said, Let me arise in my armour of vengeance and fury, and fall upon my Shepherd, the man that is my Fellow: it is a living sword that can awake itself.—Thus you see what for a sword it is that awakes against Christ. O to see and believe this truth this day!

III. The *third* thing was to shew, in what *manner* this sword did awake against Christ, and what is imported in the phrase, *Awake, O sword*. How the sword did awake against Christ has been partly declared already in the account of the sword itself: however it may a little further appear, in the import of this wonderful call, *Awake, O sword*, etc.

1. It imports, as if the sword had been *sleeping*, and now must awake against him: Christ having no sin of his own to answer for, the sword of justice had nothing to lay to his charge; and so was sleeping, as it were, with respect to him, having nothing to say against him, being the infinitely holy God in himself, until once he made the bargain with his Father, to become our Surety and Cautioner; and whenever he became sin for us, and took on him our debt, then justice had a right to pursue him; and therefore, *Awake, O sword*.

2. *Awake, O sword*, it imports, that not only while the counsel of peace was held between the Father and the Son, did justice delay the execution, though Christ was the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world, in the decree and counsel of God, but that after this glorious transaction, the sword designed against the Son of God, had long *slumbered*: the sword had slumbered above four thousand years after Adam's fall; the Lamb was not slain all that time, but only in dark typical representations of his death; but

now,

now, he must be actually slain; therefore, *Awake, O sword.* God was now speaking of the day of Christ, the gospel-day in the first verse of the chapter, where our text lies, saying, *In that day, there shall be a fountain opened to the house of David, and to the inhabitants of Jerusalem, for sin, and for uncleanness:* Now, how shall this fountain be opened? Why, the sword of justice must pierce the side and heart of the Son of God, and so open a fountain of cleansing blood; therefore, when the decree breaks forth, he says, *Awake, O sword.*

3. *Awake, O sword;* it imports, that the sword of justice did not *rashly* smite the man that is God's Fellow: A man in his sleep, or half sleeping, may give a rash unadvised stroke to his fellow; but before God gave the stroke to the man that is his Fellow, he did awake his justice, as it were, out of sleep, and proceeded upon the maturest deliberation; *Awake, O sword.* It was no unadvised stroke that Christ got by the sword of justice; it was the fruit of a glorious transaction: neither did the sword strike him without a warrant, by particular orders from the Judge of all: It was warranted to brandish itself against him; *Awake, O sword.*

4. It imports, that justice was *lively* and *vigorous* in executing the vengeance due upon our Surety for our sin: Justice did not give him a sleepy, lazy, drowsy blow; but a strong, lively, awakened blow: as it is said, in another case, Isa. ii. 9. *Awake, awake, put on strength, O arm of the Lord;* so, *Awake, O sword,* put on strength. Well, justice arises, as it were, like one out of sleep, puts on its cloaths of vengeance, and armour of power, rallies its forces, goes forth with warlike robes, and attacks the man that is God's Fellow with all its force; and acts, like itself, with impartial equity, without sparing our Surety, because of his quality Rom. viii. 32. *God spared not his own Son:* *Awake, O sword.*

5. *Awake, O sword,* it imports, the great concern and earnestness that was in God's heart to have his justice satisfied: *O sword; Awake, O sword.* God speaks

speaks here with affectionate concern: 'O sword! O justice! thou must be honoured, glorified, and satisfied, one way or other: and seeing I have proposed to my eternal Son to bear the stroke of vengeance in the room of elect sinners; and seeing he has undertaken it, my very heart is set upon the accomplishment of this glorious work; my justice is one of the pearls of my crown; I will not shew mercy to the detriment of my justice. A sacrifice I must have, a sacrifice I will have; therefore, *Awake, O sword.*'

6. I think it imports, not only God's concern to have his justice satisfied this way, but his *great delight* in the satisfaction; *Awake, O sword, against the man that is my Fellow.* With what infinite pleasure and satisfaction does the sword of justice give the bloody stroke to this glorious person? *It pleased the Lord to bruise him, and put him to grief,* Isa. liii. 10. Why, how is this consistent with the ineffable love he had to his eternally Beloved? Yes, most consistent; for the Father loved the Son in dying, and for dying; John x. 17. *Therefore doth my Father love me, because I lay down my life, that I might take it again.* He loved his Son for this very act of obedience which he yielded to him; Christ's obedience to the death was the highest and most acceptable worship and service to God, that ever was, or ever will be: it is a sacrifice of such a sweet smell that it drowned the stink of all the sins of an elect world; a sacrifice more pleasing to God than all their sins were displeasing: and therefore, with infinite pleasure and satisfaction, he says, *Awake, O sword.* This leads me to

IV. The *fourth* thing proposed, What *special hand* Jehovah the Lord of hosts, had in making this awful sword to awake against this glorious person? *Awake, O sword,—saith the Lord of hosts.* It was the Lord of hosts, the eternal Father of this eternal Son that mustered the hosts of vengeance against him, and had the main and principal hand in Christ's sufferings, which we are to commemorate this day. Jehovah's hand was

was supreme in this business; and that in these four respects.

1. It was Jehovah the Lord of hosts that *determined* all before-hand, and agreed with his Son for that effect. It was concluded in the counsel of God what he should suffer, what should be the price that Jehovah would have, and the sacrifice he would except of from his hands. It was not the Jews, nor the scribes and Pharisees, nor Pilate, but principally it was the Lord's doing, and the accomplishment of his eternal counsel, Acts iv. 27, 28. *Herod, and Pontius Pilate, with the Gentiles, and the people of Israel were gathered together, to do whatsoever thy hand and thy counsel determined before to be done.* In all they were doing they did nothing, but what was carved out before in the eternal counsel of God; and therefore says Peter, Acts ii. 23. *Him being delivered by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God, you have taken, and by wicked hands have crucified and slain.*

2. As he, the great Jehovah, the Lord of hosts, determined, that the sword should awake against him, so he *prepared the subject* capable to receive the stroak of justice's sword; Heb. x. 5. *A body hast thou prepared me.* He gave him a nature, a soul and body capable of suffering: the stroak of justice fell only upon the man Christ, upon his human nature; though the dignity of his divine person did infinitely enhance the merit of his sufferings; yet his divine person, his divine nature was never reached, nor reachable, by the sword of justice; the eternal Word was untangible and incapable of suffering, till the *Word was made flesh.* Now, this flesh, this human nature, he prepared.

3. It was Jehovah, the Lord of hosts, that *ordered* and *over-ruled* all his sufferings, when it came to the execution of his antient decree. He who governs all the counsels, thoughts, and actions of men, did, in a special manner, govern and over-rule the sufferings of the Mediator. Though wicked men were following their own designs, and were stirred and acted by the devil, who is said to have put it into the heart of

Judas to betray Christ; yet God had the ordering of all, who should betray him; what death he should die; how he should be pierced; and yet not a bone of him broken.

4. It was Jehovah, The Lord of hosts, that had an *active hand* in reaching the stroke to Christ; he was the chief party that pursued Christ with the sword of justice in his hand; *It pleased the Lord to bruise him, and to put him to grief.* It was he that was exacting the elect's debt of him; and therefore Christ looked over Pilate and Herod, and all the wicked instruments used in this work, as of no consideration in this matter; he looked over them to the Lord Jehovah his Father, and says to the chief of them, Pilate, (that cowardly self-condemned judge) *Thou couldst have no power over me, except it were given thee from above.* It was this interest that his Father had in his sufferings that made him say, John xviii. 11. *The cup which my Father hath given me, shall I not drink it?* His Father pursued him as Cautioner in our room; and to his Father he cries when the sword was running through his heart; *My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?* He spared not his own Son when he cried, but would have him drink out the bitter cup to the bottom; *Awake, O sword, against my Shepherd, and against the man that is my Fellow, saith the Lord of hosts; smite the shepherd.* The message comes from him, and he gave the sword a charge, and orders it to smite him; it was this, more than the whips, the thorns, the nails, the spear, that made him cry out. Another and a higher hand brought his soul to more bitterness, than all the sufferings he endured from men.—Thus his soul was crucified more than his body; and his heart had sharper nails to pierce it than his hands and feet.

V. The *Fifth* thing, *viz.* The *reasons* of the doctrine; Why the Lord of hosts ordered the sword of justice to awake against his Shepherd, the man that is his Fellow? Surely it was necessary, that the sword should awake against him; *Ought not Christ to have suffer-*

*suffered these things?* says our Lord himself, Luke xxiv. 26. However innocent he was in himself; yet our sins, which were laid upon him, deserved to be thus treated; and therefore he, as our Surety, who had the guilt of the world lying upon him, says, Psal. lxxix. 5. *O God, thou knowest my foolishness; and my wickedness is not hid from thee:* These are the words of Christ, of whom David was a type. He had enough of sin imputatively; and our sins had never been expiated, our judge never atoned, our souls never saved, our state never secured, justice never satisfied, the bond never cancelled, if the sword had not awaked against him. Ought he not then to have suffered the stroke of the sword? Yea, he gave his oath for it to his Father from eternity; and all the promises, prophecies, types, and sacrifices of old pointed out this. God was ready to come down with fury in his heart, and red-hot thunder-bolts in his hand, to sink all mankind to hell: and ought not Christ to suffer and interpose? yea, glory to God, that he did. But more particularly,

1. The Lord of hosts, the Rector of the universe, designed by this method to *rectify* what was out of course, by the sin of man, and to bring all things to rights. By the fall, the universal frame suffered a convulsion: the covenant of works was broken; the devil was reigning and raging in the earth; and all the honour of God's workmanship, in the first creation, was like to be lost. Now, the supreme Rector comes with the sword of justice to rectify these disorders, by drenching his sword in the blood of his eternal Son. Was the covenant of works broken? behold here is the condition of it fulfilled, by his active and passive obedience; yea, both the two covenants of works, and of grace, were at once fulfilled in his obedience to the death: this is the proper condition of each of these covenants.—Was the devil reigning and raging on the earth? Behold! by this blow of justice's sword, given to Christ, the devil and all our spiritual enemies are destroyed; *For this cause was the Son of God manifested, that he might destroy the works of the*

*devil.* Hence, when Christ is lifted up upon the cross, receiving the stroke of justice's sword, it is said, *Now is the judgment of this world; now is the prince of this world cast out*, John xii. 31. *By death he destroyed him that had the power of death; that is, the devil.* By the bruise of his heel, his human nature, he broke the serpent's head, and his power.—Again, was all the honour and beauty of God's workmanship like to be lost? Behold, the man that is God's Fellow, sustaining the stroke of Jehovah's sword, restores all; Psa. lxi. 4. *Then restored I that which I took not away.* What was taken away? why, the devil, Adam, and Eve took away the glory due to God, the obedience due to the law, and the happiness that belonged to man in his first creation. Well, says Christ, it is much to bring them all back again; but I will do it, though I took them not away. I will restore to man his happiness; he has lost the favour of God, I will restore it in justification; he has lost the image of God, I will restore it in regeneration; he has lost the fellowship of God, I will restore it, being God's Fellow: I will bring them to fellowship with God, by sustaining the stroke of the sword which they should have sustained for ever. I will restore to the law its due obedience; yea, I will magnify the law and make it honourable, by my obedience to it, in so much that the Lord of hosts shall *be well pleased for my righteousness sake*; and so I will restore to God the honour and glory that he lost by the sin of man. And this leads to a

2. Reason, why the Lord of hosts made the sword of justice to awake and smite his Shepherd, the man that is his Fellow? Why, that thus he might get all his divine attributes *glorified* to the highest. *Glory to God in the highest*, was the song of angels when he appeared in our nature, to receive this awful stroke. God's honour was not more impaired and embezzled by the sin of man, that it was restored and repaired by the death of Christ. If all mankind, and all the angels with them, had fallen a sacrifice to the sword of divine justice, it could not have repaired the honour of God for one sin: though they had all been offered

up in one whole burnt-offering, it could not have satisfied infinite justice; yea, though they had all been damned in hell, to all eternity, justice could never have got full satisfaction. But here is *justice* glorified to the highest; *By one offering he hath perfected for ever them that are sanctified*; and at the same time vindicated the spotless holiness and righteousness of God, that it may be known that God is holy and just, who will needs avenge sin in his own Son, the holy and innocent Cautioner, when he interposes in the sinner's room. This is the declared design of God's awakening the Sword of justice against Christ; Rom. iii. 25. *Whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation for sin, through faith in his blood, to declare his righteousness, that he might be just, and the justifier of him that believeth in Jesus.* If God had exacted the satisfaction of the sinners themselves, by sending them to hell, it might have declared his justice and righteousness much; but here it is more gloriously declared, and glorified to the highest: for, if we consider Christ in himself, and the elect in themselves, his death and sufferings are more than if all the elect had suffered eternally in hell. Here is *mercy* also and free grace glorified to the highest, while the sinner is liberate and not put to pay the debt in his own person. Here is divine *power* glorified to the highest; in the crucifying Christ, whom the power of God supported under that load of wrath that would have crushed ten thousand worlds. Here is *wisdom* glorified to the highest; *The manifold wisdom of God*, that there should be two natures, yet but one person; that mercy should be fully magnified, and yet justice fully satisfied; that sin should be punished, and yet the sinner unpunished; that the sinner should escape, and yet God should take vengeance upon sin. O the wisdom of God in a mystery!

3. Reason why the Lord of hosts ordered the sword of justice to awake and smite the Shepherd, the man that is his Fellow; it was even for the *honour* of the Shepherd, and the *glory* of the Man his Fellow. God designed that for his *suffering of death*, he should be *crowned with glory and honour*, Heb. ii. 9. That for

his humbling himself, and becoming obedience to the death, he should be *highly exalted above all, and have a name above every name*, Phil. ii. 9. That for drinking of the brook in the way, he should lift up his head; that after he had drunk of the brook of divine wrath in our room, he should lift up his head above all principalities and powers, and have *all power in heaven and earth given to him*, and a number of elect to praise him for ever. O it is a wonderful thing to think, what he gave and what he got! What gave he? His body, his soul, his blood, his life; What got he? Even some of the black, ugly race of Adam to embrace him; he makes his *soul an offering for sin*, and then he *sees his seed*, he *sees the travel of his soul*, and is *satisfied*. He thinks all his pains well bestowed, when he gets his bride in his arms. O here is love! behold incarnate love! bleeding love! dying love! Shall not this glorious Lover be exalted of God for ever, and exalted by all the redeemed with the highest praises, for opening his breast to receive the wound of the awakened sword of justice? yea, more, the song will be, *Worthy, worthy is the Lamb that was slain. Thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God by thy blood*. And this leads to the

4. And last reason, why the sword of justice was ordered to awake and smite the Shepherd, the man that is God's Fellow, viz. That a *fountain of blood* might be opened for the benefit of the sheep. The Shepherd was smitten with the sword of justice, that the stroke might open a fountain for the watering of the sheep; Zech. xiii. 1. *There shall be a fountain opened for sin and for uncleanness*. A fountain for watering and washing of the sheep. And how is it to be opened? even with the sword of justice; *Awake, O sword, against the man, My Fellow*. Now, the Shepherd's blood, shed by the sword of justice, is for the benefit of the sheep many ways: Why?

(1.) It is *peace-speaking* blood; it speaks *better things than the blood of Abel*: It speaks peace and reconciliation with God, which is founded upon the blood of Christ; this is the wine that cheers the heart of God  
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and man. The justice of God took a drink of this blood till it was cheered and satisfied; and when the soul of the sinner gets a drink of this blood, O but this red wine rejoices his heart.

(2.) It is *heart-cleansing* blood; the blood of the Shepherd, shed by the sword of justice, is for the washing of the sheep; *The blood of Christ cleanses from all sin.* It cleanses meritoriously from the guilt of sin, in justification; it cleanses efficaciously from the filth of sin, in sanctification: it cleanses *only*; for no means, no duties, no tears, no prayers, no sermon, no sacrament, no ordinances, no communion-table, will cleanse you from sin, but only the blood of Christ. It cleanses *infallibly*; for all the devils in hell, and all the evils in the heart, shall not be able to mar the efficacy of this blood, if it be sprinkled on you by the hand of the Spirit. The whole company that are standing about the throne, have *washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb.*

(3.) This blood, which the sword of justice draws from the Shepherd, is *healing blood*; for the healing of his sheep: *By his stripes we are healed.* Were your diseases never so desperate, here is a healing medicine for them; it can heal the *hardness* of the heart; *They shall look on him whom they have pierced and mourn:* It can heal the *barren soil* of the heart, and turn it to a fertile ground; Hof. xiv. 6. *From me is thy fruit found:* from my Spirit, as the efficient; and from my blood, as the procuring cause.

(4.) It is a *sweet-smelling* blood; it has a sweet-smelling favour in the nostrils of the Lord of hosts; and perfumes the prayers and duties of the believer; *We are accepted only in the Beloved.* Our persons, our prayers, our preaching, our communicating, would all stink, unless they be dipt in the blood of the Lamb.

(5.) This blood of the Surety, shed by the sword of justice, is *bliss-purchasing* blood; and one of the grand blessings purchased is the Holy Ghost: the Spirit is one of the greatest instances of the love of God in Christ. Whenever Adam sinned, the holy Spirit left

left him, and the unclean spirit came in his room; but when the second Adam came, he brought the Spirit of God again with him: *I have put my Spirit upon him; and he shall bring forth judgment to the Gentiles.* And, O what is the world without the Spirit of God? what is a man, a minister, a sacrament, a city, a nation, without the Spirit of God? What makes matters so far wrong in a land, but that there is so little of the Spirit with ministers and people? There is no life where the quickening Spirit comes not: O Sirs, we will have dead preaching, dead hearing, dead communicating, lifeless work this day, if the purchased Spirit do not come! When he comes, life comes with him. *Can these dry bones live?* can these dead, formal, lifeless, unbelieving, hypocritical, and carnal hearts live? Yea, undoubtedly they can, if the Spirit blow: O let your hearts cry, *Come, O north-wind; blow, thou south: Come from the four winds, O breath, and breathe upon these slain that they may live.* Cry for the purchased and promised Spirit, that we may live, and be lively in our work this day.

(6.) This blood has purchased all *spiritual blessings*: it has purchased pardon of sin; *We have redemption through his blood, even the remission of sin.* It has purchased recovery after falls, and freedom from total apostacy to all that believe; *I will heal their backslidings.* *Though he fall he shall not utterly be cast down; for the Lord upholds him with his hand,* Psa. xxxviii.

24. Good news to believers, say you, he has purchased all good for them; but not to the like of me; such an unbelieving impenitent sinner as me. If that be your thought, man, it is an ignorant blunder; I tell you better news, this blood of Christ, shed by the sword of justice, has purchased faith, to the faithless; repentance, to the impenitent; grace, to the graceless; and nothing did he purchase to any but as guilty sinners, destitute of all good. Here is a good market for you that have no good, no grace: others that are increased with goods, and think that they have a good heart to God, good desires and inclinations, and hope thereupon for God's favour, may be doing with their  
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old covenant of works, where they and their money shall perish: but for you that are poor, guilty, filthy, perishing sinners, destitute of all good in yourselves, here is good news to you; here is grace, free grace, full grace, rich grace, all grace; grace to justify the guilty, grace to sanctify the filthy, grace to strengthen the weak, grace to supply the needy. You that want grace, may come hear and get it; you that have grace, may come here and get more; this blood has purchased all grace, and the purchaser stands ready to communicate it: for he has no other thing to do with his mediatorial grace, but to give it out to sinners, to men, to rebels; *He has received gifts for men, even for the rebellious, that God the Lord might dwell among them.* O the noble purchase of this blood! It has purchased freedom from the law, both from the curse and command of the covenant of works, in so much that the believer is neither under the mandate, nor the sanction of the law, as a covenant of works: by the obedience of Christ to the command of that covenant they are *made righteous*, Rom. xv. 19. *Who also hath redeemed them from the curse of the law, being made a curse for them*, Gal. iii. 13. The believer indeed is under stronger obligations to obey the law, as it is a rule of life and holiness, than ever Adam was in a state of innocency; but as it is a covenant of works, and condition of life, he has not a farthing of debt to pay to it, if the righteousness of Christ be complete and full; yea, this makes the law of God his delight, when he attains to the faith of this, that he has nothing to do with it as it is a covenant.

In a word, by this blood, shed by the sword of justice, there is a purchase made of *access* to God. The Son of man was lifted up upon the cross, to open the gates of heaven, which our sin had shut; he rent the vail from top to bottom, *and we have boldness to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus.* The sword awakened against the Son, that he might bring us to the Father; 1 Pet. iii. 18. *Christ has once suffered for sin; the just for the unjust, that he might bring us to God.* We are at a distance from God, lying peaceably

ably in the devil's arms; *but they that were far off, are made nigh by the blood of Christ.* All the sermons, all the means in the world, will not bring us near to God; the means by which he draws men to himself, is just by his blood and righteousness; *When I am lifted up,* says Christ, *I will draw all men after me.* Well, he was lifted up upon the cross, where he received the blow of God's awakened sword; he was lifted up into heaven, to his Father's right-hand, and he is lifted up upon the pole of this gospel; and has he said, *I will draw all men after me?* O say, Amen. Lord, let this be a drawing day.

VI. The *sixth* thing was the *application*. Now, many, very many things might be deduced from this doctrine, by way of application. I shall at the time offer you but a few *general inferences*, and refer the rest to be accommodated more particularly to the rest of the work of the day, as the Lord shall please to guide and direct. Well, is it so, that by special orders from Jehovah, the Lord of hosts, the man Christ, his Shepherd and his Fellow, did fall a sacrifice to the awakened sword of infinite justice? Is it so as you have heard? then we may hence see, and behold,

I. The *infinite malignity* of sin, and the *dreadful demerit* thereof. Did it overflow the old world with a deluge of water? did it consume Sodom and Gomorrah with a storm of fire and brimstone? did it cast angels and men that are under it into Tophet, *the place whereof is fire and much wood, which the breath of the Lord doth kindle;* so as the *smoke of their torments ascend for ever and ever?* In all this may the demerit of sin be seen; but much more here in Christ, a sacrifice to the awakened sword of divine vengeance. Go to Golgotha, and see the man that is God's Fellow, drinking up the cup of his Father's indignation! suffering unto blood! suffering unto death! for, *God spared him not,* being now in the room of sinners: behold the earth trembling under the mighty load of this terrible wrath; for there was a great *earthquake* while the sword of God's wrath was running through the man  
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that was his Fellow; the *heavens grew dark* when this awful spectacle was exposed; the *sun was eclipsed*, contrary to the common rules of nature, which made an heathen philosopher cry out, 'That either the frame of nature was dissolving, or the God of nature suffering.' And what shall we that profess to be Christians say to these things? what shall we that are sinners say concerning that abominable evil, sin, which wrought this bloody tragedy? It was sin, and our sin too; for *he was wounded for OUR iniquities; the Lord laid on him the iniquities of us all*, Isa. liii. 6. O! how heavy did the man that is God's Fellow find the weight of sin to be, when it pressed him to the ground, and made him sweat great drops of blood! when the sword of wrath, which he sustained in our room, was above his head.

2. Hence behold both the *goodness* and *severity* of God: his *goodness*, in finding out this way of satisfaction to his own justice, and wounding his own Son, that sinners, for whom he was Surety, might not be wounded eternally: and the *severity* and *justice* of God, in exacting such a full satisfaction, that though all the elect had been satisfying eternally in hell, justice had not been made to shine so splendidly and gloriously. O if we could think and speak aright of this wonderful mystery! O wonder that we are not more affected with it! that we, miserable wretched sinners, should have been pursued eternally by justice, and could do nothing to avert the stroke of it; and that such a great and glorious person, as the Man, God's Fellow, should interpose himself; and hereupon the Father should spare the poor sinful enemies, and make way for them to escape, by diverting of his justice from pursuing them, and by making it take hold of the Son of his bosom; exacting the debt severely from him! O wonder that the Lord should pass by the enemies, and satisfy himself upon his own Son!

3. Hence behold the *wonderful concurrence* of the glorious persons of the blessed Trinity, Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, to carry on the work of our redemption; for here is the Lord of hosts, Jehovah, Father,

Son, and Holy Ghost, one God, essentially considered, prosecuting the work of redemption; and saying, with respect to Christ, the second person of the Godhead, considered as he became man and Mediator, *Awake, O sword, against the man that is my Fellow*. Not that God the Father delighted in the suffering, as such, of his innocent Son; for, *he afflicts not willingly, even the children of men*: but considering the end and the effect that was to follow, the seed that he should beget to eternal life, and the captives whom he was to redeem; in this respect, *It pleased the Lord to bruise him*; when he might have suffered all mankind to ly still in their forlorn condition, it pleased him to give his life a ransom for many. Here the whole Trinity is in concert, each person to perform his own part; wherein all the bright perfections of the divine nature do gloriously conspire. O! how does *God commend his love to us, in that whilst we were yet sinners, Christ died for us?* Rom. v. 8. And, O how he loved us, who *washed us from our sins in his own blood?* Rev. i. 5. Again,

4. Behold herein the *holy sovereignty* of God, that over-rules all the actions of men, even these wherein they have a most sensible hand, and are most inexcusable. Though Judas that betrayed, Pilate that condemned, the innocent Son of God, acted most sinfully; yet the Lord himself had an active over-ruling hand in carrying on his own designs. What Judas and Pilate did, was not by guess, but just the execution of God's antient decree: how pure and spotless is God in venting and manifesting his grace, holiness, and justice, when men are venting their corruption, impiety, and injustice! Here is a principal diamond in Jehovah's crown, that he is able, not only to govern all the natural second causes that are in the world, in their several courses and actions, and order them to his own glory; but even devils, wicked men, and hypocrites, their most corrupt and abominable actions, and make them invariably subservient to the promoting of his own holy ends and purposes, and yet be free of their sin, for which they shall count to him: and as it was no excuse to the crucifiers of the Son of God, that they did what  
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before was decreed of God ; so it shall be no excuse to any man in a sinful course, that God has a hand in every thing that really comes to pass, who yet is just and holy in all. This may also stay our hearts, when the devil and his instruments are, as it were, running mad, that they can do no more than what God permits ; nay, some way commisionates them to do : no sword of men, or devils, can do any execution, unless God says, *Awake, O sword.*

5. In this text and doctrine we may see and behold, what a *gloriously well-qualified* Redeemer we have ; he is *God's Shepherd, the man his Fellow* : behold what interest he has in God ! and that both by nature, being God Fellow ; and by covenant, being God's Shepherd : behold what interest he has in us ; and that also both by nature, being man ; and by covenant, by virtue of the covenant of grace, being our Shepherd by God's appointment and constitution. O how fit is he, who is the essential Wisdom of the Father, to reveal the counsel of God's love from eternity ! How fit is he, who is the middle person of the Godhead, to be the Mediator and Midfman ! How fit is he, who is the eternal Son of God, to bring many sons and daughters to glory ! The eternal Word that made the world, also to redeem the world ! How fit, as God-man ; being man, to pay man's debt ; as God, to give it a value : man, to deal with man ; and God, to deal with God ! What an able Saviour must he be, who is God's Fellow ! *able to save to the uttermost* ? Help is laid upon one that is mighty indeed ! What a willing Saviour must he be, who is God's Fellow ! He could not have been forced to suffer, nor dragged to the work, if he had not been willing : nay, with chearful willingness he flew, as it were, upon the point of the sword ; *Lo, I come.* What a sufficient ransom has he given, since he is God's Fellow ! O this price of redemption cannot be over-valued ! What a well-furnished Saviour is he, to give life to whom he will. God's Fellow, the party offended, dying to conciliate friendship with the party offending ! O what a gift is Christ, *when God so loved the world, as to give his only begotten Son ; his Fellow, his Equal* ! It is more than heaven, and earth, and the

whole universe! O how sure and permanent must this redemption be, that is managed by the Lord of hosts, and his Fellow! What a sure and sweet way to the Father, is the man Christ, since he is God's Fellow! Think not strange that he was able to triumph over all enemies, to outwit the old Serpent, to rise again from the grave, to conquer hell, and purchase heaven; for the man was God's Fellow. How highly is our nature advanced in Christ! though not changed into the divine, yet personally united thereto: Christ has not lost his dignity, by becoming man; he is the man God's Fellow. O what a well-qualified and glorious Redeemer is he! qualified by the Lord of hosts himself, who had made him his Shepherd, who is our Shepherd! *The Lord is my Shepherd*, says the believer; and he is *my Shepherd*, says Jehovah, though in different respects: I have made him the Shepherd of my sheep. O if God's Shepherd be your Shepherd, poor soul; if your heart be pleased with the choice that he has made of a Shepherd; and God's elect be your elect, God's choice your choice, happy, thrice happy were it for you, that ever you was born. O that a flock of sheep were gathered to him to-day!

6. We may hence see the *terrible state* of unbelievers and Christless sinners, on the one hand; and the *comfortable state* of believers, on the other.

(1.) On the one hand, I say, we may here see the *dreadful state of unbelievers*, and the *damning nature of unbelief*. The sword of divine justice, the sword of God's wrath, is hanging over the head of all those who come not under the cover of the blood of Christ, that was shed by this awful sword. It is a lofty, but a terrible word you have in Deut. xxxii. 40, 41. *I lift up my hand to heaven and say, I live for ever; if I whet my glittering sword, and my hand take hold on judgment, I will render vengeance to mine enemies; and a reward to them that hate me; I will make mine arrows drunk with blood.* The sword of God's vengeance must be drunk either with the blood of the sinner, or the blood of the Surety, in the sinner's room. Now, they who, through unbelief, despise and reject Christ, the sacrifice to justice, which  
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God has provided, they must themselves be a sacrifice thereto: see how fearfully this is set forth, Heb. x. 27, 28, 29, 31. *If we sin wilfully, after we have received the knowledge of the truth; that is to say, if we wilfully and finally reject Christ; if we live and die in unbelief, refusing the remedy that God has provided, notwithstanding it is made known to us in the glorious gospel, there is no remedy for us but perishing; there remains no more sacrifice for sin, but a fearful looking for of judgment, and fiery indignation, which shall devour the adversaries.* O sinner, there is not a day you hear sermon, and hear Christ offered, but if you slight him, you go away with a new load of guilt; hence the hell of professors shall be the greatest and hottest places in hell: the like of Corazen and Bethsaida, the like of Dunfermline, and the places about, where Christ is preached, shall go to the center of hell, when others shall not have so hot a hell. This sin of unbelief is worse than the murdering Christ; for they knew not that he was the Lord of glory: but this sin wilfully rejects him, while you know he is the Lord of glory. The sin of unbelief, what a dreadful thing is it! The man makes God most true, a liar, like the devil! and refuses to let God have the honour of a full satisfaction to justice; will not let God get satisfaction for all his sins, as he might have in the sacrifice of his Son. O unbelief, unbelief! for a man to have continued all his days, from his infancy, under the drop of the word and calls of the Spirit and the Bride, saying, *Come, come to Christ*, and yet the man lives and dies never hearkening.

(2.) On the other hand, here we may see the *comfortable state of believers* in Christ, and the *saving nature of true justifying faith*. The believer cannot but be safe and happy; for the stroke of the sword of justice has fallen by him, and has lighted upon his Surety, his Shepherd: the death of the Shepherd is the life of the sheep. Though the sheep may be scattered, and scared with fatherly chastisements; yet the Shepherd being smitten with the sword of vindictive justice, no stroke of judicial wrath shall ever fall upon them: for Christ has *borne their griefs, and carried their sorrows, and by his stripes*

*stripes they are healed*: and all that look to him by faith shall be healed, and saved in like manner. The object of justifying faith is the man God's Fellow, falling a sacrifice to the sword of divine justice. Though you should believe all the Bible, the whole divine revelation, except this point, *Christ set forth to be a propitiation in blood*, you have no justifying faith; the doctrine of the blood of God, of a crucified Christ, this only is the healing balsam to the bleeding wounds of the sinner, that has any sense of sin, or fear of wrath. Talk of the law to such a man, it is just as if you should bring a murderer to see the ghost of the man he had killed: O, says he, that is the law that I have broken, and so he is racked and tormented, lest the sword of wrath avenge the quarrel of the broken law upon him; but let him see a Christ dying on a cross, with the sword of wrath running through his heart, a Christ hanging between heaven and earth in his room, and all the debt of the elect upon his shoulders, here is a full cordial to a fainting soul; here is the act of justifying faith, *the beholding of this sacrifice*, and acquiescing in it as the price of redemption; relying on the precious blood that was drawn by that awful sword, and laying the stress of our salvation upon it: that is a laying stress where God laid it, a coming under the covert of the blood of the man that is God's Fellow, as a screen from the law and justice. Here is a noble foundation for faith; we may even dare to approach a provoked God, an angry Deity, the God who is a consuming fire, and a flaming sword; why, here is blood, worthy blood, to quench the fire; the man that is God's Fellow bleeding and dying in our nature. We may well say with Luther, 'Lord, keep me from a mere God, an absolute God; a God not in Christ, not reconciled by the death of Christ.' But here is the atonement and propitiation; and therefore faith may come boldly to the throne of grace.

7. Hence also we may see the *malignity* of an *antichristian spirit*; not only that of *Papists*, who bring in their works of merit upon the field of justification before God, as if any thing could please a dreadful God, besides the blood of his Fellow; but also, all others that are enemies

nemies to the cross of Christ; enemies to the glorious gospel of a crucified Christ.—Here the *Socinian* spirit is condemned as antichristian, who say, ‘That God was never alienate from man; and that God, out of his mere bounty, without any interveening satisfaction, pardons sin:’ But if so, why would ever there be such a found as, *Awake, O sword, against the man that is my Fellow?* Why would there have been an atonement, if it was not to avert the wrath revealed from heaven against all the ungodliness and unrighteousness of men? In vain did the sword awake and smite the Shepherd, if *without shedding of blood there was remission.*—Here also, the *Libertine*, and *Latitudinarian* spirit is condemned. O! what ignorant sottish fools are they, who make a mock at sin, which being imputed to the Lord Jesus, made him sweat and bleed in the anguish of his soul! O what madness are they guilty of, who prefer the satisfaction of their brutish lusts, to the salvation of their precious souls, the redemption whereof is so precious, that it ceaseth for ever, unless the blood of God be shed for it!—Here also the *Arminian* spirit is condemned, and every *Legal* spirit, under whatsoever denomination, who make faith, or any act or part of it, or any thing else whatsoever, besides the blood of Christ, to be our righteousness before God; such doctrine darkens grace, incroaches upon the prerogative of the Lord our righteousness, and is contrary to the very nature of faith, which is a passing from, and disclaiming all other foundations, and a running to, and pleading upon the blood of Christ, shed by the awakened sword of justice. The doctrine of our text exposes the malignity of a legal spirit, which is so natural to men, and rages so much at this day; as if men, by their terms and conditions on their part, could pacify a God of terrible majesty, whom yet nothing will appease, but the blood of the man that is his Fellow: surely they know not the perfection of God’s holiness, the terror of his justice, the severity of his tribunal, the spirituality and extent of his law, nor yet their own corruption, weakness, and wickedness by nature, who will dare to make any thing the ground and condition of their acceptance with God, but the doing  
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and dying, the blood and righteousness of Christ. Some make faith, others repentance and new obedience, the strict and proper condition of the new covenant; but if we will not shut our eyes, we may see that Christ's obedience, suffering, and satisfaction is the only proper and strict, so called, condition thereof: the parties of the covenant of grace, are God and Christ; Christ answering for all the elect therein: now, the condition of the covenant must be a condition performable and fulfilled by one of the parties, to wit, Christ; and the condition is, That he, in his obedience to the death, become a sacrifice to the sword of divine justice; and upon this condition all spiritual and eternal blessings are promised to the elect; faith, repentance, and all good are promised upon this ground; for, says God, upon his *making his soul an offering for sin, he shall see his seed*: they shall get the good things promised; faith, love, knowledge, fear, and obedience, which are all the fruits of this grand condition of the covenant: faith is indeed of absolute necessity, and the only means whereby we come to be justified; *It is by faith, that it may be by grace*; that is, faith renounces itself, and all other graces and good things, in point of acceptance with God, and looks for it only in the righteousness of Christ, which alone covers our iniquities, and makes us to be accepted of God. *Not by works of righteousness that we do, nor by faith as a work, or as the fulfilling of a condition, upon which, being performed by us, or wrought of God in us, we may plead for God's making out his part of the covenant*; O no: our only plea before God in this object of faith; the bloody sacrifice, made by the sword of justice, upon the man that is God's Fellow; even that our Lord Jesus has paid our debt, by fulfilling the law in our room, and satisfying for the breaches thereof. As faith is necessary, seeing *without faith it is impossible to please God*; so is repentance necessary; *For, except we repent, we shall all likewise perish*: holiness is necessary; *For without holiness no man shall see God*: they are necessary as qualities of the covenanted, purchased, and promised blessings of the covenant. None that are actually in the covenant, are without them; and so all  
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that are without them will perish and die in their sins : but let our souls detest the bringing in these, or any thing else, in conjunction with Christ, and his blood and righteousness, so as thereupon to look for any benefit, favour, or acceptance with God ; but let us look for all holiness, as well as happiness, only in and thro' Jesus Christ, and upon the account of his giving himself a sacrifice to the awakened sword of justice. And so I come to the

8. And last inference, that I name at the time, namely, Hence we may see, What is the *great duty* of all who hear this gospel, *namely*, to embrace the man that is God's Fellow, to flock in to this Shepherd, and come to him as the sacrifice and propitiation in his blood, in whom the sword of divine justice has got satisfaction. Let me then exhort you, in the name of the Lord, to this duty, before I close. I may afterwards speak to different sorts of persons, and I may afterwards tell you whom I call to the communion-table, but at present I am calling you all to come to Christ. If you think of communicating, in God's name, stand aback from his table, if you will not come to his Christ ; and whether you be thinking of communicating or not, man, woman, young or old, that hear me, I charge you, in Jehovah's name, to hear the word of salvation, and apply it particularly to your own souls, whoever you be. Is it so, that the sword of the Lord of hosts is bathed in the blood of the Shepherd, the man that is God's Fellow, then, as you would not fall a sacrifice to this sword of God's wrath for ever, O close with the man that is God's Fellow, as he that fell a sacrifice to this sword in your room. Have you no apprehension of the wrath of God, and of your dreadful condition by nature, wherein you are lying bound to be a sacrifice to the wrath of God, the Lord's hand being stretched out to lay on the stroke, and the wrath of God abiding on you, liable to the law's sentence, which is the curse of God, and the vengeance of his awakened sword, until once you get the man that is God's Fellow put in your room ? All that the gospel aims at is this, that you would seek to change rooms with

Christ: guilty finners, here is the way to get your debt paid, your Judge pleased, justice satisfied, God atoned, sin expiated, and everlasting peace and reconciliation between God and you made up. The sword of the Lord of hosts is hanging over your heads, crying, Vengeance, vengeance upon the guilty sinner: This is the sad and certain tidings of the law, *Cursed is every one that continueth not in all things, written in the book of the law to do them.* But behold the man that is God's Shepherd and Fellow; the curse of the law, the vengeance of God, the sword of Jehovah, has lighted upon him that it might not fall upon you: there is the glad news and good tidings of the gospel. Is there not here a suitable object, and a sufficient foundation of faith, that Christ is set forth of God to be a propitiation through faith in his blood, to declare the righteousness of God, that he might be just, and the justifier of them that believe in Jesus?—Now, unworthy, wretched, guilty, filthy, bloody sinner, will you take a worthy match; the man that is God's Fellow? *Will you go with this man?* Will you take him in his garments rolled in his own blood, when the sword of justice did awake against him and smote him to death? The great God of hosts was in sad earnest, when he gave his Shepherd, his glorious Fellow, the bloody blow; and now he is in earnest in his call, swearing, by a solemn oath, *As he lives, that he takes no delight in the death of sinners;* and declaring, by his drawing forth the heart-blood of the man that is his Fellow, that he is willing to save you upon the account of this sacrifice, that his justice has got: only welcome the news as a *faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptation:* and put in for a share of the benefits of this sacrifice, for it is the best, and the last, that ever you will hear of; and if it be slighted, *There remains no more sacrifice for sin.* As the eternal God is willing, so his eternal Son is both able and willing to save you; and if he had not been so, he would never have sustained the stroke of avenging justice in the room of sinners, who is that good Shepherd that laid down his life for the sheep. When he was smitten, by the sword of justice, he willingly undertook and underwent it; he longed for the bloody baptism, and

was straitened till it was accomplished. When he was smitten by the hands of men, *He hid not his face from shame and spitting, but was led like a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before her shearers is dumb, so he opened not his mouth*: He never quarrelled or complained because it was for our cause. Would he not quarrel with these that smote him? and will he quarrel with a poor sinner that desires to come to him, and to plead the benefit of his satisfaction? No, no; he will *rest in his love*, Zeph. iii. 17.; or, as the word signifies, *He will be silent, or dumb in his love*; he will not upbraid you for your falls, nor quarrel you for your former misdemeanours: he will be more content with your recovery, than ever he was discontent with your apostacy: he will be more pleased with your coming to him, than ever he was displeased with your sins, and departures against him. Come then, by the love and goodwill of God in Christ, by the blood and bowels of the Lord Jesus Christ, I adjure and intreat you not to exclude yourselves, by unbelief, from all the benefits of this sacrifice, that Christ offered of himself to the sword of divine wrath, but accept of this propitiation, and lay your poor guilty souls under the covert of the blood of this man that is God's Fellow: behold! God brings near this blood of Jesus to you, even to you, that are the most hardened sinners in all this house: Isa. xli. 12, 13. *Hearken unto me, ye stout-hearted and far from righteousness; behold, I bring near my righteousness.* Christ and his blood and righteousness is so near to you, that you may lay hold on him, and touch the hem of his garments, and be whole. In the name of God, I proclaim the access that you have all to come to Christ, and to look unto, and depend upon him for salvation; *Look unto him, all ye ends of the earth, and be ye saved.* I am warranted to preach this gospel *to every creature*: there is no rational creature within these walls, that stand in need of salvation, but you have it, unless you wilfully reject it; *Whosoever will, let him come.* Will you tell me, dare you say but you stand in need of Christ to come in between you and the sword of the Lord of hosts? Is the sword, the awakened sword of

God's wrath and vengeance a light matter? are you content to bear the lathes of it, in your own persons through all eternity? If not, then will you be content to change rooms with Christ? content that he be *made sin for you, and that you be made the righteousness of God in him?* 2 Cor. v. 21. Content that all your sin and guilt be laid upon him, and that all his merit and righteousness be imputed unto you? If you be not pleased with this sweet bargain, what in all the world will you do with your sin and guilt? Can you answer well enough for it at God's tribunal? What will you do with all your plagues and maladies? Can you heal them yourselves? What will you do with all the curses and threatenings of God's law, when grim death will stare you broad in the face, and when the last fetch of your breath shall summon you to come and answer before the just tribunal of God? What will you do with the flaming sword of wrath, that hangs above, hovers over your head, and will light upon you fearfully, as sure as God lives, unless you be pleased with this bargain, that Christ bear all the weight of your salvation, and all the weight of God's wrath for you? God seeks no more, and he seeks no less than this. You will say, Who would not be pleased with this bargain? Alas! Are there not many here that are not pleased? While you think that there must be some other things to please and appease God; may be you think you should have some good qualifications to please him; that your hearing, reading, praying, communicating, will please him; your tears, good motions and affections will please him: if you think so, you do not think honourably of God. Will any of these things appease the awful Judge, and ward off the avenging blow, when he says, *Awake, O sword!* No, no. If you be not pleased with the man that is God's Fellow, and him alone to be your Surety, his blood alone to be your covert from the sword of wrath, God cannot be pleased with you, though you should weep an ocean of tears, give all that you have to the poor, and give your body to be burnt; you both lose your soul and all your labour to the bargain. The question is, are you content that Christ alone answer for you? that he

he alone stand between you and the sword? If you think to put any thing else along with Christ, to stand between you and the sword, it is but a rotten rag, and the flaming sword will burn through it, and get at you with its devouring vengeance. Christ alone then must have the whole stress of your salvation laid on him: are you content? will you have salvation freely, through the blood of Jesus?

The glorious gospel is much clouded at this day, with legal terms, conditions, and qualifications. If my doctrine were upon condition that you did so and so; that you believe, and repent, and mourn, and pray, and obey, and the like, then you shall have the favour of God; I dare not for my life say, that that is the gospel: but the gospel I desire to preach, is, will you have a Christ to work faith, repentance, love, and all good in you, and to stand between you and the sword of divine wrath? Here there is no room for you to object, that you are not qualified, because you are such an hardened, unhumbled, blind, and stupid wretch; for the question is not, will you remove these evils, and then come to Christ? but, will you have a Christ to remove them for you? It is because you are plagued with these diseases that I call you to come to the Physician, that he may heal them. Are you qualified for hell and damnation? and have you much mischief and misery about you? Why, there needs be no better qualifications for you to come to Christ: we would indeed have some good qualifications in these whom we invite to a communion-table; they should be humbled, believing, penitent people; because it is presupposed that they have come to Christ, and received some good out of his hand: but when I call you to come to Christ, and seek no good qualifications of you at all, prior to your coming to him, but that you come with all your black and hellish qualifications, that he may take them away, and put some good qualifications upon you; so that, whatever bad things be about you, it should rather be an argument for your coming, than an hinderance of your coming to him; for never, never will you get your ills mended, till you come to him to do it for you.

But neither is there any room for you here to object, that your guilt is so great, and God's justice is so terrible, that you have no hope; for what am I telling you all this time, but that the terrible sword of justice is satisfied and appeased, to the full, with the blood of the man that is God's Fellow? Here is the way that God himself hath laid down for getting satisfaction; and there is no other way: though you man, woman, had the guilt of all the world lying on your back, all that is required of you is just this, to be heartily pleased and content that God get satisfaction for all your sins in this way: and if you be, the sword shall be put up in the scabbard, and never reach you: God will get his justice satisfied more gloriously this way upon you, than though he should damn you in hell to eternity.

Come, come then, before I close; away with all your objections, and let God be glorified, to the highest, in your embracing this way of salvation to your souls, and this way of satisfaction to justice. Behold! once for all, I make you the richest offer that ever was heard tell of; in the name of the Lord of hosts I offer you the Man that is God's Fellow, to be a complete Saviour to you, to stand between you and the sword of divine wrath, and to be the Burden-bearer for you; to bear the weight of all the curses of the law, the weight of all God's wrath, the weight of all your salvation for you; and to do all your work in you and for you. O soul, am I not offering a suitable and worthy match to you? He is a man indeed, but a wonderful man, the man that is God's Fellow: What say you? *Will you go with this Man?* Will you match with this Man? It is true, I am unworthy to offer the like of him; for *the latchet of his shoe* no man nor angel is *worthy to unloose*; but, as I said, it was in the name of the Lord of hosts that I was making the offer: So I tell you again, it is the great Jehovah that is offering his Son to you this day; and it becomes such a glorious God to make such a glorious offer; and it becomes no vile sinner here to refuse the offer; and refuse it or chuse it you must, there is no mids: for, be what you will, I again offer,  
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in the name of the Lord of hosts, the Man that is his Fellow. Are you a child of wrath? I offer him as a Saviour to redeem you, and deliver you *from the wrath to come*. Are you a poor bankrupt? I offer him who is the *heir of all things*, and has unsearchable riches to pay all your debt. Are you a poor ignorant creature? I offer you him as *made of God unto you wisdom*. Are you guilty? I offer him as made unto you *righteousness*. Are you polluted? I offer him to you, as made unto you *sanctification*. Are you miserable and forlorn? I offer him to you, as made of God unto you complete *redemption*. Are you hard-hearted? I offer him in that promise, *I will take away the heart of stone*. Are you content that he break your hard heart, according to his promise? Come then, put your hard heart in his hands. Are you a wretched backslider, that has backsliden an hundred times, a thousand times more than an hundred? I offer him in that promise, *I will heal your backslidings*. Are your corruptions strong and prevalent? I offer him in that promise, *I will subdue your iniquities*. Are you pleased that he do so? Are you afraid, that you revolt more and more? I offer him in that promise, *I will put my Spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes. I will put my fear in your heart, and you shall not depart from me*. Are you afraid you was never elected? meddle not with that secret; but according to the revealed will of God, I offer God's *chief Elect* to you, in whom his soul is well pleased; and if your heart go in to the offer, and you make him your Elect too, by choosing him, then your election is sure. Are you afraid you have sinned the sin against the Holy Ghost? I tell you, that as your fear of that says you was never guilty of it, so I offer the Man that is God's Fellow; and if you be content to have him, you shall never be guilty of it. Are you full of enmity against God? I offer him as a Saviour that can kill your enmity: Do you consent that he do so? Are you an impenitent creature, destitute of repentance? I offer him *as a Prince and a Saviour, exalted to give repentance and remission of sin*. Do you consent? Have you received him formerly? I offer him anew, that you may receive

ceive him again, and take a more large armful of him than ever. Have you never received him to this day? I offer him, after all the flights you have given him, to be now received and believed in. Are you unable to believe in him? have you no power to close with the offer? Why, I offer him to you as the Author of faith, to work it in you powerfully. Do you consent that he put forth his power for this effect? What shall I say? Are you unwilling to believe? Though that be the greatest let and impediment of all; behold, I offer the Man that is God's Fellow, as a Saviour by power, as well as by price, *to work in you both to will and to do.* Are you content that he put forth his power to break your enmity, and make you willing? God knows it is neither in you to will nor do, and that you have neither will nor power of your own; and faith lies not in bringing forth some great things by your own power, but in employing the power of God to work all your works in you, and for you. Behold then, the power of God is in your offer, while the man that is God's Fellow is offered: the strength of God is offered; *Let him take hold of my strength, that he may make peace with me, and he shall make peace with me;* and seeing the strength of God is offered, Oh! give it employment, saying, in your heart, O come, come powerful arm of Jehovah, and make me go in to his call. The gospel call and offer uses to be the channel of almighty power and grace.

Now, what in all the world have you to object more? Why, have you so many objections more, as you think all the ministers of earth cannot answer them? I offer you the man that is God's Fellow, to answer them all: are you content that he take all the work, and get all the glory? If you consent to this, he seeks no more of you. Are you a captive to the sword of God's justice? I offer you the man that is God's Fellow, in whose bowels the sword was bathed: and now the flaming sword that guarded the way of the tree of life is taken away, and here is the tree of life full of the apples of grace, glory, and eternal salvation; and the branches of the tree are hanging down among your hands,

hands, in the midst of the church of Dunfermline. O take, and eat, and live for ever. What say you now? I allude to the words of Jephthah, Judges xi. 9. *If I fight for you and prevail, shall I be your head?* O yes, yes, say they: so says Christ to you, if I satisfy justice for you; if I quench the flames of that fiery sword, and drown all your enemies in the red-sea of my blood, shall I be your head? Shall he be your head, man? shall he be your head, woman? Does your hearts say, Yes, yes? Does your hearts say, Amen, amen? Yea, say you, I think my heart says, Amen to the blessed offer, and that I would willingly and cheerfully consent; but my heart is deceitful, and I know not if my consent be of a true sort, or only a temporary flash; a presumptuous confidence that will vanish: well, if that be your objection, come, I offer you the man that is God's Fellow, who can answer that among the rest, and can say to your soul, *Fear not, for I am thy God; I am thy salvation.* Are you content to take him for this end, to discover the defect of your faith, and to work in you the faith of his elect? Can you say, That it is not in your faith, but in Christ himself, that you are seeking salvation? Can you say, Whatever be wrong about me, or about my faith, yet I see there is nothing wrong about Christ; and I would have him to right all that is wrong about me? Can you say, However I be in the dark about my faith, and whatever sort of faith it is that I have, yet sometimes I have found my unbelief, and that I could no more believe, than I could move the earth from its centre; but yet the joyful sound of gospel grace has touched my heart; and made me take up so much glory and excellency to be 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; for my priest, to take away the guilt of my sins; and for my king, to take away the power of my lusts. Is your heart saying, 'Gladly would I have him; gladly would I have him, that I may thus be blessed in him, and that his name may be glorified in me?' Are these the breathings of your soul? Then, upon my peril, I undertake to be the

happy messenger, and tell you, in the name of the Lord, that whatever you think of your faith, and of yourselves, as the blackest monsters of sin and guilt that ever were out of hell; yet you have the faith of God's elect, and you are married and matched with the man that is God's Fellow: yea, the Lord of hosts is your Father and Friend, reconciled in him, so as there is no fear of the sword of justice with respect to you. You are the sheep, and it awakened in all its fury and vengeance against the Shepherd, that the sheep might escape; and in testimony thereof, he invites you to commemorate this bloody sacrifice in the sacrament of the supper, where you shall see the sword bathed in his heart's blood in your room, and hear the Lord of hosts giving his solemn orders, for that effect, that he might be smitten, and you spared, saying; *Awake, O sword, against my Shepherd, against the man that is my Fellow.*

*The END of the SERMON.*

DISCOURSE *before the SERVICE of the TABLES.*

**N**OW, we are to proceed to the great work of the day: and that I may accommodate my former purpose to the present work, you may remember the doctrine I am upon is, 'That by special orders from Jehovah, the great God of hosts, the man Christ, his Shepherd and Fellow, did fall a sacrifice to the awakened sword of infinite justice, in the room of the sheep.'

There are some general inferences I have drawn from this doctrine; and now there are these four more particular inferences may be drawn from it; with a more immediate reference and relation to the great sealing ordinance we have before us.

1. Hence we may see what is the *nature* and *end* of this sacrament.

2. Hence we may see *who they are* that stand debarred and excluded from meddling with these sacred symbols of the body and blood of Christ.

3. Hence we may see the *character* of these who have a right to approach, and are invited of God to it.

4. Hence

4. Hence we may see in what *manner* believers are to approach, and come to a communion table.

Now, a word to each of these, and then we shall proceed to the work.

1. Then, the doctrine I am upon, may give us some insight into the *nature* and *end* of this sacrament. Why, it is just a celebrating the memorial of the death of the man that is God's Fellow, when, as the glorious Shepherd, he yielded himself a sacrifice to the awakened sword of justice, in the room of the sheep. In this sacrament, Christ is set forth evidently crucified among us, and therein we may hear the Lord of hosts saying, *Awake, O sword, against my Shepherd, against the man that is my Fellow; smite the Shepherd.* This sacrament is appointed to be a commemorative sign of the death of Christ; *As often as you eat this bread, and drink this cup, you shew forth the Lord's death till he come. Do this in remembrance of me;* of me, who became a sacrifice to the sword of justice; by which sacrifice all spiritual blessings, peace, pardon, reconciliation with God, grace, glory, and all good things, are purchased. The sword of justice having bathed itself, to satisfaction, in the blood of this sacrifice, the sacrament of the supper is a feast upon the sacrifice, 2 Cor. v. 7. *Even Christ our passover is sacrificed for us; therefore let us keep the feast. This is the feast of fat things, and of wines on the lees well refined.* Upon the body and blood of Christ, represented by the elements of bread and wine, which is just a feeding upon, and viewing by faith, the value and virtue of the sacrifice for satisfying God, for expiating sin, for vanquishing hell, and for purchasing heaven, and all the means that lead unto it; as also, for sealing the covenant of grace, and all the promises of it, which are all yea and amen in Jesus Christ, the testament being ratified and confirmed by the death of the Testator, Heb. ix. 16. But again,

2. From this doctrine we may see *who they are* that stand debarred and excluded from meddling with these sacred symbols of the body and blood of Christ in this sacrament; namely, in general, all *unbelievers*, who never having seen their wicked state, as liable to the stroke

of divine wrath, because of their sin and guilt, had not fled under the covert of the blood of the Shepherd, of the blood of the man that is God's Fellow, who was smitten in the room of the sheep. What have these to do with the sign, who never apprehended the thing signified, namely, the propitiation of the blood of Christ? And therefore, in the great and awful name and authority of the great and glorious Jehovah, I solemnly debar and excommunicate, from the table of the Lord, all who never found themselves in any measure pursued by the avenger of blood, the sword of the Lord of hosts, and never have fled for refuge to the blood of Christ, the man that is God's Fellow, to stand between them and the avenging sword of justice; these that will not come to Christ, let them not dare to come to his table, nor come to abuse the symbols of his blood; who, by unbelief trample his blood under their feet, and will not make use of it as the sacrifice to satisfy justice in their room. But, that it may appear more distinctly, whom I here debar, in the name of the Lord, I shall tell you who they are, that never made any saving use of the blood of Christ, the man that is God's Fellow, but slight and neglect this sacrifice and offering for sin, which he has made of himself to the sword of justice, and so stand debarred and excommunicated from the table of the Lord.

(1.) All these who think to make their peace with God, without minding the *necessity* of any thing *intervening between him and them*; not knowing that peace with God must be founded upon the blood of the man that is his Fellow. Some are utterly careless how their peace be made, or whether it be made or not, they hope for it, and think to come at it, but they cannot tell how; and are careless to know the way. Others presume, and think God loves them, because they love themselves; and though they know they have sin, they think God will not be so ill-natured as to reckon with them; they think God loves them, but they cannot give a ground for it. Others think that God is merciful, and therefore they conclude they will be pardoned and accepted; because a merciful man sometimes seeks no satisfaction, so they think much more will a merciful

ful God seek none; not knowing, that though God be merciful, he will not shew mercy to the prejudice of his justice. But the thought of these people is upon the matter, that they would have obtained mercy though Christ had never become a sacrifice to the sword of justice, without respect to the mediation of the man that is God's Fellow.—These therefore I debar, in God's great name, from the table of the Lord.

(2.) Another sort, who despise this sacrifice made to the sword of justice, is, all these who take the *legal way* of making their peace with God. Not as if they thought to appear before God without sin and holiness, as the covenant of works requires; but who think, that if they sin, they will make amends; and that either by something negative, that they have not done, or something positive, that they have done; or some internal qualification, that they rest upon. Some think to make amends to God by something *negative*; that they have not been so ill as other people; and if they go to hell, they think few will go to heaven; and if they were to die, they think they care not, they have done no person any injury; they have carried very harmlessly, like the Pharisee, *God, I thank thee, I am not like other men; I am no drunkard, or adulterer, or oppressor, or swearer*; and when they see any profane persons, they are puffed up with a good opinion of themselves, because they are not so profane as they: these I debar, in the name of the Lord. Others think to make amends to God by something *positive*; they do many good duties, like the same Pharisee, that boasted, *I fast twice a week, I give tithes of all that I possess*; if any duty be performed, or any good be done by them, their fingers are ready to stick to it; they rest there, and hope God will be pleased and pacified on this account: these I debar, in the name of the Lord. Others, upon this same head, think to make amends by some *internal qualification*, that they rest upon: if at any time they have liberty, and motions of affection in prayer, stirrings of conviction in hearing; and joys of heart, like the stony-ground hearers; any sorrow of heart, or sadness for sin, these they think will do their turn, and they think they need no other sacrifice to God,  
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but a broken heart; sadly mistaking the nature of a true evangelical brokenness of spirit. It is certain, both from scripture and experience, that many hundreds of professors dash and perish on this stumbling-block; *They call themselves of the holy city; yea, and stay themselves upon the God of Israel, Isa. xlvi. 2. They seek him daily, and delight to know his ways; yea, delight in approaching to God, Isa. lviii. 2.* Expectation of happiness, grounded upon some weak performance, and some internal motions and qualifications, do cut the throat of many civil and discreet men, that are not grossly profane.—All these, therefore, that make any of these things the ground of their hope of peace with God, I debar and excommunicate from the table of the Lord, as being strangers to the true ground of peace, the Man that is God's Fellow, becoming a sacrifice to the sword of justice.

(3.) Another sort, who make no right use of this sacrifice offered to the sword of justice, are these, who, though they make use of Christ, as the object of their worship, yet make not use of his blood as the *ground* of their justification and peace with God: as if they would not altogether neglect Christ, and yet they neglect his offering, and would make use of himself, but not of his sacrifice; like the man that came to him, saying, *Good master, what shall I do, that I may inherit eternal life?* He was going upon the ground of his own righteousness; so some, they may come to Christ, to desire his help to enable them to do duty, that by doing thereof they may work out their own salvation; and be helped this way to make their peace with God: thus, by grace, sought and received from him, they hope to be their own Saviour and Peace-maker, with God; and so were never brought to ground the making of their peace with God, upon Christ's sacrifice and offering alone. These therefore I also debar from this holy table.

(4.) A fourth sort, that never made right use of this sacrifice to justice's sword, and propitiation in the blood of Christ, are all these, who never got such a view of the *love of God*, in this sacrifice, as to *kill the love of sin in them*, and to bring down the reigning power of sin; for

for the great end of Christ's sufferings was to *bring us to God*; the great end of his giving himself a sacrifice to the sword of justice, was to *redeem us from all iniquity*; and to *purchase to himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works*. And hence they are yet strangers to Christ, who never felt any measure of the virtue of this sacrifice, in sanctifying, purifying, and making them study holiness. And therefore I debar from this table, all *impenitent sinners* and breakers of God's commandments; all whose names are in that black catalogue, Mat. xv. 19. Rom. i. 29,—32. all whose names are in that black list, Gal. v. 19,—21. and all whose names are in these black rolls, 1 Cor. vi. 9, 10. Rev. xxii. 15. —All *Atheists* that practically deny the being of God, in their lives and conversations; and ignorant persons that know not the principles of religion, and the nature of this ordinance; and profane persons, who mock at sacred things, neglect public ordinances, on week-days or sabbath-days, and neglect family-worship, and secret prayer.—All *profane swearers*, whether by God, or the devil, or faith, or conscience, or whatsoever is more than, yea and nay. —All *sabbath-breakers*, who put no difference between that and other days.—All that are unfaithful in their relative stations; as magistrates or subjects, masters or servants, parents or children.—All *murderers*, and these who give way to the killing sins of malice, passion, revenge; and the self-murdering sins of drunkenness, gluttony, and tipping.—All *whoremongers, adulterers, fornicators, Sodomites, and unclean persons*, who never mortified the deeds of the body.—All *thieves, oppressors, and cheats*, that study to over-reach their neighbour in their dealing.—All *false witnesses and liars*, that make no conscience of speaking the truth; *perjured persons*, that make no bonds of unlawful oaths; *covenant-breakers*, and such as are enemies to a covenanted work of reformation in these lands.—All *covetous persons*, whose hearts are glued to the world.—In a word, I debar all *formalists*, and *hypocrites*, and *legalists*; all that never saw and bewailed their heart-plagues of atheism, enmity, pride, hypocrisy, and unbelief: all who know  
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not the difference between the law and the gospel; the covenant of works and the covenant grace; and between legal and evangelical preaching.—All that never felt any thing of the *power of God's word on their heart*, in convincing them of sin, original and actual, and drawing them to Christ, as their righteousness and strength, for justification and sanctification.—I debar all who *hate to be reprov'd* of their faults, and contemn their reprovers; and all who can be *witnesses* to the sins and faults of others, and yet never give any sort of testimony against them.—I debar all who *love not the godly*, nor care for their company: all who love not the *Bible*, nor search the scriptures: all who love not *Zion*, nor care how matters go with the church of Christ; whether its members be divided or alienated; whether its interest sink or swim: All who can go lightly over the belly of their own conscience, for fear of outward losses or crosses, and easily cross their light to please men.—I debar all that are not *lovers of the truth*, but espousers of error: Socinians, Arminians, and Antinomians, who are properly so called, for some are wrongfully and ignorantly so designed.—I debar all that think they have *believed all their days*, and never were convinced of unbelief, nor found religion a work above them, and their natural powers.—I debar all who have *no errand to the Lord's table*, but to take a little bread and wine, and think it an easy work to communicate; nor ever had any fears or jealousies about their miscarrying in that work: All who come only to keep up a *name among professors*: and all that have no other tokens for communion, but that which they have got from their ministers or elders: all who have been at no pains whatsoever to prepare for this work: and all, on the other hand, who think they are prepared enough, and have no other thing to rest upon but their own preparation.—All these, and others of that stamp, I do, in the name of the living and eternal God, debar from this holy table, as being strangers to the Man that is God's Fellow, and strangers to the sacrifice whereby he has satisfied the awakened sword of infinite justice: therefore, as you would  
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not take a cup of poison to destroy yourselves, as you would not eat and drink damnation to yourselves, and bring down the guilt of the blood of Christ upon your head, do not dare to venture to this holy table; for, *He that eats this bread, and drinks this cup of the Lord unworthily, shall be guilty of the body and blood of the Lord.* And if you will venture notwithstanding, remember, though you have got a token from me, or any person else, your blood is upon your own head, if you find yourself now debarrèd, and yet come to trample upon the blood of the Man that is God's Fellow.

But now, lest I should fright any of the children from their food, who are apt to take these things to them, more than they to whom they are principally *directed*, therefore I proceed,

3. To a *third* inference, with relation to this ordinance, that may be drawn from our doctrine, namely, Hence we may see the *character* of those who have a right to approach, and are of God invited thereto; namely, in general, all *believers*, who, through grace, have been made to flee unto the covert of the blood of the Shepherd; into the covert of the blood of the Man that is God's Fellow, to screen them from the sword of divine wrath. As we dare not, for our souls, allow or encourage any to approach this ordinance, who are unbelievers, under whatsoever names and designations they may be called; so, on the other hand, we dare not, for our souls, disallow, or discourage from this work, any the least, the weakest believer in Christ, that has gone in with the call of the gospel, and closed with, and embraced this sacrifice whereby justice is satisfied: And therefore, in the name and authority of the same glorious God, and gracious Lord, I invite to this table of the Lord, all such, whatever there sins have been, though guilty of the sins that I have named, or whatever else; all such, I say, whatever there guilt be, who have taken this gospel-method of getting their sin and guilt expiated and removed, namely, by hiding their guilty souls under the wings of Christ's righteousness, who gave himself a sacrifice to satisfy the sword of

justice. But that it may be known more distinctly whom I mean by such believers in Christ, as I am calling to the Lord's table, you may examine yourselves more particularly from the doctrine; *Let a man examine himself, and so let him eat.* I hope you that are to communicate as believers, have been examining yourselves before this time; but if you be yet in the dark, there are these four marks may be drawn out of our text and doctrine, for clearing whether you be believers indeed, that have closed with the man that is God's Fellow, as a sacrifice to the sword of justice in your room.

(1.) Have you seen, sometime or other, the sword of justice awaking against *your own souls*, the avenger of blood pursuing you? Have you heard such a knell as that in your heart, *Awake, O sword; awake, O law; awake, O vengeance, curses, and threatnings against a man for his sins?* Have you been so filled with the fear of hell and wrath, as you have been put to cry, *Men and brethren, what shall I do to be saved?* Or, have you been put to more concern about salvation, than ever you was about any thing else in the world? And have you seen, in this case, the natural tendency of your heart to rest upon some other thing for peace with God than this sacrifice, which Christ offered of himself to the sword of justice? There is such a natural inclination in all to rest upon some other thing for peace with God, and it is a good token when it is discovered, and becomes a burden and a ground of a challenge, that they have had a sinful inclination to put duties, prayers, tears, enlargements, and the like, in Christ's room. *Before the law came, I was alive,* says Paul; and thought I had a stock of righteousness in myself to be the ground of my peace with God; *But when the commandment came, sin revived, and I died:* when, by the law, I got the knowledge of sin, I died to all conceit of myself and my righteousness; *What things were formerly gain unto me, these I counted loss for Christ.*—Now, if you have been thus pursued by justice, which you see no sacrifice will satisfy, but that of the Man that is God's Fellow, and have been burdened with your natural inclination to some other sacrifice, I think the

the Lord has begun the good work upon you, and therefore I call and invite you to the table of the Lord.

(2.) Have you seen the *glory* and *excellency* of this sacrifice? What a glorious ransom God has found out for his own satisfaction, that thousands of rams could not do it, but that one Lamb could do it, even the Lamb of God sacrificed? Have you seen the sword quenching its thirst in the blood of the Lamb? and have you taken up the love and mercy of God in providing such a Lamb, such a ram caught in the thickets, when your neck, like Isaac's, was upon the block? Have you seen him to be a worthy ransom, because of the worthiness of the person sacrificed, he being God's Fellow, God-man in one person, and so acting in his Father's name, and by his appointment, when he yielded obedience to the death, as being his Shepherd, whom he sealed for this end? And has the view and apprehension of him, in this mediatorial glory, drawn forth your esteem of him and of his offering and sacrifice, so as you could venture heaven, and your eternal salvation upon it; so that you desire to say, *To him that loved me, and washed me in his own blood, to him be glory?* Is the view of this sacrifice that which cheers and delights you most? and is it matter of wonder to you, now and then, that when the stroke of justice was ready to come upon you, Christ should have interposed between you and the fatal deadly blow; Can you say, *You count all but loss and dung, that you may win Christ, and be found in him;* so that you care not what be cast over-board, if you but get to that shore, even Christ and his righteousness? Then welcome are you to the table of of the Lord; I invite you in his glorious name.

(3.) Have you found your *souls in safety*, from the sword of justice, under this shadow of the blood of the man that is God's Fellow? Nothing rightly satisfies the awakened challenges of conscience, but that which satisfies the awakened sword of justice; and that is the smitting of the Shepherd, and the blood of the Lamb that is his Fellow. Now, have you seen God's justice satisfied thereby, and found your conscience satisfied with the same? Have you, some time or other, found

your soul at peace under this covert of blood, knowing that the sword was put up in its scabbard, it being fully satisfied with the blood of God? This is a being pleased with what the Lord of hosts is pleased; and you have thus, being justified by faith, had peace with God, through our Lord Jesus Christ. Where go you, when under challenges for sin? Do you find most peace in this sacrifice, even when you have the deepest and most kindly impression of your sin? For the Legalist, he can believe well enough, when he has no challenges for sin, but under these challenges, his faith fails him. But for you, believer, under all challenges, do you find this is always your only shift, the blood of Christ, the sacrifice of the man that is God's Fellow? Is this also your only shift when you think of death, or of appearing before the judgment-seat of God? Do you make such use of Christ's offering to justice, as that it is your constant desire to put Christ in your room? Is the language of your soul, O! I desire no accompting and reckoning with justice; nay, I dare not count and reckon with Christ, but my soul, as it were, leaves Christ in its room, and runs away from reckoning with justice, to hide itself under his wings, who can count to the utmost farthing. Dear soul, who has attained to something of this in reality, I invite you, in my Master's name to come to his table.

(4.) Is it oft-times matter of exercise to you, to get over *all other sacrifices to this alone*, whereby the awakened sword of justice is appeased? Can you say, it has been matter of exercise to you, not only how to get over your sins unto Christ; but also, how to get over your graces and duties to him, so as you might not trust therein, to the prejudice of trusting in Christ? Paul not only, while in nature, but even after conversion, found an inclination to count some thing gain, beside Christ; and therefore, in opposition to this inclination, he does, with a *doubtless*, cry down *all things*, and *count them dung and loss*, for the excellency of the *knowledge of Christ*, Philip. iii. 8, 9. Taking in his gracious actings, and actions, as well as others, and found a need to cast away the good, as well as the bad in point

point of justification. Did you ever find it a harder exercise to be quit of your duties, tears, and enlargements in point of dependence, than to be rid of your sins? The believer has one exercise of faith, how to be quit of sin; and another new exercise, how to be freed from resting on duties, and how to be singly engaged in resting on Christ: his mind is not quiet in all his duties, till he come hither, even to be found in Christ, to have his peace with God founded upon Christ, and not upon duties. The Legalist, when he gets duties performed, then he has peace; but the believer, though he should be about duties a whole day, and is indeed more engaged in duties readily than the Legalist himself, that relies thereon; but let him be about duties a whole day, yet perhaps he has little or no peace, because he would be over all duties, to Christ himself, as his resting place; and so has no peace till he enjoy him to his satisfaction. Hence also, he is oft-times full of fears and jealousies, lest, through unbelief, he put some other thing in the room of Christ's sacrifices. A natural man may, perhaps, suspect his duties, lest they be wrong; but the believer is more taken up in suspecting his faith, saying, *Lord, I believe, help my unbelief*: he dares not trust his own faith, knowing his evil heart of unbelief that he has within him. Well, if this be oft-times matter of exercise to you, poor soul, to get over all other sacrifices and services, to this great sacrifice, Christ Jesus, in whom alone the sword of justice is satisfied, I invite you, as a believer, to feast at the Lord's table, upon the sacrifice. Does the faith of this sacrifice purify your heart, so that you long to be perfectly holy, seeing and lamenting your own unholiness and impurity, and desiring daily to bring your impure sins and lusts, to the fountain opened, by the sword of justice, in the heart of a pierced Christ?—I then invite you, in the name of the Lord, to this holy table, as one that has seen the value, and shared of the virtue, and participated of the efficacy of this sacrifice, given by the man that is God's Fellow, to the awakened sword of justice.

In a word, is there any here, who, under a sense of  
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sin, see an absolute need of this sacrifice; who under a sense of their unworthiness, are fearing and trembling to approach to the Lord's table, and yet would give all the world for a share of the saving and healing virtue of this glorious sacrifice; and see nothing in the wide world so fit for them as Christ? I invite them to the Lord's table. Are there any here lamenting the Lord's anger and absence at this day? lamenting that things are so far wrong in the house of God, and that there is so little power and glory of God seen in the sanctuary, and panting after communion and fellowship with him, crying, *O that I knew where I might find him. O that it were with me as in times past!* O for an heart to love Christ! O for a sealed interest in Christ! O for the healing balsam of the blood of the Lamb to cure the sad plagues of my heart, which I see to be as black as hell! O come and take a drink, poor soul, at the Lord's table, even a full draught of the blood of Christ, which cleanses from all sin! Is there any here, any poor creature, that sees and laments his own weakness, and the power of sin and corruption in him, pained to the heart with his numberless backslidings from the Lord Jesus? I would gladly have a knot cast between Christ and his soul, that may never loose; such strength and grace communicate, as that he may never go back from God: I invite you to come forward to the Lord's table, and get a strengthening meal.—Perhaps there is some trembling weak believer here, that is doubting, whether he has grace, or not; whether he be a believer or not; O cry to the Spirit of God to be sent to clear you, by shewing to you the things that are freely given you of God. I shall only ask you, who are fearing you have no interest in him, no portion in the son of Jesse, the man that is God's Fellow; tell me, will you quit your part of him? Could you freely choose to take the world, and your lusts, and let others take Christ who please? would you find in your heart to rest contented with other things, and give any body your part of Christ? What say you to that, poor doubting soul? Is your heart now melting, and relenting within you, and saying, O minister! what is that you are saying? that wounds me to the bottom  
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of my soul! quit all my part of Christ! O no, no, no! If I were sure of my interest in him, I would not quit my part in him for ten thousand, thousand, thousand worlds; and even as it is, though I dare not assert, that I have an interest in him, yet I would not say that I would quit my part in him; no, for all that lies within the bosom of the universe. Is that the language of your heart? Well, Christ hears that, and he will mind it as a token of some heart-kindness to him. Can you say, that God will be just and righteous though he should send you to the bottom of hell, instead of allowing you to sit at this table; and if such a dog as you, get a crumb from him, it will be a miracle of mercy? Can you say, that though doubts and darkness, and innumerable evils be now surrounding you, yet, for what you know, it was a day of power you met with at such a time, in which a saving work, as you thought, was begun, and now you would willingly have it cleared up to you? Can you say, that though you have a thousand objections against yourself, and your own heart and frame, yet you have no objections against Christ? at least if any reasonings and high imaginations against him be risen and raging in your heart, you would gladly take hold of him, that he may cast all down, and take and keep the throne himself? Do you see the way of salvation, through free grace, and through his perfect righteousness, to be an excellent way, worthy of God, and suitable to man, becoming the wisdom and glory of God, and that you are well pleased with this way? Can you finally say, that you are one of the poorest creatures in all the world; poor and needy, destitute of all good, of all grace, of all faith, love, repentance, holiness, and any other spiritual quality in yourselves; but that you see an infinite fulness in Christ, that can supply you, and out of which you desire to be supplied, with all that you need? and can appeal to heaven, that in him only you desire to be found, who is *all in all*? Can you say, Yea and Amen to these things? Then, poor soul, I charge and command you, in the name of the Lord of hosts, to venture forward to this table, as you would not displease him, and grieve his holy Spirit by staying away, when  
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he calls you, and commands you to do this in remembrance of him, and of his kindness to you. You know not if ever you will get another opportunity, poor straying, wandering sheep; though you be such a weak creature, as that you think, if you be among the flock of Christ at all, you are the worst among them all for sin; and the last among them all for grace; and straying so far behind all the rest of the flock, that you will never get up among the rest, unless the great Shepherd take you up in his arms, and carry you; I charge you, in his name, to come forward, and see the glorious Shepherd smitten with the sword of justice in your room. —And now, hoping I have prevailed, or rather that the Lord has, and will prevail, with his little flock, to come to the Lord's table, and hear the Lord of hosts sacramentally saying, *Awake, O sword, against my Shepherd, the man that is my fellow.* I close with

4. A *fourth* inference from this doctrine, with relation to this ordinance: hence we may see in what *manner* it is that believers should approach to a communion-table, since the sword of Jehovah's wrath is ordered to smite the Shepherd, the man that is God's Fellow. Then you ought to commemorate this sacrifice, and come to his table.

(1.) With *wonder* and *astonishment*. O come! wondering that the sword of the Lord of hosts, that infinitely just God, should pass by you, man; and you, woman, that was an enemy; and satisfy himself upon the man that was his Friend, the man that was his Fellow, by smiting the Shepherd in the room of the sheep: that the man who is God's Fellow should be made sin for you; made a curse for you; made shame for you; made a sacrifice to justice for you; and made the channel in which the wrath and displeasure of God should run so as to run by you, and never light upon you. O wonder! wonder, men and angels!

(2.) Come with *praise*, *gratitude*, and *thankfulness* to the Lord of hosts, and to the man that is his Fellow, for such a wonderful contrivance of salvation. What posture did grace find you in, poor believer? even lying open to the stroke of God's drawn sword of justice; and

our Lord Jesus, on the one side, stept in and said, Hold, Lord, let that stroak fall upon me, and let them go free; and, upon their side, there was God's good pleasure, condescending to accept of his offer, saying, *Awake, O sword; smite the Shepherd, and spare the sheep.* Poor soul, that desires to flee to him for refuge! Christ has changed rooms with you, by interposing to keep the stroak off you, and receiving it into his own bowels: and, O what infinite obligations to love and thankfulness does this lay you under! How will he be praised for ever among the redeemed for his love! Come, singing *unto him that loved us, and washed us from our sins, in his blood,—to him be glory.*

(3.) Come with *boldness, confidence, and cheerfulness.* What a shame and dishonour to the glorious Shepherd is it, that the sheep should be always trembling and quaking, while they are under such a sure and safe covert, as the blood and righteousness of the Shepherd! If we were coming to deal with God about salvation, upon the footing of any thing in us, we might indeed be confounded with despair, and could not stand far enough away from God; but when you are to deal with him upon the score of the God-pleasing, justice-satisfying blood of the man that is his Fellow, we cannot come with too much boldness: on this ground let us *come boldly to the throne of grace, having boldness to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus.* Is it the blood of God's Shepherd, the blood of the man that is his Fellow! Is it not thy valuable blood, or not? Then, why should you give way to diffidence? What a shame is it that we dare scarcely trust to his sacrifice! Therefore,

(4.) Come with *full assurance of faith*: assured of the love and good-will of God in Christ, in whom his sword is pacified, and through whom peace with God is proclaimed, and a cessation of arms to all eternity. If you can attain to this full assurance of faith, poor weak believer, you will, no doubt, come forward, as the Lord shall help you, under covert of this honourable sacrifice; come hoping against hope, and believing against unbelief; say, *Lord, I believe, help my unbelief.* Come

lamenting your unbelief, and crying to him for faith. Come depending on him for grace to communicate in a suitable way, and for grace to take a hearty draught of the sword-satisfying blood of the man that is his Fellow.

S E R V I C E at the T A B L E.

**N**OW, believers, what was Moses's work when the angel of the Lord appeared in a flame of fire out of the midst of the bush, Exod. iii. 2. when the bush burned with fire and was consumed? Why, says Moses, *I will turn aside, and see this great sight.* That same should be your work and exercise now, at a communion-table: *turn aside, and see this great sight*; what sight? the greatest sight that ever was seen, the eternal Son of God in the bush of our nature, and this bush burning in the flames of divine wrath, for our sakes, and in our room and stead, and yet the bush not consumed. O! with what holy fear ought you to look upon this great sight! *Put off thy shoes from off thy feet,* says God to Moses, *for the place where thou standest is holy ground*: and Moses hid his face, for he was afraid *to look upon God.* You may perhaps think, if you were as great a saint as Moses, you would not be afraid; but, O the sight of God is an awful thing to the greatest saint on earth, and humbles them to the dust! But, if you be a saint at all, I will tell you, you will be reckoning yourself the greatest sinner out of hell, the chief of sinners; and if it be so, sure I am, this great sight may be more wonderful in your eyes to see the sword of divine wrath drunk in the blood of the glorious Surety, in your room.

Solomon says, *He that is surety for a stranger shall smart for it,* Prov. xi. 15. Behold the Son of God become Surety for you, that was a stranger and alien; but he must *smart for it*: or, as it may be rendered, *He shall be sore broken.* So was the Son of God, our Surety; he was broken in soul, broken in body, broken to pieces; and we have here the symbols of his broken body; for, *In the same night in which he was betrayed,*  
*he*

*he took bread*, as you see us take it here, after his example.—

Now, spectators ; now, communicants ; if you have the eye of faith, you might see a broken Christ represented under this broken bread ; now you may hear God saying, *Awake, O sword, against my Shepherd. All we like lost sheep had gone astray ; and we have turned every one to his own way, and the Lord, the Lord of hosts, has laid on him the iniquities of us all.* Sin brings down the sword of vengeance ; but, behold your sin laid upon the Shepherd, and thereupon the Lord of hosts saying, *Awake, O sword, against the Shepherd.* O rare and ravishing contrivance ! O admirable and amiable contrivance ! O beautiful and beneficial contrivance ! Eternally blessed be the Contriver ! and eternally blessed be the Shepherd ! O infinitely kind and compassionate Shepherd, that laid down his life for the sheep, and *feeds his flock like a shepherd* ! yea, feeds them with his flesh and blood ! for, having broken it, he gave it to his disciples, saying, *Take ye, eat ye ; this is my body broken for you : this do in remembrance of me.*—ME ! what for a ME, is this ? who was it that was smitten by the sword of justice ? Why, it is even the Shepherd, the man that is God's Fellow, his own Son : we have sinned, and he is smitten for it ; the sword awaked against him, and we go free : O sinner, sinner ! O guilty sinner, filthy sinner, wretched sinner ! who in all the world would have done that for you that Christ has done ? Who in all the world could have suffered that for you, that Christ has suffered ? O communicant, apply, apply his doing and dying to yourself in particular, and say, O marvellous and matchless love ! O boundless and bottomless love ! *He loved me, and gave himself for me !* Or, if you cannot attain to the particular application, that he did it for you ; yet, O wonder, wonder, that ever he did and suffered so much for any ; for he suffered the hell of all the elect ; God made a gape or wound in the breast of Christ, with the sword of his justice, and then poured in a whole hell of wrath upon him. O ! is it not good your part, to remember him, who remembered you when the sword of justice was ready to be sheathed in

your bowels, and to drink in the blood of your soul? No sooner did the Son of God behold the sword at your breast, and the hand of justice fetching the bloody stroak, but he cries out, O Father, hold thy hand; let all that vengeance that is due to those poor guilty creatures, fall upon me; behold I open my breast to receive the stroak of justice in their room. They have broken thy law, but here I am to fulfil it for them; they have enraged thy justice, but here I am ready to satisfy justice for them; they have drunk up iniquity like water; but lo! I will drink up the gall and vinegar of thy vengeance for them: *Lo! I come*; let the sword light upon me with all its vengeance. Come, come then, my beloved Son, says God, the Lord of hosts, you know what this work will cost you; will you stand your hazard? Yes, yes, says Christ: what will I not do for thy glory, and for those miserable sinners? What will I not suffer for them? let it be infinite vengeance, I bear it for them. —Content, content, then says the Father; and therefore, *Awake, O sword, against my Shepherd, and against the man that is my Fellow; smite the Shepherd*. Well, the Shepherd, the man, the wonderful man, is smitten, and the bloody stroak opens a wide gap in his heart, from hence streams a river of blood; *A river, the streams whereof make glad the city of God*: and of this river you are called to drink this day. Christ having sacrificed himself a peace-offering to the Lord of hosts, He, as the antetype of Moses, did sprinkle the blood of the sacrifice on the people; and therefore, *in the same manner, after supper, also he took the cup, when he had supped, saying, This cup is the New Testament in my blood; this do, as oft as you drink it, in remembrance of me; for, as oft as ye eat this bread and drink this cup, ye do shew forth the Lord's death till he come again.*—*Without the shedding of blood there is no remission*: but there is blood shed; take it, and remission of your sins with it; it is worthy blood, the blood of the man that is God's Fellow: the sword of justice has got such a full draught of this blood, that it craves no more. As long as God's justice is demanding vengeance, no man can stand before God: but here justice has no more to crave; for the  
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the satisfaction Christ gave was full measure, heaped up, and running over; he *offered himself to God, for a sweet-smelling savour*; justice was pacified and satisfied, and love got a vent towards man: and hence, instead of a cup of wrath, you have a cup of love to drink. What was justice seeking from Christ, when the sword was running through his heart? Why, justice was even pursuing him for your debt, and exacting all of the Surety that was due by you. May it not affect the heart of any debtor, that has the least spark or remains of ingenuity, to see his cautioner dragged to prison for his debt? But here you see more, the sword of justice not only arresting your Surety, but running him through, and killing him. O may not this fill you with hatred of your sins, and love to your Surety, that was so well pleased to be thus dealt with for you! Let not unbelief say, that you cannot think that this blood was shed for such a hellish sinner, such a wonderful sinner as you; for it would not be such wonderful blood, if it was not for the cleansing of such wonderful sinners: be your sins what they will, lay them under the covert of this blood, the blood of the man that is God's Fellow; as sure as he was smitten you shall escape; for, *He was wounded for our sins*. True, when he was wounded by the awakened sword, he might have cried, O Father, these sins are not mine; these transgressions are not mine; these faults and miscarriages, these black crimes are not mine; why should I be smitten for them? No, no: there was never such a word in his mouth. Love breathed out some other language; 'I was content, as a Surety, to take all that sin and guilt upon me; and now, I am as content to bear the weight of all that wrath and vengeance that their sins deserved.' O mighty love!

Now, my dear friends, the time of a communion action should be a busy time. When you see the sword of justice awakened against Christ, O lay all the enemies of God, especially his enemies within you, under the stroke of his sword of justice: bring all your *lusts* and *idols* to the justice of God, saying, *Awake, O sword of justice against these my sins and smite them*.—What think you

you of this love, believers? What think you of this love, communicants? What think you of this love, spectators? If it had not been for this, instead of weeping at a communion-table, you had been weeping in hell. Awake, O sword, against my lusts, and give this lust a stroak, and that lust a stroak; Awake, O sword, against this pride and passion of mine, and give it a stroak; awake, O sword, against that enmity, unbelief, and legality of mine, and give them a stroak; awake, O sword, against my atheism, carnality, and worldly-mindedness, and give these a stroak; awake, O sword, against my filthiness and frowardness, my uncleanness and vileness of heart and way, my Delilah sins, and O give them a stroak.—Bring forth all your sins, and particularly the sins that easily beset you, bring them forth to the sword, the sword of justice, to be hewed in piece, like Agag, before the Lord; saying, *Lord, let the sword that awaked against my Lord, awake against my lusts, that they may be crucified with him.* O take vengeance on thy enemies within me! O it will be a blessed communion-day if it were but a day of vengeance upon your sins and lusts. O! cry down the vengeance of the sword of justice upon them.

And as you should bring forth all your sins, so bring forth all your *wants*: whatever you want to your own souls; to your friends; to your family; to your children; to your neighbours, and Christian acquaintances, that desire you to mind them; lay all your wants before the man that is God's Fellow; who, as he is the sacrifice for your sins, so he is the store-house for your supply; *My God shall supply all your need, according to his riches in glory, by Christ Jesus,* Philip. iv. 19. Want you any thing for the church of Scotland? Our great want at this day is a spirit of zeal, a spirit of love, and a sound mind; the want of God's holy Spirit makes much division and disorder; O cry down the Spirit! And do not wonder if the Shepherd be smitten, that the sheep may be scattered; this was fulfilled when *all the disciples were offended because of him, in the night wherein he was betrayed; and all forsook him and fled: they were scattered, every one to his own,* like so many timorous

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rous sheep, and left him alone, John xvi. 32.—*But I will turn my hand on my little ones*: some make that word a threatening, that, as Christ suffered, so shall his disciples; they shall be baptized with the bloody baptism he was baptized with. Think not strange, if a scaffold of blood should be your trial; if you be a believer indeed, you shall notwithstanding overcome by the blood of the Lamb, by the blood of the Shepherd, the man that is God's Fellow. *I will turn my hand on the little ones*: some make it a promise, that God will gather together the scattered sheep; the little ones among Christ's scholars, may be divided and dispersed, but they shall rally again. O look for a time when he will return; and, in mercy, *turn his hand on the little ones*.

Now, let all the little ones, the poor, weak, feeble sheep of the flock, follow and lean upon the great Shepherd that was smitten for them, and he will supply all your wants, subdue all your iniquities, pardon all your sins, and bear all your burdens, and sanctify all your crosses, and do all your work in you and for you. If you have not now gotten what you would have, cry to him, and wait upon him, and let it be the top of your desires and endeavours, to have more and more fellowship, with the man that is God's Fellow, especially in his being the only sacrifice to the sword of justice in your room. Upon this sacrifice wherewith God is so infinitely well pleased, let all your hope of grace and glory depend.

Now, go in peace, and may the *God of peace, that brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus, that great Shepherd of the sheep, through the blood of the everlasting covenant, make you perfect, in every good work, to do his will; working in you that which is well pleasing in his sight, through Jesus Christ; to whom be glory for ever and ever. Amen.*

## S E R M O N II.\*

The RENT VAIL of the TEMPLE;  
or, Access to the Holy of Holies by  
the DEATH of CHRIST.

M A T T H. 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 *connexion* of this verse, with what went before, in the particle AND, intimating, the time of this miracle, that it intended 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,

\* This sermon was preached on the sabbath-evening, immediately after the administration of the sacrament of the Lord's supper at Carnock, July 12th, 1719. It hath undergone five editions.

Isa. liii. 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, 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 mysterious and significant therein, Mark x. 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, 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 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 to the bottom; an intire 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 veil of his flesh, the literal temple did, as it were, echo 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. iii. 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 *cerimonial law*; Christ, by his death repealed it, and *cancelled that handwriting 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 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 the 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 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 veil was rent, Heb. ix. 7,—13. Though Christ did not personally ascend

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. 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 veil.* We have now free access to come with boldness to a throne of grace, to a God in Christ, Heb. iv. 16. 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 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 veil, Heb. vi. 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.*

**OBSER.** *That Christ, by his death hath 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. 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 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 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* the *vail* is 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 lost their end; why? they apprehended a *vail* betwixt them and the glory of God, and thought it impossible to get through the *vail*: but perhaps, you knew 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 if yet 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 to thee, if thou wouldst believe, thou shalt see the glory of God?* But I proceed in the method proposed.

I. 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 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

was a precept, a promise, and a penalty. The precept was *do*, or perfect obedience; the promise was *life*, or eternal happiness upon 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 execute. Here is a veil that separates betwixt God and us; a veil that neither men nor 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 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 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 righteousness 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

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,

3. A third veil, and that is the veil of *sin* on our part. This is a separating veil betwixt God and us, Isa. lix. 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 hopes of mercy: therefore says the prophet, *it is a people of no understanding; therefore he that made them, will not have mercy on them.*—There is in us a power of enmity, *The carnal mind is enmity against God,* etc.—We are enemies to God by wicked works: this is another veil that must be rent by the 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 this 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.*

II. 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 to God through that veil of the law; for the law was fulfilled in

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 an 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 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. 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 this veil. 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 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

crificed 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,* etc. 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 also is 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 had done fundamentally and virtually on the cross. By this purchased Spirit he rends the veils of darkness and ignorance: *The God who commanded light to shine out of darkness, shines into the heart,* etc. 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 veil of enmity; for we love him whenever we see that he first loved us, 1 John iv. 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 veil of enmity rent in twain. By this purchased Spirit he rends also the veil of unbelief; for, as he is a Spirit of light, to remove the veil of darkness, and a Spirit of love, to remove the veil of enmity; so he comes into the heart, as a Spirit of faith, and removes the veil of unbelief; he begins the rent 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 veil 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 veil of unbelief; and compleats the rent of this veil when faith

is turned into vision.—Thus you see how by his death the veil was rent.

III. The *third* thing, In what *manner* was the veil rent? All I say on this head, shall be in allusion shortly to the rending of the veil 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 displeased at the veil of partition betwixt him and us; angry at the veil of separation, and enraged that there should have been any veil to intercept between him and us. God's heart was set upon a reconciliation betwixt him and us, and therefore his hand tears 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 veil of the temple was not only rent, but rent in *twain*: the veil 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 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 veil together; no, the veil was rent in twain. And not only so, but,

3. Behold the veil was *rent* FROM THE TOP TO THE BOTTOM: The veil was rent from the TOP, the highest thing that separated betwixt God and us was rent in twain; we could never 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 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, *says he*, some that ‘ will go to the quire for us, some that will play for us, ‘ some that will say Mass for us, 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 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 all 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; well, 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 vail was rent in twain from the top to the bottom.*

IV. 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.

us. 2. That we might enter in also after him and thro' 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; and 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. 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 veil into heaven, the true *holy of holies*, carrying in with him the blood of his own sacrifice, Heb. ix. 12. *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 veil in 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 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 no 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 to heaven, as I said in the explication, 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 the veil was, not only that he might make a way for *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 veil, 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 stedfast, entering into that within the veil, whither the Forerunner is for us entered, even Jesus, made an High-priest for ever after the order of Melchisedec.* 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 veil, that is to say, his flesh.* Where our way to heaven, or to the holiest, is said to be through the blood of Christ; or, which is all one, through 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 two-fold, either inchoative here, or consummate hereafter.

(1.) There is an initial, *inchoative*, or begun entrance that

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. iv. 14, 16. *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 veil? *Ans.* 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. lv. 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 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 xiv. 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  
some-

sometimes you have been so troubled that you could not speak? Psa. lxxvii. 4. ; that your hearts have been so bound and straitened, 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 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 Isa. xlv. 3. *I will 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, although 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, though you cannot express it, yet you can relish and understand some sound words about it. It may be, you feel it sometimes in the secret retirements of the 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 suitably to it, then you are 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

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 comfort, like puddle water, loathsome and unfavoury to you; yea, that hath made you grone 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 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 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. xiii. 10. O what a sweet exchange will that be, when faith will say to vision,

sion, 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 veil; (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 veil was rent, namely, that way might be made for Christ's entering into the holy of holies, and so for our entering in also through him, and after him. But I come now to

V. 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, *first* 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. v. 2. *He gave himself for us, 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. xvi. 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 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

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 stedfast, as it might be, except it enter within the veil, Heb. vi. 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. xvi. 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 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 veil, 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 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. 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, 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 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 get 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 person 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 people 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 thro' the veil. The veil of the temple is rent, and the way to the holiest lies thro' the rent veil. Every person thinks, that 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 assure you, 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, 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, young or old; 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 neither 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 Sirs, 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 veil, and perhaps not I. We 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 veil, and so stand aloft 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 and commands you all to come in to 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 patent: 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 rent fundamentally, 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 in to the holiest by the rent veil? And,

1. If you be a believer indeed, in 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 a 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, *Men and brethren, what shall I do to be saved?* Did you never see your sad state, as having a black veil standing up betwixt God and you? The exercise of persons about religion is suspicious, if they never saw the veil. Some will say, O I have seen many evils about me, and I have an evil heart, and an evil frame of heart: but I ask, man, did you never see yourself to be in an evil 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 flood mark 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. x. 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 through him, as the propitiation in 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 Renter of the veil 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 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 is within the veil; have you seen God's glory then through 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. vi. 18, 19. After your soul, like a weary vessel tossed 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 your anchor, sure and steadfast, entering into that within the veil, whither the Forerunner hath entered*. 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 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 entered into the holiest with his blood within the veil, 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 veil*.

4. If the veil 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 veil, 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,

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. 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 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 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 veils 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 veils are all whole and intire in the unregenerate; and though in believers these veils be rent, yet they are not removed; regenerating grace hath given them a rent that shall never be shewed up or healed again;

again; but yet, alas! they are remaining veils 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 that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death! O to be above corruption! O to be within the veil! that I may see him as he is, and be like unto him.* O! when shall all veils be removed? when shall the day break, and the shadows fly 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 veil were rent into ten thousand pieces!

6. If the veil be effectually rent, then your heart will be effectually rent also; when the veil 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 veil, 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 veil 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 veil remains upon their heart, otherwise their hearts would rend for the sins of others, and of the generation: *Set a mark upon the foreheads of them that sigh and cry, for all the abominations that are done in the midst thereof.*—Again, when the veil 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 chasten*

*chasten me in thy hot displeasure.* Nothing affects them more than the Lord's absence; for these things they weep: *Mine eyes, mine eyes run 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 his 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 eyes 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 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 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, though 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 are some things your heart is rent for, namely, for your own sins, the sins of others,

\* About this time the second form of the *Abjuration Oath* was imposed, which occasioned different sentiments both among ministers and people: and the matter was carried so high by some, as almost to make it a term of communion. It is probably this that the author hath in his eye.

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 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, roving, 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, as there are some things your heart will be rent *for*, so there are some things your hearts will be rent *from*. Why, your hearts 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 in to 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 besprinkling 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 hath 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

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 his own holiness; so much unrighteousness in 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 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*: 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, 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 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-ful-

ness and sufficiency, he is brought to that, *In me, that is, in my job, dwelleth no good thing*: he sees himself empty of all good, and filled with all evil. Instead of self-confidence and 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 raised 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, though they hear that 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 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?* — What will you do, when he that rent the veil shall rend your soul and body in twain, and say, O flighter 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 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

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 veil, 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 hindered 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 conversation; but ere long, there shall be another kind of separation; you that will not come in among them through *the rent veil* now, there shall be a veil hung up betwixt you and them, that shall never be rent; yea, a veil 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 veil to pieces, will eternally tear you to pieces, when there shall be none to deliver. Now, the veil 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 veil; and you shall have  
God,

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 veil is rent; but if once you go down by the sides of bottomless Tophet, the veil 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 veil 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 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 ministered unto you, into the holy of holies above, whither 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 flee away, and then all veils shall be rent and removed for ever. I will 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 strokes 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 bot-

tom 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 will say, Farewel 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; and distance will give way to presence, glorious and everlasting presence. Now you say, I cannot see him, he is far away; but, says Christ, *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 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 veil of *ordinances* be rent in twain: any view we have of God's glory now, 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 veil of *scanty enjoyments* will be rent in twain; the veil of passing blinks and interrupted views. The life of the faint 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 blink

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 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 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 *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 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 dark 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

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 foretel good to the church. It says, that he will rear up a more glorious temple, such as is promised, Isa. liv. 11, 12. *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 in ver. 13. *All thy children shall be taught of the Lord, and great shall be the peace of thy children.* You see 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 tried with another kind of tempest before it come to pass; for, see how the promise is ushered in, *O thou afflicted, 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 never will be perfect, till *that which is in part shall 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.

7. The veil 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 veil ; 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 sevenfold, as the light of seven days.*

8. The veil 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 veil 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. 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 veil 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

sun cannot be looked upon without destroying the sight; because the faculty is not so strong, nor capable to receive the object: so it is here, we want a capacity to behold the light of glory; but within the veil, or in heaven, the faculty will be strengthened, and the capacity enlarged, 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-veffel, 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 veil 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 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 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 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 through all the years of eternity, praise him, and never weary.

In a word, all the vials 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 uneasi-

ness of body or soul shall be rent in twain; *The inhabitants 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 it is well for 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 veil 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 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. vi. 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. ix. 4, 5. *There was to be seen the golden cen-*  
*ser,*

*ser, 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 the veil is 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 into 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 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. *Answer*. I wish you indeed knew your own weakness, and 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 sees his own utter weakness, saying, *Not that I am sufficient of myself to think*  
any

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 an indigent creature, 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 perform all the work, and take all the glory.

3. Come and wonder: *Behold, the veil of the temple was rent in twain, from the top to the bottom*. Come and wonder, that all hinderances are taken out of the way of your access to God. Wonder at the love of God in sending his Son to rend the veil; wonder at the love of Christ in rending the veil, 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 veil of the temple was rent*. The rending of the veil cost him his life, it cost him his soul; his soul was made an offering for sin, and then the veil 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,

der, but also boldly enter into the holiest ; not standing in the outer-court, as it were, or behind the veil gazing, or only putting in your hand by the rent veil, but come in wholly, and enter boldly. The veil is rent in twain ; O then, come and enter by the rent. You may all come oldly to the holiest, by this new and living way that is consecrated through the veil. O may such a dog, such a filthy dog as I come ? Yes, we use to say, *When doors are open, dogs come in ;* 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, sorcerers, 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 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 fullness. 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, man, woman ? here is the way, it lies through 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

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 this veil. You might go home singing, if you took up the true meaning of the text, and turned 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*.

S E R M O N

## S E R M O N III.\*

The BEST MATCH; or, the Incomparable Marriage between the CREATOR and the *Creature*.

ISAIAH liv. 5.

*Thy Maker is thy Husband.*

THE prophet Isaiah having largely discoursed of the sufferings of Christ, and the blessed fruits and effects of them; among which, one is, that he should have a numerous seed to believe on him; and that, when the Jews reject him, the Gentiles should gladly receive him: And thus foreseeing, by the spirit of prophecy, the glorious state of the Gentile church, he breaks forth into a song of triumph in the beginning of this chapter; where the prophet directs his speech to the church and spouse of God in these words, *Sing, O barren, thou that didst not bear; break forth into singing, and cry aloud, thou that didst not travail with child: for more are the children of the desolate, than the children of the married wife, saith the Lord.* Where we have a magnificent promise of the fertility and the felicity of the Gentile church; and this is enlarged to the fifth verse, which contains the words of our text; where we have the reason of her happiness and fruitfulness who was formerly a barren widow, *For thy Maker is thy Husband:* he who made thee out of nothing, and therefore can easily fulfil all these promises, how unlikely soever they seem to be; he who made thee a people, yea, which is more, who made thee his people, he will own thee as his spouse, and act the part of an husband to thee.

\* This was delivered in two discourses at Culross; but the precise time and occasion cannot be ascertained; only we see the first edition was printed Anno 1722. This is the fifth impression

I shall defer my further introduction and explication, and also whatever might be said concerning the external relation betwixt Christ and the visible church, my chief design being, at this time, only to speak a little to that internal spiritual marriage-relation betwixt Christ and the invisible church, or Christ and the believer, as it is represented under the formality of a marriage: and what I would offer upon this subject, I lay before you in this doctrinal proposition,

*That there is a marriage-relation betwixt Christ and believers, wherein he supplies the place of a husband unto them, and they the place of a bride and spouse to him.*

In prosecuting whereof, I would essay these three things,  
I. Prove, That there is such a *marriage-relation* betwixt Christ and believers.

II. Speak to the *nature* of this marriage.

III. Give the *reasons*, why Christ comes under such a relation to his people.

IV. Make some application of the subject.

I. To confirm the doctrine, that there is a *marriage-relation* betwixt Christ and believers. This will appear from these two considerations.

1. From the *compellations* given to *Christ* with relation to believers. How frequently doth the spouse call him *her husband* in the book of the Song? *As the apple-tree among the trees of the wood, so is my Beloved among the sons. My Beloved is mine, and I am his,* Song ii. 3, 16. And, says the apostle, 2 Cor. xi. 2. *I have espoused you to one husband, that I may present you as a chaste virgin unto Christ.*

2. The marriage-relation betwixt Christ and believers appears from the compellations given to *believers* in scripture, with respect to Christ. How frequently calls he her *his love, his spouse*, in the book of the Song? *Thou hast ravished my heart, my sister, my SPOUSE. How fair is thy love, my sister, my SPOUSE!* Song iv. 9, 10. In Rev. xix. 7. there the church, (or believers in the collective capacity) is called the bride, the Lamb's wife,

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*The marriage of the Lamb is come, and the BRIDE hath made herself ready.* We need not stand to prove that which is so evident, we need say no more to confirm it, than to repeat the text, *Thy Maker is thy husband.* Therefore I come,

II. To speak of the *nature* of this marriage: and here we would briefly consider, 1. The *parties* married. 2. The *terms* of the marriage. 3. The *properties* of the marriage. 4. The *effects* of it. 5. How the *match is carried on.* 6. How it is *concluded.*

(1.) I say, let us consider the *parties* married; who is the Bridegroom, and who is the bride.

1. Then, the Bridegroom is the *wisdom of God*; and all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge are found in him: he knows all the wants of the bride, and is ready to supply them.—On the other hand, the bride, before her matching with him, is the most *arrant fool* out of hell: her folly is discovered by continuing to refuse to match with him; to refuse to give her consent to this heavenly Bridegroom.

2. The Bridegroom is the *eternal Son of God*; the King's only Son; *The King made a marriage for his Son*: He is the blood-royal of heaven.—On the other hand, What is the bride's pedigree? She needs not boast of her descent, *Thy father was an Amorite, and thy mother an Hittite*, Ezek. xvi. 3. There is a vast difference here.

3. The Bridegroom is the *heir of all things*: he hath all riches, the unfearchable riches of Christ.—But what is the bride worth before he match with her? She is worse than nothing, poverty itself; and not only a beggar, but in debt, and Christ is willing to pay her debt.

4. The Bridegroom is *comely and glorious*. All the seraphims and cherubims above, all the sons of men in the world, all the crowned heads on earth, in all the circumstances of glory, are but like black pieces of earth compared with this glorious Bridegroom.—On the other hand, What is the bride before he match with her? Even as black as the devil can make her. Not

only a leopard, spotted here and there, but an Ethiopian, wholly black and ugly. When she is *cast forth in the open field to the loathing of her person*, she is a spectacle of horror and misery; yet then it is a marriage-day, and a time of love.

(2.) What are the *terms* of the marriage; the articles of it on his part and her part? The terms on her part, though the whole belong to Christ, yet, to speak of terms in an improper sense; he requires of her what he worketh in her; namely,

1. That she be *divorced* from all other husbands, and give up with all other lovers and idols; particularly, that she be divorced from the law, that she may be married unto Christ: she must not obey the law from a principle of her own strength; nor as a covenant of works, that, by obedience, she may purchase a title to heaven; nor to gratify a natural conscience; nor merely to escape hell, and make a righteousness of her obedience: she must be divorced from that husband.

2. Upon her part it is required, that she be *satisfied* with this husband alone, as the great portion of the soul, that he may have no rival, no competitor in her affections, none to sit on the throne with him: she must keep the chief room for the Son or God. Again, on his part, he contracts,

1. That he will make over *himself* to her; all he is, all he hath, all he hath purchased, all he hath promised: he will make over to her all the blessings of the everlasting covenant. O this is a sweet article! and a large charter indeed!

2. He contracts to perform all the *glorious offices* of a husband to her; to provide for her, protect her, direct her, pity her, clothe her, to encourage and comfort her; and to do all for her she needs: this is the sum of the contract; for, to speak properly, Christ is all, and does all in this matter; and our part is done by him in us, Hof. ii. 19, 20. *I will betrothe thee unto me for ever: yea, I will betrothe thee unto me in righteousness, and in judgment, and in loving-kindness, and in mercies; I will even betrothe thee unto me in faithfulness, and thou shalt know the Lord.* Christ signs the contract  
for

for him and her both. *I will betrothe thee unto me in righteousness*; I will fulfil the law, and satisfy God's justice. *I will betrothe thee unto me in loving-kindness*; though there be nothing in thee to invite my love, but much to challenge my aversion, yet I will overcome all thy imperfections, and set my love upon thee. *I will betrothe thee unto me in mercies*; in pardoning mercy, sanctifying mercy, supporting mercy, comforting mercy. But lest the bride think, that when ever she sins there may be a divorce, she may break and go away, therefore it follows, *I will betrothe thee unto me in faithfulness*. He pledges his veracity for fulfilling the articles on her part and his both. But then,

(3.) What are the *properties* of this marriage?

1. It is a very *mysterious* marriage, that the Creator should take the work of his hands for a bride; not only when in its primitive and virgin integrity, as it dopt out of his creating hands, but when polluted with the poison of the devil, the venom of the serpent, that he should take her for a bride; *Thy Maker is thy husband*. This is a wonderful conjunction. If a glorious angel should be matched with a creeping worm, and a king with a beggar, it would not be such a wonder; but the Maker to join himself to the work of his hands! there cannot be a greater distance conceived betwixt any thing, than betwixt a Creator, and that which is brought out from the barren womb of nothing, a creature; and yet they are in a marriage-relation; *Thy Maker is thy husband*.

2. This marriage is very *difficult* and *hard*. It is true, there is nothing too hard for Omnipotency; yet the human nature of Christ had much to do with it: though he was supported by the divine nature, yet he behoved to swim through the river of his own blood, before he could get his bride. He satisfied the justice of God, established a new covenant. All this must be done in order to this marriage.

3. This marriage is an *indissoluble* marriage; death dissolves other relations, but it increases this intimate union: Nothing shall separate Christ and the believer; *I am persuaded*, saith Paul, *that neither life, nor death,*

nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord, Rom. viii. 38, 39.

(4.) What are the *effects* of this marriage?

1. The first and immediate effect is a most *close union* betwixt Christ and the believer. This union, though less than a personal union, although it be in some respect, yet it is more than a political union, more than a moral union: It is a very close union. The Bridegroom, Christ, he gives his bride his own Spirit; communicates vital influences, from the glorious Head, to her; and she cleaves, by faith and love, close to him: and God promises that he will make the house of Israel cleave close to him, as a girdle to the loins of a man, Jer. xiii. 11. He makes his spouse, in spite of all her folly, in spite of all her enmity, in spite of all her enemies and temptations, to cleave close to him.

2. Another effect of this union, is *sweet communion, mutual fellowship*: he feasts with them and they with him; he blows upon her garden, quickens and animates her graces; and then he comes and eats his pleasant fruits.

3. Another effect is, *familiarity*, which is coincident with the former: he treats them not as strangers, but as friends; and not as friends only, but as his own spouse: he communicates to her, and speaks comfortably and kindly to her. It is a wonder what condescension God will make sometimes: and the believer again can be more familiar with God, than with the whole world; and can tell to God what he can tell to none else.--Thus you see some of the effects of this marriage.

(5.) How was the match *carried on*?

I answer, in a word. On his part it was carried on thus:

1. He gave the Father his hand, and engaged to him in the covenant of redemption, from eternity, that he would do all things necessary for accomplishing the marriage.

2. Because

2. Because there must be an union of natures betwixt the Bridegroom and the bride; (it was not possible that we could be matched with the divine nature;) therefore he becomes a man, and takes on our nature, that there might be an union of natures.

3. Because the bride is a slave, he pays her ransom, substitutes himself in her room, takes on her debt, and pays all that she owed to justice, and then takes on with her. But, on our part, just nothing at all: we had no hand in the covenant of redemption; no hand in the contrivance of salvation; we knew nothing about the business; we had no thoughts of a Redeemer; deserved nothing but pure wrath: we were lying, with full contentment, in the devil's territories when Christ was carrying on the match.

(6.) How is the marriage *concluded* upon his part?

1. He sends forth his ambassadors to *court* for him, as Abraham did his servant for Isaac; and there is a great work, indeed, to make her give her consent. Let angels in heaven unite their topicks of persuasion, they could not prevail with one soul, if a converting day were not come: but they must always speak fair to her. How rhetorical was Abraham's servant for his master? he hath but one child, and that child hath great riches; he seeks no portion with Rebecca, only her consent. Thus he rhetorizes and flourishes exceedingly, and persuades with the greatest motives. But yet the ambassadors of Christ have a larger commission, if our eyes were opened to see it: they are sent forth to make love to the bride, and in his name to commend Christ.

2. He concludes the marriage thus. The bride being wretchedly ignorant of her true happiness, therefore his Father *distresses* her with the *debt* that she owes to him; and the wretched person is forced, for some time, to mount Sinai; and there God descends in all the circumstances of terrible majesty; he thunders against her, curses her; *Cursed is every one that continueth not in all things which are written in the book of the law to do them*, Gal. iii. 10. God exacts all the debt, conscience roars, and the devils are let loose; she fears  
hell

hell and wrath; and God declares, in the gospel, that the wretched bankrupt shall go to prison, and ly eternally in hell, if she do not take on with his Son, marry him, and believe on him. Thus the bride is forced to an extremity: some have more, some have less of this law-work; but all are humbled and broken in some measure, who are married to Christ: he sends forth his Spirit and convinces the world of sin. But this would not do either; and therefore,

3. The Bridegroom sees that nothing but *condescension* will do it; and so he appears in all his glory: when the bride is full of fears, perplexities, and anxieties; when the terrors of God are surrounding her, and the arrows of the Almighty drinking up her spirits, and when she is crying out, What shall I do? Whether shall I go? Then the bridegroom appears in all his excellency and glory, and says, *Behold me, behold me*; and she gets a view of him that ravishes her heart, and enlarges her soul: then it is that the Spirit is sent to determine her to consent. The manifestation of his glory does enlighten her mind and spirit; and immediately grace, upon the will, draws out the whole heart after him; so that if the bride could be grieved and pained upon the marriage-day, it would be for her folly in refusing him so long.—But what is done upon the bride's part, for concluding the match? Nothing at all; but the whole soul is enabled to acquiesce in a Redeemer; and the believer is ready, at such a time, to say, *He is my Lord, my God, my strength, my all*, and shall be for ever.—Thus you have a brief scheme of the nature and way of this marriage.

Having spoken but very briefly to the former heads, I shall here, before I proceed to the reasons of the doctrine, offer a few remarks upon the *time* of this marriage-union betwixt Christ and believers. We told you how this match was concluded and compleated by Christ, and now we say, there is a stated day and time for the concluding thereof: and upon this head we may remark,

1<sup>st</sup>, That there is a two-fold *day* we are to consider in this marriage, namely, the day of *espousals* on earth,  
and

and the day of *consummation* in heaven; and we may compare these two together in a few words.

1. The day of espousals here is ushered in with a very dark morning, or rather an evening, upon the bride's part, with the wrath of God, and the law: as it was said, *The evening and the morning was the day*; so, in this contract, the evening of legal terrors, at least some humiliation, ushers in the morning: But as to the consummation, there is a great deal of glory before it, the soul being taken to heaven already, and the body sleeping sweetly in the grave, a bed where the bridegroom lay three days before her.

2. In the day of espousals, when the person gets a victory over corruption, and finds little stirring of it, no sensible working of it, yet there is a party within, at the same time, that oppose the match, and which will afterwards get out its head, and will be still assaulting the believer, while he is on earth: but, in the day of consummation, there is no such thing; no enemy, no sin, no corruption; but the whole soul goes out wholly upon the bridegroom.

3. The espousals are carried on secretly; it may be the person is sitting at your side, and you do not see, nor know when Christ is making up the match; or, perhaps, on his knees at home, there is a secret transaction: But the consummation will be before millions of angels, millions of saints, and millions of spectators. Here is a great difference: after the day of espousals is over, the bride may give many squint looks to her old lovers, looking back to Egypt, departing from her husband, doubting of his love, distrusting his word, fearing his dispensations: But, after the consummation, no shadow of sin, no shadow of jealousy, no shadow of mistakes, or fears, can overtake her for ever; no cloud can intervene, for the sun of righteousness shall never be eclipsed any more. But then,

2d, A second remark is, that the *precise time* of the espousals is condescended on by the Bridegroom and his Father, from all eternity; the very moment when the bride shall be made to sign the contract, and flee to Christ, and pour out her whole soul upon him; that

precise moment is agreed upon betwixt the Father and the Son, in the covenant of redemption, from eternity.

3d, We remark, that the Bridegroom *waits patiently* for that moment that is agreed upon betwixt the Father and the Son; he longs for it, he desires it. The believer many times is ready to think, O, Christ is not willing! I have set days apart, I have gone to my knees, I have sought him in and about this and the other ordinance, and yet I could not close with him: I have been almost dipt in hell with affliction, yet my heart was never melted; surely Christ is not willing. O let us flee the borders of blasphemy! The Lord Jesus is willing; but the fulness of time is not yet come: there is a set moment of his coming to his people, and for this they are to wait; yea, for this he waits himself, according to that scripture, which I shall read to them that cannot get that in duties and ordinances which they have been long looking for; Isa. xxx. 18. *Therefore will the Lord wait, that he may be gracious unto you; and therefore will he be exalted, that he may have mercy upon you: For, the Lord is a God of judgment; blessed are all they that wait for him.* He will wait upon the very moment of time, for the day of Salvation; he knows the proper season. The crane, the swallow, and the stork know their seasons, by the natural instinct God hath given them; and will he not know his own season? yea, he waits to be gracious.

4th Remark, That when the time comes, then there is a *sweet conjunction* of all circumstances to conclude the work; all things work pleasantly together to compleat the match; conscience goes right to work, the word is made lively, the Spirit acts powerfully and sweetly in the soul: there is an auspicious conjunction of all favourable circumstances, for determining the bride, and drawing out her heart.

5th Remark, That there are several *signs and characters* of this day, by which it may be known. What are the signs of it? you shall say. I shall not stand on this, only it is a day of light; great light breaks in upon the mind: it is a day of love; much love is let in upon

upon the heart: it is a day of power, wherein the bride is persuaded and overcome; difficulties are surmounted, enemies conquered, and the bride's will is moulded into a compliance; it is a day of amazement. O what an extasy of wonder is raised in the person's heart! I was blind, now I see; I was dead, now I live; I was weak, now I am strong; this morning, perhaps, I was under affliction, and under the terrors of God, and now he hath ravished me with the consolations of his Spirit: I was affraid of hell, now I have the hope of heaven and eternal life. O what a day of wonder is it! Lastly, It is a day of vows; the soul will be ready to break forth in such a day, crying, What shall I speak for him? What shall I suffer for him?

A *sixth* and *last* remark, on this head is, that, in this stated day of espousals, the bridegroom *manifests his glory* to the bride; when he intimates to the soul, *Thy Maker is thy husband*, he shews his glory; his absolute glory, his comparative glory, his relative glory; they are all one upon the matter, yet there is a formal different consideration of them.

1. His *absolute* glory is manifested. What does the soul see, that is matched and married to Christ? Alas! some see nothing but dreams and fancies; but when the believer is matched with Christ, he so deals with him as with Moses, he makes all his glory to pass before him: The person gets a view of the glorious attributes of the Son of God.

2. He manifests his *comparative* glory; *Thou art more excellent than hills of prey; fairer than the sons of men*: the bride, the believer, sees him *as the apple-tree among the trees of the wood*, every way incomparable. Whatever he be compared to, he excells it; if he be a lilly, he is the lilly of the vally; if he be a rose, he is the rose of Sharon; if he be a plant, he is the plant of renown; if he be a physician, he is the physician of value; if an advocate, he is an advocate with the Father: he is represented without any parallel.

3. His *relative* glory is manifested: he is discovered as a glorious Priest, a glorious Prophet, a glorious King, a glorious Husband, a glorious Redeemer and

Saviour; and there will be a sight of his glorious fulness in all these relations, and the glorious fitness of that sufficiency and fulness, all suited for the soul: and thus revealing himself, he removes all jealousies and mistakes from the bride, supplies all her wants, heals all her diseases, and out-bids all her rivals, who can offer nothing to allure the soul, while he can, and doth say, I am All-sufficient to help thee.

III. I come now to the *third* thing proposed, namely, To offer some *reasons* of the doctrine, why Christ comes under a marriage-relation to believers. I answer,

1. His own *sovereign will* is the best reason why he comes under a marriage-relation in this case; *Even so Father, for so it seems good in thy sight*, Matth. xi. 28. His actions are not to be examined at the bar of our reason: *He hath mercy, because he will have mercy*.

2. His *love* to them makes him come under such a relation to them; *I have loved thee with an everlasting love; therefore with everlasting kindness have I drawn thee*. Love is the motive that engages him; love brought him out of heaven for them; love nailed him to the cross for them; love laid him in a grave for them; and love engages him to a marriage-relation with them.

3. He does it for the *glory* of his own free grace, mercy, and love. As love and mercy was his motive, so it was his end, that he might display and discover it to the utmost. This attribute is at its utmost line. Infinite wisdom could have contrived a thousands worlds, and infinite power could have made them, but the love of God hath gone to its utmost height; it is not possible for Christ to give a greater demonstration of his love than he hath done, in giving his life for the bride, and entering into a marriage-relation with her.

4. He does it, that he may furnish *work* for the blessed company in the higher house; for on the earth the contract is only drawn up: this is only the day of espousals; heaven will be the day of consummation of the marriage: this is only a courting and wooing time; but the day will come when the nuptial solemnity shall be celebrated, and that shall continue while the day of  
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eternity lasts.—This shall suffice for the reasons of the doctrine.

IV. The *fourth* thing was, To make some *application*; and it may be, 1. For information. 2. Lamentation. 3. Examination. 4. Exhortation. Now of these in their order.

(1.) For *information*. Is it so, that there is a marriage-relation betwixt Christ and believers?

1. This informs us of the *infinite love of God* towards lost sinners, in giving his own Son to be a Husband and Redeemer unto them; *God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him might not perish, but have everlasting life*, John iii. 16. God so loved the world, as neither angels nor men can tell.

2. This informs us of the *infinite love of Christ*, in condescending to be a husband to such a bride. It could never have entered into the heart of the wisest angel in heaven, that Christ, the eternal Son of God, should become man; and far less that he should take such a filthy and deformed creature and bride by the hand, as sinners are: if he had given us our deserving, he would have made his justice to ride in triumph over us, and hell to resound with eternal hollows of praise to incensed justice; but, to the quite contrary, he hath so ordered, that heaven shall resound with eternal halelujahs of praise to his gracious mercy and free grace, in chusing those that were enemies, and admitting them to his blessed bosom.

3. This doctrine informs us of the *believer's safety*. Having Christ for her husband, who can hurt her? It is the duty of a husband, you know, to protect and defend his spouse; and to be sure Christ will not be wanting in this to his bride: *He will hide them in the secret of his presence from the pride of men; he will keep them secretly in a pavilion, from the strife of tongues*, Psalm xxxi. 20. *About all the glory he makes a defence*, Isa. iv. 5. He covers them with the mantle of his providence, the mantle of his righteousness, the mantle of his intercession, the mantle of his Spirit; sure then the bride of Christ

Christ is in absolute safety: he hath retiring chambers for her, to hide her in till the day of indignation be overpast.

4. This doctrine lets us see, that believers are no such mean and *despicable persons* as the world generally takes them to be; they are Christ's bride, and he is their husband: and, O what an honour is it to be married to the Son of God! Having him for an husband, they come to be related to all Christ's relations; God is their Father, because he is his Father; angels are their servants, because they are his servants; saints are their fellow-brethren, because they are his members; heaven is their inheritance, because it is the kingdom of their husband. In a word, whatever is his, is theirs; *And all things are yours, for ye are Christ's, and Christ is God's*, 2 Cor. iii. 22, 23.

(2.) For *lamentation*. Is it so, that there is a marriage-relation betwixt Christ and believers? This calls for deep lamentation in these two particulars.

1. It calls us to lament that Christ should have so *few brides* among us, though he be wooing and courting us by the gospel, crying, *Behold me, behold me*, Isa. lxxv. 1. Yet where is the man or woman that is prevailed with to enter a match with this glorious bridegroom? Though he be fairer than the sons of men, and condescends to offer marriage with sinners, who are as black and ugly as hell itself, yet they set him at nought, and give him just ground for that melancholy complaint, *My people would not harken to voice, Israel would have none of me*, Psalm lxxxvi. 11. And may he not appeal to the very immaterial creation, to judge of our folly, as he did of old to Israel? Jer. ii. 12, 13. *Hear, O heavens, and give ear, O earth; yea, be astonished and horribly afraid, for my people have committed two great evils: they have forsaken me the fountain of living waters, and hewed them out cisterns, broken cisterns, that can hold no water.*

2. This doctrine may afford us matter of lamentation also, That believers, who are espoused to him, should walk so *unworthily* of such a husband. You know a wife should demean herself conform to the character of her husband; and where her carriage is base and mean,

it reflects a dishonour on him. O how unfuitable is it to see Christ's bride blackened with the filth of hell! to see those who have stricken hands with Christ, in a marriage-covenant, joining hands with lusts and idols, and defiling themselves with them!

(3.) For *examination*. Let us try if we be thus married and related to Christ; whether he be our husband, and we his bride and spouse.

I shall offer a few marks whereby we may know whether or not we be married unto this glorious husband; and they may be drawn from the consideration of the antecedents, the constituents, and the consequents of this marriage.

*1<sup>st</sup>*, Try by the *antecedents* to the marriage-contract. Before ever Christ did contract with thee, didst thou observe him courting thy soul before this contract? Here is a courting. Now, how did Christ court you?

1. Did he court you by the *austerity* of the *law*, as with fire and sword? Did he court you by such a word as that, Thou art a cursed wretch; For, *cursed is every one that continueth not in all that are written in the book of the law to do them?* Gal. ii. 16. Did he court you by such a word as that, *Cursed is every one that doth the work of the Lord negligently?* Did he court you thus, by the spirit of bondage, with the terrors of God, as clothed with vengeance, telling thee, thou art an heir of hell and wrath, a child of the devil? Did he court thee so as thou wast surrounded with fear and trouble?

2. Did he court thee as by the *austerity* of the law; so by the *sweetness* of the *gospel*, when he saw thee cast down, when he saw thee a poor heavy laden sinner, like to be crushed under thy weights? Did he then court you with such a word as that, *Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest,* Matth. xi. 28.; or with such a word as that, *Ho, every one that thirsteth, come to the waters; he that hath no money, come; buy wine and milk without money and without price,* Isa. lv. 1. *Flee to your strong holds, ye prisoners of hope.* Did he thus court you with the *gospel-offer*?

3. Did he court you by his *love-letters*? This is another antecedent of the contract. Got you ever a love-letter

Letter sent from Christ out of heaven? But you will say, What is the love-letter? even the Bible; *Search the scriptures, these are they that testify me*, John v. 39. Here there are the declarations of the love of Christ to thy soul: here there are love-promises in these letters, that shall be yours. There is a love-covenant in these letters. Have you read and pondered them? And can you say that Christ spake them in to your heart? If it be a text that was preached upon, or if it be a single word, O Christ dropt that into my heart! and I think it will go with me to my death-bed, it came with such life and power. In a word, Got you any gifts before the marriage-contract, such as the gift of true conviction, such as the gift of heart-contrition, the gift of real humiliation, the gift of self-denial, the gift of faith? These are given, some before, some at the contract.

*zilly*, Try by the *constituents* of the marriage.

1. If this marriage be made up betwixt Christ and thee, then thou hast put away *all lovers* besides Christ; the right hand will be cut off, the right eye put out; you will be divorced from all other husbands, particularly from the law; ye must be dead to the law, that ye may be married to another husband, even to Christ. But you will say, What is it to be dead to the law? I answer, It is not to lay it aside as the rule of obedience; for the law shall still be the rule and standard of the believer's obedience, life, and conversation: but to be dead to the law, is to be sensible that the law cannot save us as a covenant of works. It is to disclaim all hopes of being justified by the law, or by our works or obedience to it. I see Christ, the glorious husband, hath brought in an everlasting righteousness, answering the law fully: this is the garment I must put on, and cast off my old filthy rags.

2. Hast thou given a *cordial consent* upon the contract-day? Can you say you was enabled to take him, as the Psalmist, *O my soul, thou hast said unto the Lord, thou art my Lord*; and thou art my God, my Head, my Husband? Have you given a rational consent to it? yea, a superrational and supernatural consent? a deliberate, chaste, stayed, solemn, peremptory consent? Did you  
say

say it with faith, and with an air of heaven, that he was yours, and shall be so for ever? It is true, persons may be matched to Christ who cannot condescend on the precise time: the Spirit may work many times some way that we cannot know; yet it is his ordinary way with his bride, after many tossings, to break in with ravishing, conquering sweetness, to draw forth her soul to a solemn remarkable closing with him, and consenting to him. Have you then been engaged to make over yourself to the bridegroom, by an unreserved resignation of yourself to him, that you will not only take him wholly, and for ever, for holiness and happiness, for light and life, for grace and glory, but also make over yourself to him, soul and body, whatever you are, whatever you have been? Have you been thus made to yield yourselves unto the Lord? Are you one with him? Have you one Spirit with him? Are you of one faith with him, of one way with him, endeavouring to walk as he walked? *He that is joined to the Lord is one spirit,* 1 Cor. iv. 17.

3. Can you say, that, upon the marriage-day, you got a *marriage-gift* from the Bridegroom? Among the Jews, the bridegroom was to give a marriage-gift to his bride: Now, what gift got you on this marriage-day? Can you say, indeed I got the wedding-garment; he clothed me with his righteousness, which he spun out of his own bowels, weaved with his own hands, and dyed with his own blood; and thus all my guilt is covered, the curse is done away? This is indeed what few get; yet some have been, and are able to say, I am delivered from the wrath to come; and there is no condemnation to me; and on such a time I got also an ornament of the graces with the Spirit, which I wear as jewels, *viz.* faith, love, obedience, patience, humility; and I got the promise of an hundred-fold here, and I am expecting more gifts yet, before the marriage be consummate; I am expecting more assurance, I live in the hope of glory; I expect a sealed pardon of all my sins, and I look to get the earnest of the Spirit, and more every day.

4. Another constituent of this marriage-contract is, the bride, on that day, *puts off* one vail, and *puts on* another. This was the Jewish custom, the brides put off the

vail of bashfulness, and put on the vail of subjection. Christ's bride, before the marriage, cannot look the Bridegroom in the face, is ashamed to look upon him; but she is made to put off this vail in the presence of her former lovers, and to take Christ by the hand, and then she puts on the vail of subjection, whereby she promises, in his strength, to subject herself to her husband's will. Have we thus promised to be obedient to his commands, in his own strength, whatever he enjoins us to do or suffer?

3dly, Try by the *consequents* of this marriage. Would you know if there has been a contract betwixt Christ and you? Try then by the immediate consequents.

1. Did you see the King in his beauty, and such a glory and excellency in him as could not be paralleled by all the glory of ten thousand worlds?

2. What was your converse with him on the contract-day? Can you say, he embraced me in his arms, and I embraced him in my heart, and there was sweet communion and fellowship betwixt him and me?

3. Wast thou crowned in the marriage-day, so as thou wast known by others, as it were, to be the bride of Christ? The Jews, they not only crowned the bridegroom, but the bride also. You see what the crown is that Christ's bride should have, Rev. xii. 1. *There appeared a great wonder in heaven, a woman clothed with the sun, and the moon under her feet, and on her head a crown of twelve stars.* The bride of Christ is crowned with the doctrine of the twelve apostles.

4. The bride of Christ keeps at home, and delights in the bride-chamber. This is her delight all the days of her life, *to dwell in the house of the Lord, to behold the beauty of the Lord, and to enquire in his temple.* Ordinances will be sweet, being the galleries wherein the King is held.

II. Try by the *qualities* and *duties* of the bride, which are also the consequents to this marriage.

1. If you be Christ's bride, then you will love the bridegroom. Love is what every wife owes to her husband; much more doth the believer owe it to Christ, who hath expressed far more love to this bride than ever

ver a husband did to a wife; *he loved her, and gave himself for her.* He shed the hottest blood of his heart to save and redeem her. You will love him with a love of desire; *with my soul have I desired thee in the night: with a love of delight; my meditation of him shall be sweet:* with a love of benevolence, wishing well to his interest; *if I forget thee, O Jerusalem, let my right hand forget her cunning; let my tongue cleave to the roof of my mouth, if I prefer not thee to my chiefest joy,* P<sup>sa</sup>. cxxvii. 5, 6. They that habitually love husband, wife, children, riches, or any thing more than Christ, have no reason to think that they are matched with them.

2. If we be married to Christ, we will *trust in* and *depend on* our husband. In whom can a wife trust, if not in her husband? The believer rests on Christ for grace and glory; and commits all to him, ventures all on him, and expects all from him. The soul that is espoused to Christ, looks on the infinite virtue of his blood, the infinite efficacy of his Spirit, the infinite fulness of his grace, the infinite dimensions of his love, the infinite faithfulness of his promise: in all this he sees an infinite ground of hope, and thereupon he ventures, and rolls all on him. Here, he says, I will stay and rest, here I will build, here I am resolved to stay, here I am resolved to live and die.

3. If we be married to Christ, we will have a *zeal for his glory.* Some sacrifice Christ's interest to their own honour; but the believer says, Let my Master increase, and me decrease. Though my name should never be heard of in the world, let Christ be exalted. O, says Christ's bride, I would have all the world coming and adoring him! I would have all the world to love him! I would have all the world to praise him! Especially when she is under any lively influence, O then, says she, if the greatest enemies knew what were in our Lord, they would come and join with him, as I have done!

4. The bride of Christ cannot *live without him.* An honest wife will be hard put to it, to live many years without her husband. O it is sometimes like a hell to her to miss Christ in ordinances! O the fore moans and

heavy groans of the deserted soul, that has had the experience of the sweetness of Christ! *O that I knew where I might find him! that I might come even to his seat!* Job xxiii. 3. *O that it were with me as in months past!*

5. If you be Christ's bride, you will be *longing* sometimes for his second coming; less or more you will desire the day of judgment, and long for his appearance. The epilogue of all the spouse's sweet discourses is, *Make haste, my Beloved, be thou like a roe, or a young hart, on the mountains of Bethel, till the day break, and the shadows fly away.* And the conclusion of the whole Bible is, *Come, Lord Jesus, come quickly,* Rev. xxii. 20. Can you say you have longed for his coming? I see the devil reigns here, corruption reigns here, and never will things be right till he come again in the clouds, and set heaven and earth in a flame, when these nuptial solemnities shall begin to be celebrated, and the marriage solemnized while eternity lasts.

6. If there has been a marriage betwixt Christ and your souls, then readily you have some of the love-tokens to present; I mean, some experiences and some expressions of his covenant-love: you can tell, that, some time or other, he brought you to the banquetting-house, and displayed a banner of love over you. Sometime he hath enlarged your soul with ardent and longing desires after him, and satisfied you with the fatness of his house. The soul that is really espoused to Christ, will readily have some experiences of his love to tell of.

7. The spouse of Christ is a *chaste* spouse. Idols never get her heart as before; though now and then she may give a squint look, yet idols never have that force and room in her affections once they had; she is afraid of doing any thing that may be displeasing and dishonouring to him: hence we will find the spouse of Christ breathing out earnest desires and requests to God, to be kept and led in the way of righteousness; *O that my ways were directed to keep thy statutes,* Psalm cxix. 5. Hence she groans up her case, *O wretched one that I am! who shall deliver me from this body of sin and death!* Rom. vii. 24.

8. If we be Christ's bride, we will be a fruitful bride. Let us try; have we never a child of good works, or of grace? *Thy belly*, says Christ to the spouse, *is as an heap of wheat*, Song vii. 2. You know wheat is very fruitful; the barren soul that never loved, never mortified, never repented, never gave alms, never appeared for God; that barren soul is not the spouse of Christ; for the spouse of Christ is fruitful.—Thus much by way of trial.

*4thly*, For *exhortation*. Is there a spiritual marriage betwixt Christ and believers? O then! shall we not be persuaded to come and close with Christ for our husband, and take our Maker for our husband, our God for our husband? If we be ambitious, here is the top of ambition, Jesus Christ; if we be covetous, here is the true riches; whatever we are, whatever we have been, if we come to him, he will in no ways cast us out: it is true, we cannot come of ourselves, but let us cry, Lord, if I die, I shall be buried under the mercy-seat, praying, weeping, looking, as I can, and go to hell with Christ in my heart as much as I can. Come to him, and he will overcome your impotency; lay your case before him, saying, Lord, I am a wretched one in the highest degree; Lord, here is a great offer made, I have no heart to it; O come and give a discovery of a lost state, and of thy excellent glory. O draw out my heart, and let me die upon the spot, rather than reject Christ for ever!

Many motives might be adduced; consider only,

1. The *loveliness* and *beauty* of Christ. His beauty is universal; he is lovely in his person, lovely in his natures, lovely in his offices, lovely in his estates of humiliation and exaltation, lovely in all his relations; his beauty is transforming, it will make the bride comely also; it is communicative, the bride *is made comely through his comeliness*. When we speak of the comeliness of Christ, we should let angels and saints above, that have the more immediate intuition of the radiant splendor of this blessed object, go forth to declare his glory. Every thing in him is lovely, and nothing is lovely without him, nothing is lovely but what proceeds from him,  
be

and goes to him; he is so lovely, that he cannot possibly be otherwise: he is the primary, original, and necessary loveliness.

2. Consider, as he is lovely, so he is *loving*; his love is infinite, eternal, free, distinguishing, effectual; never man loved like him. O how many foldings are in this love, as can never be unfolded?

3. Consider, if we close with Christ we will give him a *glad heart*; his heart is glad in that day, when he takes a poor sinner by the hand; the day of his espousals is the day of the gladness of his heart. How many times have we grieved him by our hypocrisy, and formality, and backwardness? And would we now give him a glad heart, for all the grieved hearts we have given him? then let us embrace him as offered in the gospel, and then he will be glad. Why? then he will see the fruit of election, the fruit of redemption, the fruit of his death, the fruit of his resurrection, the fruit of his ascension, the fruit of his intercession: then he gets back the temple of the Holy Ghost; the lost sheep is found again: then he gets back the member of his own body.

I might give something by way of *direction*. You may say, What shall I do then, that I may be married unto Christ?

In one word, if you would have Christ for your husband, O then entertain his suit, and hearken to his wooing and courting motions! Is he darting light into your hearts, and letting you see the evil of some sin that formerly ye delighted in? O do not resist his suit, by continuing in sin after this!—Is he strengthening that light so as to set conscience on fire with the sense of sin, and apprehension of wrath? O quench not this fire till you get water out of the wells of salvation! otherwise ye reject his suit.—Is he carrying his suit farther, and stirring up your affections to desire after Christ! O quench not this motion! but cry to him to fasten the nail sure, and carry on the work, till the marriage be completed.

Now, I might give a word of *exhortation* also to them that are married and espoused to Christ.

All I shall say is this; O let Christ's bride live on him, and take all from him! as a poor woman married to a rich man, she lives upon his riches. Many are ready to say, That if Christ would call us his bride, we would live on ourselves; we would pray, repent, believe, &c.; but the bride of Christ must get all these things in him, and take all from him, and live wholly on him, and freely on him. When Joseph's brethren did not know him, they were buying and selling with him, they would have nothing from him without money; but when they knew that he was a brother, for all the offences that they had done him, they were content to come down every man of them, and take all from him for nothing: this is the way you must do with Christ, when matched to him; we must not, with the legalist, have repentance and duties of our own, we must take all from him, who is the repository of all divine fulness, whereof the believer's part is, out of that fulness, to receive *grace for grace*.

S E R M O N

## S E R M O N IV, V.\*

CHRIST the *People's* Covenant.

ISAIAH xlii. 6.

—*I will give thee for a covenant of the people.*—

**M**Y dear friends, if your ears be open, there are three things that you may hear this day,

1. 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 in to your hearts. Therefore,

2. You may hear what *God* says to you: this is matter of great moment; for God's speaking can make us both hear and live, though we were as dead as stocks, or 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. You may come to hear what *God* says to *Christ*, and this is 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

\* This was an Action-Sermon, preached immediately before the celebration of the Lord's supper, at Dunfermline, August 19. 1722. To which is annexed, The Substance of some Discourses, after the Sacrament, upon the same subject. The after-enlargements on this subject, were mostly placed under there respective general heads of method.—This piece has already undergone nine Editions.

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? Yes, 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, behold there is a company of people meeting in Dunfermline 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 it is 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!

1. How sweetly does he speak of him? *Behold my servant whom I uphold, mine elect in whom my soul delighteth,* etc. That Christ is the subject here treated of, you need not question, if you compare this first verse with Matth. xii. 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 whom I uphold; mine elect, in whom my soul delighteth:* 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, nor lift up, nor cause his voice to be heard in the street,* ver. 2.: He commends him for a tender-hearted Saviour; *A bruised reed shall he not break, and the smoking flax shall he not*

*quench; he shall bring forth judgment unto truth, ver. 3.:* He commends him for an *able* Saviour, that will go through with his work, maugre all impediments; *He shall not fail, nor be discouraged, till he have set judgment in the earth, ver. 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.

2. How sweetly does he speak *to him*, from ver. 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, ver. 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 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* itself, and what he says to Christ, ver. 6. *I the Lord have called thee in righteousness, and will hold thine hand, and will keep thee, and give thee for a covenant of the people,* etc. 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 the 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 right-ly

ly called; for he was willing to the work, and voluntarily offered himself, *Lo, I come;—I delight to do thy will, O my God:* 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* piece of the indenture is, *I will hold thine hand;* that is another thing he says to him: go, says he, and I will hold thee by the hand all the way; I will 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 misplace 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* piece 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 terrour of justice, the vengeance of heaven, and the fury of earth 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* piece 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 of the people, a light to the Gentiles,* etc. Whatever be their malady, I will give thee to be a suitable remedy. Have they broken covenant? I will give thee to be a better covenant. But what of that, while they are ignorant? Why then, *I will give thee for a light to the Gentiles.* But what though they have light, if they have not sight too? for a blind man hath no benefit of the sun; why then *I will 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 will 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 ordinance and appointment thereto, *I will give thee* for that end.

1. The *glorious 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 heart of the covenant; he is the foundation and cap-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. xlix. 8. *Thus saith the Lord, in an acceptable time have I heard thee; and in a day of salvation have I helped thee: and I will preserve thee, and give thee for a co-*  
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*venant of the people, to establish the earth, to cause to inherit the desolate heritages.* 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 *benefit* 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.

I. 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.

1. 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. ii. 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 intitling to live; a righteousness

ness to satisfaction, undergoing the penalty of the law, and so delivering from death. The former is impossible for us; for, *we are dead in sins and trespasses*, and so can never perform any duty acceptable to God, far less complete and 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 the covenant of works, ‘That, when God 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 apostasy 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; 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 the pains of hell for ever. Why? *The wages of sin is death*, and we are *children of wrath*; and *curst 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?

them? or, do you believe them yet? Have you 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,

2. 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, you may take it thus, ‘ God having out of his mere good pleasure, from all eternity, elected some to everlasting life, did enter into a covenant of grace, to deliver them out of the estate of sin and misery, and to bring them into an estate of salvation by a Redeemer.’ 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. iii. 21.* Now, this covenant of grace may be considered, either in its original transaction from eternity, or in its actual manifestation in time.

(1.) 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. xl. 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 satisfacti-  
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on to offend justice, in answer to the penalty incurred through the breach and violation of that covenant. *Lo, I come*; since the law cannot be fulfilled without doing, nor justice satisfied without doing, 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 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. liii. 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,

(2.) 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 the 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 means 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.

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 eternal dispensation of the gospel, and administration of the covenant, they are revealed 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 gathered in, made to believe, and come under the bond of the covenant.

3. 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: with respect to Christ, it had its constitution from eternity; with respect to us, it hath its application in time: on this account it is called, *The grace given us in Christ before the world began*, 2 Tim. i. 9. *And eternal life, which God that cannot lie promised before the world began*, Tit. i. 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 public 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 condition of life to be performed is 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 *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 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. liii. 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; verse first 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. viii. 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 in him, Amen;* twice in him: importing, That as the covenant of grace, which is the covenant of promise, is made jointly with him and us; so in 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 immediately, they are made to him; secondarily, and immediately, to us in him.

4. Hence the *fourth* thing remarkable, imported in the text, is, ‘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 not only to be made with him, but he himself is the covenant. And this leads me to,

II. The *second* thing, *To shew how Christ is the covenant, and in what respects he bears that name?*

We reply, 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*

than that is laid, which is *Jesus Christ*, 1 Cor. iii. 11. He is the sure foundation that God hath laid in Zion, Isa. xxviii. 16. The covenant of works, being built upon something in man, it was not sure work, and so the fabric 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. i. 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 unto us wisdom, and righteousness, sanctification, and redemption.* He is the foundation of all the promises, graces, and comforts of the covenant. This were 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. ix. 15. Why? he brings God and 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. ix. 16. *Where a testament is, there is the death of the Testator:* He hath signed all the articles of it with his own blood, and so confirmed it, and made it a testament.—He is called *the Messenger of the covenant*, Mal. iii. 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 v. 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  
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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. lv. 5. *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. vii. 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, even in this hopeless state we are fallen into, pays the debt to the last farthing, and puts his name in our bond: *He 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 whom I uphold*, Isa. xlii. 1. *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,  
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the *Performance* itself. Christ, standing in all these relations to the covenant, may well be called the covenant of the 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 proposed; 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. iii. 15. Gen. xxii. 18. Luke i. 32, 33. He is the substance of the prophecies, *To him give all the prophets witness*, Acts x. 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 Antetype, the substance of the whole Bible, and of all the scriptures; *These are they that testify of me*. It is a strange 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 the blessings come with him; *How shall he not with him freely give us all things?* Rom. viii. 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  
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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. liii. 10, 11, 12. *By the obedience of one shall many be made righteous*, not by the obedience of any man for himself, Rom. v. 19. He is the procurer of justification, Rom. v. 18.; the procurer of remission of sin, Rom. iii. 24.; the procurer of peace, Isa. liii. 5.; yea, the sum of it, for, *he is our peace*; the procurer of our 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. liii. 10. 1 Cor. i. 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 the 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 excellencies 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, 1 Tim. i. 15. Acts xvi. 6. Yea, after the person is brought within the covenant,

covenant, Christ is the great performer of all covenant-duties; he performs all our works in us, Isa. xxvi. 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 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 the 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.

III. The *third* thing was, to shew, For whose *benefit* 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. He indeed, and all the fallen angels, are excluded; and no doubt he is 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, insomuch that whosoever of all the people will subscribe to this covenant, and go in to it by faith, shall have the everlasting benefit of it.

QUEST. *Why, say you, I am, 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.* ANSW. 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,

*charter*, the one is an original, written in heaven; and the other 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. xii. 23. They are called *the church of the first-born that are written in heaven*. In this writing are the names of all the elect, of all that ever were, are, or shall be actually taken 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. i. 4. And again, *Whom he did predestinate, them he also called*, Rom. viii. 30. And again, *All that the Father hath given me, shall come to me*; and, *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, though this extract be a true copy, answering exactly to the original; yet, for rendering 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 signed your consent, by subscription, to the copy that is among your hands, which is here let down on the earth, to see how you please 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 these 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 these who subscribe their names here.

QUEST. *But, for what purpose 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 names 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 benefit then is he thus the covenant?* Why, it is even for the advantage of these whose names are here set down; and though they may not here find their particular names, John, James, Mary, Martha, yet their general names; yea, both their more general and 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; whoe-  
 ver they be that hear this gospel, all saving benefits are preached to them by Jesus Christ, according to the ministerial commission, saying, *To you is the word of this salvation sent*, Acts xiii. 26. And in this sense the apostle says, Titus ii. 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 it at their peril; our commission is wide and full, infomuch 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 man, woman, do not put that covenant from you. But, say

you, Is there no more special name 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, what people in a special manner is here meant, is cleared in the following words, *A light to the Gentiles, to open the blind eyes, to bring out the prisoners from the prison, and them that sit in darkness, out of the prison-house.* 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. 1. The name is *Gentile*. 2. The surname is, *Gentile, dark and blind; Gentile, bound and imprisoned.*

(1.) I say, the name of the people, whose covenant he is, is *Gentiles*; and, I suppose, 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. iii. 16. It was a mystery to the Jews and primitive Christians, when Christ was first given by a preached gospel to the *Gentiles*, Acts ix. 17, 18. Why? the *Gentiles* were called *the uncircumcision*, Eph. ii. 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 common-wealth of Israel, and strangers to the covenant of promise*, Eph. ii. 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. ix. 25. *Cursed be Canaan*: and indeed the *Gentiles*

tiles and Canaanites, as they were contemned by the Jews, and looked 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 of the crumbs that fall from their masters table.* The door of Bethlehem, the house of bread, is open, Acts xiv. 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. xxii. 15. *Without are dogs, and sorcerers, and whoremongers, and murderers, and idolaters.* 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 and 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 name, and set it down at the foot of the contract, by subscribing your consent to have Christ to be your covenant; and though it be a base name, he will not refuse to take in your subscription. In a word, the Gentiles are called *heathens*, Gal. iii. 8. *The scripture foreseeing that God would justify the heathen through 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*.

(2.) 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. The *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, 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; 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 part of your surname *blindness* as well as darkness? Have you not only sore eyes, and see ill, but are you 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 providence, and cannot discern the signs of the times? 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 benefit Christ is the covenant, and if that be your surname also, why then there is room at  
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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 the prison-house.* Now, whatever prison you are in, Sirs, if your surname be a bound prison, 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 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 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 un-hinge 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 are in, name it yourself, and say, I am 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 will 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 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, ver. 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 say, I am one of the people they call *Gentiles*? I am a *dark, blind, bound prisoner*; that is 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 will wait till the day of judgment, and in the mean time inevitably perish at death; and all the money of your terms, conditions, and good qualifications, which you will 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

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 missed any one here.—Thus you see who the people are, for whose benefit 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 seal 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.

IV. 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*. 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.

1<sup>st</sup>, 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 the Father, that Christ, the second person, should come and bear the *whole weight of the covenants*: Hence Christ tells us, *He had commandment from the Father*, and that *he came to do his will*; John vi. 37, 38, 39. God the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, by an 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 *ad extra*, 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*, John xvi. 28. and xvii. 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 blessed 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, ver. 8. *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 the completement thereof.

2dly, The glorious person *ordained*, in the pronoun **THEE**, namely, Christ the second person of the glorious Trinity, and the other part 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 would 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  
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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, constituted, promised, typified, to whom all the prophets gave witness, and we are not to look for another: insufficiency is ingraven and stamped 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 dyed garments from Bozrah, who trode the wine-press of his Father's wrath alone, and of the people there was none with him.*

4. His being the person ordained of the Father, imports, the *unparalleled 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 a propitiation for our sins.* 1 John iv. 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. viii. 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 Covenanters. 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 will give thee for a covenant of the people.*

3dly, The glorious *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 give him place among great men*, Prov. xviii. 16. Men are esteemed and respected for the valuableness of the gifts and be-

nesses they give; how much more should God's gift make room for him! Christ is God's gift; *I will give thee for a covenant of the people.* And this giving of Christ implies several things which cannot 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 yours, 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 the people had a being: they were not so much as consulted in the matter, when the contract was signed in the counsel 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 want; 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, to be the Mediator, to take our guilt upon

on him; 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 the measure.* How he sent him, you see in several 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 awakened against him; Awake, O sword, against my Shepherd,—smite the Shepherd.* He was put in the wine-press 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 no where 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. viii. 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 of this work, was every way *free and gratuitous*: what freer then 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 man, or to give Christ for that end; though all mankind should have been for ever 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 gave 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 him: faith, which is the only 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 iii. 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 two-fold giving of Christ;

1. 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. viii. 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.

2. 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

giving is a foundation of our title to receive Christ, and 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, or whether they take this gift out of God's hands or not. That Christ is God's gift to a whole visible church in this sense, is a great privilegè, 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 disgusting 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 vi. 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 is HE 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 with 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 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,  
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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 also given to you, that all that please 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,

*4thly*, 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 actions; but their would be more calm reasoning in the world, about gospel-truths, if all our reasonings did strike fail 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 it imports *authority*: supreme authority of the eternal  
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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. x. 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,

V. 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 exhibit 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 cope-stone, with shoutings of *grace, grace unto 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 encroach upon the warrant ministers have to offer Christ to all, and the warrant that all have to receive him; yea, they encroach 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, though none can be possessed of Christ and his benefits, till by faith they receive him; yet this faith to receive,

receive, is given, as well as the gift received by it; Eph. ii. 8. *By grace ye are saved, through faith, and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God.* It is given, by virtue 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 takes 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 though 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 substituted 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 hainously violated by such a base creature as man is, in that he received 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 man 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, *πολυτοίκιλος Σοφία τῆ Θεῶν*, THE MANIFOLD WISDOM OF GOD. Herein he glorified

fied 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 wo 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, though 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 and 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 threatenings 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, through the propitiation of Christ; Rom. iii. 25. *Whom God hath set forth to be the propitiation, through faith in his blood, to declare his righteousness for the remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God.* Herein is *vindicative* 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. iv. 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 shew his *displeasure* at the unbelief of the Jews, as we see, Acts iii. 46, 47. Rom. xi. 11, 19, 20.; but also to shew his *sovereignty*, *That he will have mercy on him 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 to Noah, saying, *God shall enlarge Japhet, and he shall dwell in the tents of Shem*, Gen. ix. 27. Now, of Japhet came the Gentiles, Gen. xii. 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 declared, insomuch that none can, with any shadow of reason, exclude themselves, be 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 on the outside of the door of the sanctuary, is, *Whosoever will, let him come*; all comers are welcome, and refusers left inexcusable.

VI. The *sixth* thing proposed, was the *application* of the whole. This doctrine would admit of a vast improvement, which we must confine to as narrow bounds as possible; and we may improve it,

*1st, 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 brought upon ourselves, by the breach and violation

lation 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 thyself.* Who can repair that ruin? There is a glorious ME, that says, *In ME is thy help,* Hof. xiii. 7. 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 will give thee for a covenant to them;* which, though 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, that whosoever believeth in him might not perish, but have everlasting life.* Christ came not to be a covenant of the people without a 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 concerning 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 hath also 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 of the people.*

3. Hence we may see a *test* of the true religion. All schemes that centre 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 enough, 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, is of a foul-ruining nature, and utterly to be detested. The second Adam came not to patch 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 will give thee for a covenant.* Our chief business, as ministers of the gospel, is to trumpet forth the transcendent excellency of Christ, and *desire to know nothing but Christ, and him crucified*, and 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 threatening of the covenant of works: they are made void to him through 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 threatening 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

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. vii. 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, to 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 liability thereto. And hence,

5. We see what *place* the believer's obedience hath in the covenant of grace: His obedience hath no place 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, though 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 unto 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. iii. 21. *If there had been a law given, that could have given life, verily righteousness should*

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 takes 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 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 liability 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

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 here dissolved, nor obligation to obedience diminished, but rather strengthened and sweetened; 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-pleased: 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 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 the fulness of the Godhead bodily*; and believers are *complete 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 nor commandment 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 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, Sirs, to confound the dispensation of the gospel, with this  
gospel

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 commands*. *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 iii. 18. And this condemnation shall be more aggravated, than if this new object of faith had never been presented, or if this light had never come into the world, ver. 19.

10. Hence learn, 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 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 gives him*; faith says, *I take him as thy gift, as God's gift*: God says *I will give him, it is my will*  
to

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 him alone for salvation, as he is offered; and in so doing, *believe that through the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, they shall be saved*, ACTS v. 11.

11. Hence see, 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 wo 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, casts the covenant in among all the people, saying, *Who-soever will, let him take*; who-soever pleases, let him take, and in taking, he shall have a proof of his being an elect-vessel. As it is said of the Jews, *To them belong the covenant and 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 a 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 ill-will; *You will not come to me that ye might have life. I would have gathered you, and you would not.*

12. Hence we see the CERTAINTY *of the conversion of*

*the elect*; whose conversion, in particular, is God's great end and design in exhibiting Christ as a 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 the 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 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, 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 the covenant of 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*, and to remove spiritual darkness: a covenant of *fight*; 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 xiii. 47, 48. So that an effectual application of the covenant of 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, where-ever the gospel comes, to believe; and he mocks none; for all  
that

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 vastly copious and comprehensive is this doctrine, that I might begin anew, 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. v. 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 through 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: 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 that glorious covenant, while they are in league with their lusts, and prefer their base idols to the Son of God.

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 faith doth not make *void the law*, but *establishes it*, and makes it *honourable*, etc. 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 public and national. If by personal-covenanting be either meant believing at first, and laying hold on God's covenant, or the believer's engaging, through 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. Public 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 forefathers, for themselves and their posterity, "engaged and swore against popery, prelacy, superstition, and every thing  
" contrary

“ contrary to the word of God ; and to the doctrine,  
 “ discipline, worship, and government of the reform-  
 “ ed church of Scotland ;—and that as we should an-  
 “ swer to Jesus Christ at 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 en-  
 gagements ; yea, of the burning and burial of our co-  
 venants, and many grave-stones laid upon the sepulchre ;  
 also the prevalancy of *abjured popery* in this land, with-  
 out being duly lamented, and the open introduction of  
*abjured prelacy*, and *English popish ceremonies* and *ser-  
 vices*, in many places of this land, without being duly  
 testified against ; but the zeal of many runs in another  
 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 hor-  
 rible pit and filthy mire of infamy, bondage, slavery, and  
 contempt ? However, covenant-obligation to duty is  
 what we stand still 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 there-  
 fore, 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 igno-  
 rance ! the covenant of grace is quite another 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, 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, 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 will give, and you shall take. The legalist is constantly 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 connexion between 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, *Grace for grace.* Here God gives all, and faith takes all. All that is required, is given; and all that is given, is given freely. Faith itself doth 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  
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condition of the covenant, and so is the means of our being accounted righteous. Not one 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 one promise in our name, upon performing any gospel-condition, though by the aids 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 of 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 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.’ Again,

(3.) 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 in it; 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. x. 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 comprized in the covenant. Again,

(4.) If Christ be the covenant, then it is a *sure* covenant, *The sure mercies of David*. 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.*

*vid.* He hath sworn, that the bargain shall stand, in so much, 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, 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*

*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,

2dly, 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 the 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 this 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 will but mock God, and set a seal to a blank; yea, you will seal your covenant *with hell*, and *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 commands us to *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 gain souls to himself. I know, moreover, that as you are unworthy of 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 well 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 *will have 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 believeth 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, though 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*  
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*well-pleased*: 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; 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, man, woman; young and old, 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 are in, while you are out of this covenant: you are under a covenant of works, and so under the wrath and vengeance of God, under the bondage and curse of the law; yea, you are 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 are damned for ever, if you be not under another, for that bargain is blown up. This new covenant is a plank after shipwreck; though 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 own making; it was made before the world was made, and drawn up in the council 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 for 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 on 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 are 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 firm 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 will 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 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 intended: yes, it is you. Away with unbelief, and let your heart say, This is a covenant for me. This is a believing with application: and wherefore am I sent here, but to tell you that covenant is for you? You are 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 an 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 will 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 will give him for a covenant*; the other is from you, saying, *I take him for a covenant to me.* The first  
word

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 the 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 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 will 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 as 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 hellish proud spirit of man is not for taking a covenant from God, but for making a covenant with him, for as bad as they are at keeping of 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, nor more wickedness in a Christian world. I say, the most part of the world rejects 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

the Lord of glory, and interpretatively renewing the bloody tragedy again, that was acted at Jerufalem really? And will ye have a hand in the murder alfo? The more they be that reject him, the more should ye receive him. He hath long been fet 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 will 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 to take this covenant of promiſe is the way to give glory to God. You will pleaſe him better than ever your ſins diſpleaſed him; yea, it is impoſſible to pleaſe him another way; for, *without faith it is impoſſible to pleaſe God:* but in this way you will pleaſe him, and content his heart; yea, you will give more ſatiſfaction to his juſtice for all your ſins, than your everlaſting damnation would do; for, this is a covenant *with him by his ſacrifice; a ſacrifice of a ſweet-smelling ſavour,* 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 in the text is ſuch as may obviate all, on whatever ground you ſtate them. *I will 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 are 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 deſtroyed 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 liſt you

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up, if you do not reject the counsel of God against yourselves. 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 yourselves, 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 no elect? Accept of this blessed bargain, and your election is sure. Who dare say that you are 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 will venture upon the covenant at the call of God? But, if I be not an 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 ye debar yourselves? What is the case that this covenant cannot answer? Are there any here that hath false and unconstant 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. xxxii. 40. Are there any here that want through-bearing in the world, and are feared from straits, and even temporal difficulties? Here is a covenant that says, *Bread shall be given thee,*  
*and*

and thy water shall be sure ; yea, verily thou 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 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 afraid of 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 will lead the blind in a way they know not. I will never leave you, nor forsake you.* Are ye for this covenant ? Is there any 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 to 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 the covenant is given ; all grace is given when it is given. Are you content to take 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 are calling us all, both

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, P<sup>sa</sup>. l. 16. : Yea, the voice of God in the law, says, *Vengeance upon you* ; and there is no escaping that vengeance, but by hearing 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 in Christ, in order to reformation ; and taking him for a covenant, in order to our sanctification. Why then, say you, I will 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 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 sins 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 have wearied 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. xliii. 24, 25. *I, even I am he that blotteth 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 upon the heathen,*

*and on 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 among the mist of the bottomless pit, among the smoke of hell, so as they cannot be found out? Why, the covenant hath a word to you; Isa. lxii. 12. *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, man, woman? 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 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 shapped for a hallelujah? Man, woman, who hast seven devil's in you, will you have him, *who hath the seven Spirit 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 hear who 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 shake the dust off my feet, in witness against you, That,

on the nineteenth day of August 1722, at a communion at 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 gladly speak her fair on her marriage-day; therefore, O refuser and despiser of Christ, will you bethink yourself yet, and take your word 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 suggests to you.

But again, before you give him a total denial and absolute 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 away to eternity since the last communion here; and this may be the last communion-invitation that ever you 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 off your hand already.

And finally, my dear friends, before you refuse him wholly, think again what you are refusing: Is Christ a despicable person, of no more worth than 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 moonshine? Is the love of God, the blood of Christ, the eternal interests of your immortal souls, and the divine glory, all matters of indifferency to you? Is the great JEHOVAH, his 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 thought 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 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 centre; but yet the joyful sound of 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! Gladly would I have him, that thus my soul may be blest in him, and his name may be glorified in me. Why then, whatever you think of your faith, and of yourself, as the blackest monster of guilt that ever was out of hell, yet it seems you have the faith of God's elect.

I would

I would very gladly hope, that some souls in this assembly are taken hold of by the hand of grace, and content to sign this covenant with their heart: and woe's me that there should be any here that would 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 have a heart to sign, may be saying, O I cannot write, I cannot believe, I cannot subscribe, though I think I could do it with a thousand good-wills. Say you so, man? I will 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. Say you 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 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 ever was 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 made, 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 taken off his hand. And therefore, having taken then the covenant, never stand to take the seal in the sacrament of his supper.

The SUBSTANCE of some DISCOURSES after  
the Sacrament, on 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 myself, 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 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 turn 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 there 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 seize 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, although the sacrament-table be drawn, yet the covenant-table is not drawn, it is covered yet, and Christ 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, though 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 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,  
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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 Jerufalem, 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 Send, faying, *Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord*. If, after all, you are faying, stay a little, Sir, let me take it to advisement for some days: No, no, man, woman; I have no commiffion to allow you a day, or an hour's delay; *To-day, if ye will hear his voice, harden not you 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 foul should flit out of your body before it flee in to Christ, you are gone, you are undone for 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 is obliged as a debtor to none but himself, and his own pleasure, and his Son's righteousnes; 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 rent and tear the old contract that was betwixt you and your lusts, 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 will 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

have it till you have nothing to pay for it. See how the creditor deals with the debtor in the parable, Luke vii. 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, Oh! 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 thought, 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 there 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 wonders 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 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 registrated to eternity, it shall never be blotted out for me; *Him that cometh, I will in no wise cast him out.* Since they had no better name to sign withal, than the name of sinner, apostate, backslider, criminal, leper, blackamoor, 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 are 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 are 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, the people at the sacrament in Dunfermline, 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 confirming welcoming to others; if he and you I say, be welcoming one another this day, Glory, glory to God that ever this day dawned. Eternity will be duration little enough to praise him for this day. Glory, glory to God for the three happy meetings: glory to  
him

him for the happy meeting betwixt the divine and human nature in one person, and 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 kissed 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, for it is a meeting never to part ; the Covenant will never quit its holding 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 feel 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 on 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 do ; 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 virtue 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-like, 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, where-ever 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, against my inclinations; and he immediately adds, As for our transgressions, thou shalt purge them away,* Psa. lxxv. 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

death never make you look upon yourselves as wretched, saying, *O wretched person that I am! who shall deliver me from it?* that is some virtue. Did the prevalency of sin never force you to the blood of Christ, the *fountain open for sin and for uncleanness?* that is some virtue. Are you 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 between hands, when iniquity is prevailing? Do you not find yourself uneasy, and out of your element, ay till the Lord return? that is some virtue.—Do not deny the sanctifying virtue of the covenant: and what can be the reason of it, that though you sign the covenant, and go in to it, yet you find so little of its powerful sanctifying virtue? I will tell you one reason of your instability 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 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 black 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 unconstant are you; but the lower place, the more stable: Therefore, when you

\* An ancient piece of small Scots copper-coin, in value the twelfth part of a penny sterling; at that time current, but not so now.

sign the covenant anew, put your name farther 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 creature? 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 will pledge 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 you 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

\* At the time when this Sermon was preached [*viz.* August 19. 1722.] the *contest* about the *Marrow doctrine* was upon the field: First occasioned by a new impression of a book, intitled, *The Marrow of Modern Divinity*, with a recommendatory preface, by the Rev. Mr. James Hog, minister of Carnock, as a book designed to vindicate the doctrine of Free-Grace; which book the General Assembly 1720. by their fifth Act, severely animadverted upon, and condemned several precious important truths, through the sides thereof: And though a *Representation* was given in by some ministers (among whom our Author was one to the Assembly 1721. laying open the *dangerous consequence* of the said Act, yet the Assembly 1722. by their seventh Act, farther explained, corroborated, and confirmed the said fifth Act.—As this affair occasioned a very considerable difference, both among ministers and people; so this much may serve as a key to this passage.

all the faints, in an agreeableness thereto, decide matters of this sort. But, O poor believer, do not fall out with Christ, though even many of his friends should differ with one another; be not stumbled in a day of reproaches and offences: *Blessed 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 a crumb is something that indicates that there is yet 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 insight 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? that is a crumb. If you have not got 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 by-past experience, when you got a more sensible hold 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 Forerunner. 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 further; *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  
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rather that there are many in this generation, who would be content that some gospel-truths were scratched 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 parties, the Father and the Son. Here is a sure ground of faith; whereas the reason of your staggering is, because you put in yourself as the one party, who are but a changeable creature, that alters every moment: but it is concluded betwixt two unchangeable parties, whereof none of them ever repents the bargain. O, says the poor soul, though 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 will draw you to heaven, if you were a devil: I will draw you back again though 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 was so far down in the pit, that the Lord would never return again to lift you up: he hath returned, and surprized you; and, it may be, hath 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; his 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 covenant; 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 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  
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in the work of redemption: the Father bears equal burden in the work; and all the three persons of the glorious Trinity had an 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 in God's sight acceptable, 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 upon some righteousness of your own: you would have in your clouted cloke with his fair robe; but God will have none of your blackened righteousness. The right is now, welcome a 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 speak 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 condemned 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 guiding of all about the covenant; and when we take him, we take holiness with him; we take perfect holiness in him for justification;

tion; 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 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-pleas'd.*

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 does he instruct them in? Why, he tells them what is the way to heaven, saying, *I am the way*: he preaches himself, and it well becomes him to do so.—He shews them how a man is made full by emptying himself; *When I am weak, then am I strong.* If any say, I will 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.

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Some will tell us, it is the great and learned men of the world that know preaching best: true, some learning may make them know how words are ranged 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 judgeth 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. 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 always 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 robes royal 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, *etc.* 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 his 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 chal-

ledge; 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 wants their faults more than we? O blind souls! know that Christ is the opener of blind eyes. There are blind persons that know their bodily case, but not that of their souls; they observe bodily providences, but not soul providences: they know not down-castings nor uprisings of soul. O! go to Christ, and 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 piece of holiness, rather than on God's holy covenant, that only can make them holy; and hence their holiness is always to seek: they see not how a man is justified in a moment, by an inward 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 people. 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 an High-priest became us, who is holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners*. 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;*

*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 makes all the devils tremble, and he orders the jaylor to remove his chains ; then, *Dumb and deaf spirit, I charge thee to come out of him,* said Christ to the posselt man in the gospel ; so says he, when he comes to loose a 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, etc.* 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 over the cross, as it were, and put to the king's horn, there being many bonds registrate upon him ; he is carried to prison, and there he lies, fearing the wrath of God, and the execution of the curse and threatening 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 threatening, and dwell upon that ; but believe the gospel-promise, and take hold of the gospel-righteousness, and you shall be loosed. Others dwell long in this prison, because, if they take a promise, they take a conditional promise, and make no right use of it ; such as that, *To you that fear my name, shall the Son of righteousness arise.* There is a sweet promise, the Son of righteousness his arising ; but then the condition of *fearing his name,* that cuts 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

make up all to you, and then you will find a loosing of prison-bands. If you will not be content every day and every hour of the day, to be in God's common, in free graces common, you will ly and rot in your prison. Many abide long in this prison, because they would willingly live to two husbands, both Christ and the law. We cannot live to Christ, unless we be dead to the law, Gal. ii. 19.; 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 languishes, their faith languishes 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 upon what he hath upon bond. But how does Christ, the covenant of the people, open the prison-doors? Why, he even teaches the 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 on 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 liberate!

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,

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 ye 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 obligations to duties 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 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, ver. 19. *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 injoin a duty; for then the man is at this, *O! what shall I render to thee Lord?* Nothing advances holiness so much as the getting a full and free covenant; and he is the covenant, and the whole of the covenant: why? because Christ walks in the midst 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 will run the way 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 thoughts 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 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 true 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 fulness 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 marr 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, ver. 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 that obedience of faith and love is gospel-holiness. O then, let the gospel-covenant have room, or holiness will never thrive and increase: take in the covenant, and it will make you sing; *Sing to the LORD a new song and his praises to the ends 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.

## S E R M O N VI.

The WORLD'S VERDICT of CHRIST  
and his FOLLOWERS; or, the truly  
*Devout* ridiculed and reproached by  
the *Profane*. \*

ISAIAH viii. 18.

*Behold, I and the children whom the Lord hath given me  
are for signs and for wonders in Israel; from the Lord  
of hosts, which dwelleth in mount Zion.*

THE subjects I have lately discoursed upon, compared with this text, will hold forth to us a four-fold verdict concerning Christ, the glorious Redeemer of an elect world. 1. The FATHER'S verdict concerning him, saying, *I have given him for a covenant of the people, a light of the Gentiles* †. 2. The SPIRIT'S verdict concerning him, witnessing in his behalf; *He shall testify of me*. 3. His OWN verdict of himself, saying, *I and my Father are one* ‡. 4. The WORLD'S verdict of him and his followers, *Behold, I and the children whom the Lord hath given me, are for signs and for wonders in Israel*.—In the first, the Father commends him to us by his APPROBATION; *I will give thee for a covenant of the people*. In the second, the Spirit commends him to us by his ATTESTATION; *He shall testify of me*. In the third, he commends himself to us by his PROCLAMATION; *I and my Father are one*. But in the fourth, the world discommends and entertains him with DETESTATION; *Behold, I and the children whom the Lord hath given me, are for signs and for wonders in Israel*.—Behold, how the Father's gift is despised, though he gave him for a covenant of the people! Behold, how the Spirit's testi-

\* This sermon was delivered by our Author in his own church at Dunfermline, Decem. 16. 1722. This is the second impression.

† See the preceding sermon.

‡ These two last subjects have not yet appeared in print.

mony is *rejected*, while he *testifies of Christ!* Behold, how his own declaration is *neglected*, shewing that *he and his Father are one!* Behold, how unworthily this glorious one is *entertained*, by the generality who hear of him; even with prodigious marks of *reproach* and *contempt* upon him and all his children!

It might have been thought that Christ and his friends should be better entertained, by the people of the world, seeing he is given of the Father to be *the covenant of the people*: yet the most of people are such strangers to their true interest, such apostates from, and enemies to Christ, that his best friends, are ready to meet with the greatest opposition, when they are most employed in witnessing for him. But that he whom the Father hath given, for a covenant of the people, will still have some friends amongst the people to witness for him, is evident from that word; *He shall testify of me; and ye also shall bear witness.* And surely they shall have no reason to be ashamed of their testimony concerning him, seeing he is such a glorious person, that *he and his Father are one*, in essence: and yet what treatment his witnessing friends are to expect, even in *Israel*, is declared in this text, by their glorious Leader; *Behold, I and the children whom the Lord hath given me, are for signs and for wonders in Israel.*

That you may not apprehend we mistake the scope of the words; it may be here asked, *Of whom doth the prophet here speak? of himself, or of another?* We answer, He speaks both of himself and of another. That he speaks of *himself*, is evident from the context, which you may view at your leisure: and that he speaks of *another* also, is evident from Heb. ii. 13. where this very text is cited, and applied to Christ; *Behold, I and the children whom thou hast given me.* So that here the *prophet* is the type, and *CHRIST* the Antitype: therefore, hence it is evident, that in discoursing upon this subject, I will not deviate from the scope, while I apply it either to Christ, or his servants and friends: and while I consider it either as the language of the *prophet*, the type, speaking of himself, and his children, converted by his means and instrumentality; and fo  
may

may be applied to all the faithful ambassadors of Christ, and their converts: or, as it is the language of CHRIST, the Antitype, speaking of himself, and of all his friends and followers, who, of his own will, are begotten and regenerated by the word of grace: *Behold, I and the children whom the Lord hath given me, are for signs and for wonders in Israel.*

The scope of this, and several following chapters, is to show the great *destruction* that was shortly to be brought upon the kingdom of Israel, by the king of Assyria, for their sins. In these times of public calamity threatened and impendent, the prophet *comforts* the people of God, ver. 11. with the same comfort, wherewith himself had been comforted of God; *For the Lord spake thus to me, with a strong hand, and instructed me, that I should not walk in the way of this people.* Where we may remark, 1. That there is a *proneness* in men to walk in the way of the people they live amongst, though it be not a good way: the best of men are prone hereto. 2. Those whom God *loves* and *owns*, he will enable them to swim against the stream of common corruption, though they should be called singular.—In these times of distress, the Lord also *cautions* his people, by the prophet, against all sinful fears, ver. 12. *Say you not, A confederacy to all them to whom this people shall say, A confederacy; neither fear ye their fear, nor be afraid.* Be not associate with them, nor afraid of their confederacy. When the church's enemies have sinful confederacies on foot, the church's friends should watch against the sinful fears of these confederacies. And especially, it concerns us, in time of trouble, to watch against all such fears as put us upon any indirect courses for our own security; or any sinful shifts to shun the cross.—He next *advises* them to a religious fear, ver. 13. *Sanctify the Lord of hosts himself, and let him be your fear, and let him be your dread.* The believing fear of God is a special preservative against the disquiet and fear of man: and they that truly fear God, shall not need to fear any evil; for, *He shall be for a sanctuary to them,* though to others he will be a *stone of stumbling,* over which they will fall to ruin, ver. 14, 15. They who are helped to keep up the fear of God, and keep

down the fear of man, will find God to be their refuge; while the wicked, and all their confederates, though hand join in hand, shall not go unpunished, but stumble and fall into despair and ruin.—In ver. 16. we have the *unspeakable privilege* which the people of God enjoy, in having the oracles of God intrusted to them; the scripture, as a TESTIMONY, to direct our *faith*; and a LAW, to direct our *practice*: it is God's proclamation, under the broad seal of heaven; it is the good thing committed to them that are disciples.—In ver. 17. we have the *use*, the good use we are to make of this privilege: and this we are taught by the prophet's own practice and resolution; he embraced the law and the testimony, and had the comfort of it, amidst all the discouragements he met with. What counsel God had given, ver. 12. the prophet here follows, ver. 17. *I will wait upon the Lord, that hideth his face from the house of Jacob, and I will look for him.* God was frowning upon his people; and then the prophet was waiting and looking. When God is hiding his face, and threatening to come in a way of judgment, even then his people should be attending upon him, and expecting his return, in a way of mercy: and those that wait upon God, by faith and prayer, may look for him with hope and joy.

But now, while the prophet was taking this course, it was judged to be an imprudent and ridiculous thing in him; he and his disciples, amongst whom the law and testimony was sealed, were scoffed and mocked, contemned and reproached for it; *Behold, I and the children whom the Lord hath given me, are for signs and wonders in Israel.* Where, for a short division, you may observe these six following things.

1. The note of *admiration* or *lamentation*, BEHOLD! The prophet admires that *godliness* should be so strange: or, he laments the *sin* of that age, that piety and religion should be such a strange thing among them.

2. We have the *party* that is here derided, contemned, and wondered at; *I and the children whom the Lord hath given me*: the prophet and his disciples, ministers and their converts, Christ and his friends.

3. Observe the *mark* of reproach and derision put upon

upon them; they are *signs* and *wonders*: they are looked upon as prodigies and monsters, and turned to matter of scorn and ridicule.

4. We have the people that are *guilty* of this high contempt; and this is the special consideration, speaking it to be matter of wonder and lamentation; it is in *Israel*. If it had been in *Egypt*, and among heathens, it would not have been such a strange matter: but that they should be for signs and wonders, even in *Israel*; or, treated with contempt by a people professing the true religion, this is the more strange.

5. We have the *spring* of this dispensation; it is *from the Lord of hosts*. God, by his providence, hath so ordered it: he hath a sovereign hand in over-ruling these things, for the trial of his people, wherein men have a sinful hand.

6. We have the ground of *comfort* that the children of God have under all these, and such like discouragements; and this is implied in the *titles* that are here ascribed unto him; in that,

(1.) He is the *Lord of hosts*, who hath all the hosts of heaven and earth at his command; in so much, that the reproachers and despisers of his people, can do them no harm; yea, cannot touch one hair of their head, any further than he gives them liberty and permission.

(2.) He *dwells in mount Zion*; there were the symbols of his presence, and the ark that was a type of Christ; so that his *dwelling in mount Zion* points out, not only his *presence* with his people, but his *dwelling* upon a throne of grace and mercy; as a *God in Christ reconciling the world to himself*. He dwelleth in mount Zion, manifesting himself to his people, ready to hear their prayers, and receive their complaints; ready to satisfy their desires, and sanctify their crosses, and support them under their sufferings and reproaches for his name. Though for the present he hide his face from the house of Jacob; and the time of hiding, be also a time of reproach, wherein they suffer contempt and ignominy; yet he *dwelleth in mount Zion*, so as they know where to find him, and recover the sight of him.

Now,

Now, instead of adducing many observations from the words, I shall insist mainly upon this one,

OBSERV. *That as it hath been, so it is still the lot of Christ and his friends, whether ministers or people, who bear his image, to be held as monsters; hated, contemned, reproached, and wondered at: Or thus, Christ and his people are the world's wonder. Behold, I and the children whom the Lord hath given me, are for signs and for wonders in Israel.*

In the prosecution of this proposition, I would, as the Lord may assist, essay the followings things.

- I. Offer some *remarks* for the further application of the text.
- II. Adduce some scripture *passages* for the confirmation of the doctrine.
- III. Enquire into some of these marks of *reproach*, that use to be cast upon Christ and his followers.
- IV. Assign the *reasons* of the doctrine, whence it comes to pass, that they are thus held as monsters, and for signs and for wonders in Israel.
- V. Deduce some *inferences* for the *application* of the whole subject.

I. We proposed to offer some *remarks* for the further *explication of the text*: and there are these six following remarks evident in it.

*Remark 1.* "That *converted persons* are the children of Christ, and the children of these ministers by whom they are converted." They are the *children of Christ*, as being the only author of their *regeneration and adoption*; Behold, *I and the children whom God hath given me*, saith Christ, Heb. ii. 13.—They are the *children of ministers*, as being the instruments of their regeneration and new birth; *My little children*, saith the apostle, of whom I travel in birth, till Christ be formed in you, Gal. iv. 19. And again, 1 Cor. iv. 15. *In Christ I have begotten you through the gospel.* And 2 Cor. xi. 2. *I have espoused you to one Husband.* Christ is the everlasting Father of all believers: and, *as a father pities his children, so will he pity them*; for, *of his own will* begat

begat he them, by the word of truth. Ministers are the instrumental fathers of all those to whom the Lord blesses their ministry, as the instrument of their regeneration. But no sooner doth the church, the woman spoken of, Rev. xii. bring forth any children to God, than the dragon stands ready to devour them, as soon as they are born. *Behold, I and the children whom thou hast given me, are for signs and wonders.*

*Remark 2.* "That it is the power of God that converts and regenerates any that are converted and regenerated by the word: *Who is Paul, who is Apollos, but ministers by whom ye believed, even as the Lord gave to every man?* 1 Cor. iii. 5, 6." Ministers must look upon their converts, as the children that God hath given them: for, whatever good they are instrumental of, to others, it is owing to the free grace of God; if God had not given them, they had never been able to do them any saving good. Christ looks upon believers as his children, which the Father gave him; *I have manifested thy name to the men whom thou gavest me out of the world, thine they were, and thou gavest them me,* John xvii. 6. They were thine by election from eternity, and thou gavest them me to be redeemed by my blood, and regenerated by my Spirit: and in this regenerated work, the Father hath a special hand of power; for, *No man can come to me,* saith Christ, *except the Father which hath sent me draw him.*

*Remark 3.* "That the best that ever was in the world, doth meet with the worst treatment therein: *I, and the children whom thou hast given me, are for signs and wonders.*" We are held as monsters, and prodigies, and gazing-stocks. Who? Even Christ, and his children; ministers, and their converts: the chief Shepherd, and the fairest of his sheep; the under-shepherds, and the flower of their flock. Christ and his friends, both ministers and others, are generally hated, and contemned by the wicked. Yea,

*Remark 4.* "That those who profess religion, and the worship of the true God, may yet despise Christ and his people: *They are for signs and wonders; where? even in ISRAEL: not in Babylon only, but even in* *Israel.*"

“*Israel.*” Many that bear the name of Christians, are enemies to Christ; they profess religion, and yet are despisers of all that are truly religious: *All are not Israel, who are of Israel*; for, even in Israel are to be found despisers of the God of Israel, and of the Israel of God. Even within the church visible, are to be found despisers of the church invisible, and their glorious Head.

*Remark 5.* “That the children of God are not despised, contemned, reproached, and wondered at without the *providence* of God; it is *from the Lord of hosts, that dwelleth in mount Zion.*” *Is there evil in the city, and the Lord hath not done it?* The evil of affliction, he ordereth it; the evil of sin, he permits it, for wise ends: for he is not the author of sin, but he is the Over-ruler of the wickedness of men, to make it contribute and work together, for glory to his name, and good to his people. Man hath a wicked hand in all the marks of contempt he pours upon the godly; but God hath an holy hand in ordering the same, for the trial of faith and patience: and it is the comfort of his children, amidst all discouragement from without, that it is not without the wise providence of God, that contempt is poured upon them; it is *from the Lord of hosts*; he hath bidden Shemei curse David. It is their comfort also, that he is *the Lord of hosts*, who arms what instruments he pleases, to execute his will; and that he is the God that *dwells in mount Zion*, to be a *present help in time of trouble*, and to give present comfort in time of discouragement; he is not far off, he dwells in mount Zion.

*Remark 6.* “That it is matter of *wonder* and *lamentation*, to all the children of God, both ministers and people, that the power of religion, and true piety, should be such a rarity, and exposed to such contempt, in a sinful world, and especially in Israel; and yet so it is, Isa. lxvi. 5. *Hear the word of the Lord, ye that tremble at his word; Your brethren that hate you, that cast you out for my name's sake, said, Let the Lord be glorified: but he shall appear to your joy, and they shall be ashamed.*” Where we see it is no new thing, for the godly to be persecuted for Christ's name, even

in Israel, by men that pretend conscience, and a zeal for the honour and glory of God, and the good and welfare of the church; and who prosecute their hatred and despite with all the formality of devotion: Christ doth explain this, John xvi. 2. *They shall put you out of the synagogues: yea, the time cometh, that whosoever killeth you will think he doth God service.*—So much shall suffice for the remarks I premise for the explication of the text. I come now,

II. To adduce some scripture passages for the confirmation of the doctrine, namely, *That as it hath been, so it is still the lot of Christ and his friends, whether ministers or people, who bear his image, to be held as monsters; hated, condemned, reproached, and wondered at.* You may see both Old and New-Testament instances of it. — In the *Old-Testament*, see an instance of it in *David*, Psal. lxxi. 7. *I am as a wonder unto many.* — See an instance of it in the *Old-Testament believers and church*, mentioned Psal. cxxiii. 3, 4. *Have mercy upon us, O Lord; for we are exceedingly filled with contempt: our soul is exceedingly filled with the scorning of those that are at ease, and with the contempt of the proud.* — See an instance of it in *Joshua and his fellows*, Zech. iii. 8. *Hear now, O Joshua, the high-priest, thou and thy fellows, that sit before thee; for they are men wondered at.* — You may turn over to the *New-Testament*, and see an instance of it in the believing *Hebrews*, Heb. x. 33. *We were made a gazing-stock, both by reproach and affliction.* — We see an instance of it in all the *primitive Christians*, Acts xxviii. 22. *For as concerning this sect, we know that every where it is spoken against.* — And we see an instance of it in the flower of the flock, *CHRIST himself*, the Captain of the host, Luke ii. 34. *Behold this child is set for the fall and rising of many in Israel; and for a sign which shall be spoken against.* Christ is the *rejected stone*, Psal. cxviii. 22. *Enduring the contradiction of sinners against himself*, Heb. xii. 3.

I might here demonstrate the truth of the doctrine, by an induction of particulars, shewing how Christ and his Father, his Spirit and his word, his servants and people,

and his religion itself, hath been signs and wonders for reproach.

I. CHRIST himself hath been spoken against and reproached.—They spake against his *person*, as base and contemptible, *Having no form or comeliness*, Isa. liii. 22.—They spake against his *preaching*, as false, factious, senseless, and seditious, John vii. 12. Luke xxii. 2. and xvi. 14.—They reproached and spoke against his *miracles*, as done in confederacy with *Beelzebub the prince of devils*, Matth. xii. 24.—They spoke against his *morals*, charging him with *blasphemy against God, profanation of the Sabbath*, as a *wine-biber, a friend of publicans and sinners*.—They spoke against his *followers*, as a company of ignorant, despicable people, John vii. 48, 49.—They reproached him in his *offices*: in his *teaching* office, when they challenged him to *prophecy who smote him*: in his *saving* office, when they challenged him to *save himself, as he had saved others*: in his *ruling* office, when they challenged him to *prove himself the king of the Jews*, by coming down from the cross.

It is long since the world thus spake against him, and reproached him; and that he was held for a sign and a wonder in Israel, and was spoken against even in Israel. But are there none that speak against and reproach him to this day, even when he is exalted to the place of glory and power? Yea, How do the *Jews* speak against him still, in all these, and many other respects?—How do the *Mahometans* speak against him, while they prefer their base impostor into his room?—Again, how are *Arians* and *Socinians* daily speaking against Christ, as if he was a mere man, though *he thought it no robbery to be equal with God*?—How do *Quakers* and *Enthusiasts* speak against him, as if he was a mere *nothing*, an empty name, setting up, we know not what sort of a Christ within them, instead of that Jesus that was crucified at Jerusalem?—How do *Atheists* and *Deists* speak against him, as if he was a mere cheat; accounting the religion he hath established, a great imposture; and his gospel a jest?—How do *profane* and *ignorant* persons speak against him, as if *our Beloved* was no more than *another beloved*? saying, *What is thy Beloved, more than another beloved*.

*beloved?*—How do *Latitudinarians* speak reproachfully against him, as if he was a minister of sin!—How do *Legalists* speak against him, as if he alone was not the *Lord our righteousness*?—How do *Papists* speak against him, and reproach him? They make him but a false Christ by their doctrine. They spoil him of his true man-hood; holding that Christ's body is not only in heaven, but really and substantially in all places wherever the sacrifice of the mass is offered: thus they make it omnipresent; and take away the very nature of a body. They reproach him in, and rob him of, his offices. They degrade him from his *prophetical* office; making the pope the infallible judge of all controversies. They degrade him from his *priestly* office, which consists in satisfaction and intercession: they nullify his *satisfaction*, by joining therewith the satisfaction of man's works, as if his were imperfect without that: and they rob him of his *intercession*, communicating the same to saints; yea, they exalt the virgin Mary far above Christ, in this work; for they pray her to ask the Father, to command Christ, her Son, by the authority of a mother, to do thus and thus for them. So much is evident from the genuine popish tenents, out of the *Rhemish Testament* \*. Yea, they also degrade him from his *kingly* office, by placing the pope in his room and stead, as his deputy, in his presence; while they give power to the pope, to rule the catholic church, to pardon sins, and make laws to bind men's consciences; which are things proper to Christ alone: whereby they take the crown off Christ's head, and set it on the pope's: for, to claim regency, in the presence of the lawful prince, is to proclaim rebellion against the prince; because commission of vice-regency ceases in the presence of him that appoints it: now, Christ is always present with his church, *Matth. xxviii. 20*. And, therefore, the pope, by his claim, must needs thrust Christ out of his offices.

And, alas! what a lamentable thing is it, by the bye, that this damnable doctrine spreads so much even in this island; particularly in the north of Scotland, where, we understand, the popish mass is as solemnly celebrate,

\* A popish translation of the Bible.

as we attend upon these divine ordinances? And as Episcopacy was the very ground-work, and foundation-stone, upon which Popery was at first erected; so, what matter of lamentation is it, that popish ceremonies, maintained in the episcopal church, are so much affected; whereby such indignity is offered to the appointments of our Lord Jesus Christ, as if his institutions were imperfect, defective, and faulty, without their additional inventions? I do not think it worth my while, here to meddle with particular persons, and their principles, which some may think I have fair before me: we should pity and pray for them who despitefully use us, or our glorious Lord and his ordinances; and especially we should pity and lament over an ignorant generation, that are so infatuated, as to desire nothing more, than to have these realms intirely subject to a popish government, and antichristian yoke; which neither we nor our forefathers were able to bear: surely, such do not know and consider, how much Popery speaks to the reproach of Christ and true Christianity.—These are *hard speeches, which ungodly sinners have spoken against him*, Jude ver. 15. which is the *sign* to be spoken against.

2. As Christ himself, so his FATHER is spoken against and reproached.—Some denying his *being*, though his existence be so necessary, that, if he be not, it is impossible any thing else should be; yet many fools say in their heart, what they dare not speak out, *viz. That there is no God*, Psal. xiv. 1. And he that saith there is none, would wish there were none; and if he could help it, there should be none.—Some blasphemously charging the all-seeing eye with *blindness*, saying, *The Lord shall not see*, Psal. cxiv. 7. Charging the eternal mind with *forgetfulness*, saying, *God hath forgotten*, Psal. x. 11. Charging the omnipotent arm with *weakness*, saying, *Can God give bread in the wilderness?* Psal. xxviii. 19, 20. Charging his rectoral equity with *injustice*, saying, *Though we sin, we shall not surely die*.—Some speak against and reproach his *providence*, by quarrelling, murmuring, and complaining, and finding fault with the disposals of it.—Some profane his *name*, making it a by-word, by which they give vent to their exorbitant

orbitant passions, and fill up the vacancy of other idle words. Not only is the name of God thus abused by those who belch out their bloody oaths, which would make the ears of every good man to tingle; but also, by those who mention the name of God slightly, or irreverently, in their ordinary conversation; he is near to their mouth, but far from their heart. To use these forms of speech, which properly signify an *acknowledgment* of God's being; as, *O God! O Lord!* or the like: or an *appeal* to his omniscience, as *God knoweth, the Lord knoweth*: or an *invocation* of his favour, as *God bless me! Lord be merciful to me!* I say, to use these, or the like expressions, impertinently, and intending thereby only to express our wonder and surprize, or our passionate resentment, or any thing beside that which is their proper and awful signification, is an evidence of a vain mind, that wants a due regard to that glorious and fearful name: yet, thus is the *mouth of the ungodly set against heaven*, Psal. lxxxviii. 9. Jude 16. *May the Lord, that hath chosen Jerusalem, rebuke them!* Zech. iii. 2.

3. As Christ himself and his Father, so his SPIRIT is reproached. Many indeed are grossly ignorant of the Holy Ghost, like those, Acts xix. 2. *We have not so much as heard, whether there be any Holy Ghost.* Others that hear of the Holy Ghost, they blaspheme the Spirit of Christ; and so make fearful approaches to the unpardonable sin: while they reproach his motions, as enthusiastic fancies; and his operations, as frantic notions; and all his graces and influences, as dreams and delusions.

4. His word is reproached; *But when the Jews saw the multitudes, they were filled with envy, and spake against those things which were spoken by Paul, contradicting and blaspheming*, Acts xiii. 45. Atheists speak against the *authority* of the scriptures: Papists speak against the *perspicuity* of the scriptures, and receive unwritten traditions with the same reverence and affection. Some profanely jest with the *words* of the scripture; making themselves merry with scripture language, Jer. vi. 10. *The word of the Lord is to them a reproach.* Profligate  
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wits relish no jests better, than those which ridicule the sacred word : as no cups could please Belshazzer better, in his drunken frolicks, than the sacred vessels of the temple. But, *he that sits in heaven will laugh at them, and hold them in derision* ; and, in spite of impotent malice, will *magnify the law, and make it honourable*.

5. His *religion and doctrine* is spoken against and reproached. The *truth* of it, and of the gospel, are many times reproached, ridiculed, and contradicted, as false and groundless ; even as the *mediation*, and the *resurrection* of the dead was mocked at by the Athenian philosopher. The *laws* of it were accounted grievous and unreasonable, as *hard sayings*. The *ordinances* of it despised, as mean, and having no form and comeliness ; hence came in the gaudy ornaments of human invention, in the worship of God. *Sabbaths* and *sacraments* were mocked at and contemned. Primitive Christianity was industriously caluminated, because it overthrew idolatry ; for, when the devil was silenced, in his oracles, he opened his mouth in lies and slanders : Julian discharged the Christians to be called any other thing than Galileans. And the reformed religion, in like manner, was reproached : where was your religion, say the Papists, before Luther and Calvin ? Why, it was still in the Bible, where Popery never was : though it maintains all that doctrine, which Christ and his apostles preached ; yet, the professors and preachers of it, are called schismatics and heretics. And even amongst these who profess the reformed religion, how is the flower of godliness contradicted and contemned, by those that rest only in a form ! They that are *servent in spirit, serving the Lord*, must expect to be evil spoken of, by such as affect lukewarmness, and indifference in religion ; and so,

6. His *servants and people* are also reproached. The *preachers* of Christ are, with a distinguishing enmity, *every where spoken against*, 2 Cor. xxxvi. 16. They have been trampled upon as *the filth of the world*, and the *offscouring of all things*, Ezek. xxxiii. 30, 31, 32. The standard-bearers have been most struck at.—The *professors* of religion also, have been reproached, reviled,

ed, and persecuted, Matth. v. 11, 12.—God's heritage hath been always a speckled bird; and his children for signs and wonders; and those who are the greatest blessings of the age, branded as *troublers of Israel*. And, indeed, *If they called the master of the house Beelzebub*, no nick-name fastened upon his followers can seem strange. But this leads,

III. To the *third* thing, which was, To enquire into some of these *marks of reproach* and *contempt* that uses to be cast upon Christ and his friends, in the world. It is a true saying that the apostle hath, with respect to the children of God; *If in this life only we had hope, we are of all men the most miserable*. This he speaks with reference to the trials that they must lay their account with, in the world; for, they must be the butt of the malice of the world, and the subject of the mockery of the wicked; yea, of many professors in Israel; *Behold, I and the children, whom the Lord hath given me, are for signs and for wonders in Israel*. There are these, and the like following marks of reproach that are cast upon them.

The *first* mark of reproach is, That sometimes they are held for monsters and prodigies of *folly* and *impudence*; 1 Cor. iv. 10. *We are fools for Christ's sake; i. e.* we are thus reckoned in the judgment of the world; because we prefer affliction before sin; and because we fear God more than man; and the wrath of God more than the wrath of a king. The world reckons it is a folly for men to choose affliction rather than sin. No doubt, the three children were reckoned fools, to expose themselves to the king's fiery furnace: but surely it was more wisdom than to expose themselves to God's fiery furnace, whose wrath is more terrible than all the fury of the kings of the earth. The world thinks Moses's choice a folly; what! to prefer *afflictions with the people of God, before all the pleasures of sin*, and grandeur of Pharaoh's court!

The *second* mark of reproach is this, They are sometimes, held for monsters and prodigies of *wickedness*, monsters of *villany*. Christ himself was reproached as  
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the most arrant villain, upon the face of the earth; a man in compact with the devil: his followers were stigmatized with the greatest of wickedness; their religious meetings and conventicles for divine worship, were reproached as being cloaks for covering the design of whoredom and uncleanness. Papists have looked upon Protestants as the worst of devils incarnate: and do not loose-living persons look upon those that are strict to be nothing but base persons, a pack of hypocrites, liars, and deceivers? They put them in bear skins, and then bark at them, and worry them. You will get a wretched, graceless, cursing, ranting debauchee, that, in some company, will persecute a child of God, and make him as hell, if you will believe him; and, if you observe attentively, you may see just the devil, the father of lies and accuser of the brethren, speaking out of him; and his tongue to be the instrument of calumny, while he represents them as enemies to the law and holiness. See Acts xviii. 13.

The *third* mark of reproach is, That they are sometimes held as monsters of *injuriousness* and *hurtfulness*: though even for their sakes the world is upheld, and for their sakes the wicked have many mercies continued with them; yet they are many times looked upon as the troublers of church and state: thus Elijah was the man that most lamented the sins of Israel, and yet he is called the *troubler of Israel*, 1 Kings xviii. 17. Thus they are reproached sometimes with rebellion, and as enemies to civil government, having laws different from all people, Esther iii. 8. *And Haman said unto the king, Ahasuerus, There is a certain people scattered abroad, and dispersed among the people, in all the provinces of thy kingdom, and their laws are diverse from all people, neither keep they the king's laws; therefore it is not for the king's profit to suffer them.* While they hold by the laws of King Jesus, in opposition to all the laws of earthly government, that seem to clash with the law of God, then they are treated as lawless persons. When Amos was reproving the sins of Israel, the priests of Bethel complain upon him to the government, Amos x. 11, 13. Thus were the christians reproached, Acts xvii. 7.

*These*

*These are they, say the wicked Jews, that have turned the world upside down: and these all do contrary to the decrees of Cæsar, saying, That there is another king, one Jesus. Thus the builders of the walls of Jerusalem were accused and charged with rebellion, against the government, Neh. ii 19. They laughed us to scorn, and despised us, saying, What is this ye do? Will ye rebel against the King?*

The *fourth* mark of reproach is this, They are sometimes held as monsters of *pride* and *self-conceit*; as men affecting singularity; as men who think themselves wiser than others, and as a sect and faction preferable to all others, Acts xxviii. 22. *As for this sect, we know, that every where it is spoken against: where the godly were-represented under the invidious name of a sect, or a party, that affected singularity.*—The masters and maintainers of sects are looked upon as enemies to the great *corporation of mankind*: but there is not the least colour to put this scandalous character upon the true professors of Christianity, or followers of Christ: for, it establishes that which is of general concern to all mankind.

We read, indeed, of the *sect of the Sadducees*, who justly deserved that character; because they overturned the foundation of religion, by denying a future state, and the immortality of the soul: whereas, the gospel, and true religion, establish those principles that concern man's everlasting welfare.—Also it cannot be called a sect, because it hath a native tendency to the *uniting* the children of men to the Son of God, and to one another in him, by love. Christ died to break down partition-walls, and to slay all enmity; and taught all his followers, not only to *love one another*, but to *love their enemies*. And his gospel, and the believers of it, are far from being a sect, which is supposed to lead to division, and sow discord. It is true, the preaching of the gospel hath been the occasion of much contention in the world: and hence the preachers of the gospel have been branded as *men of contention*, Jer. xv. 10. where the prophet says, *he was born a man of strife, and a man of contention to the whole earth*; on which account

Christ says, *he came not to send peace, but a sword; and to set men at variance one against another*, Mat. x. 34, 35. intimating, what occasion of contention the gospel would be; and what a load of reproaches might thereupon be cast upon its followers, as if they were contentious persons, and division-makers: but whatever division or contention it be the occasion of, yet it is nowise the *cause* of contention; for, it was intended to be the cure of it: and so far as gospel truth and principles do powerfully prevail, upon the hearts of men, so far doth it make them meek and quiet, and of a loving disposition; for, *the wisdom that is from above, is pure and peaceable*; and the gospel proclaims *peace on earth*.—In a word, true gospel-believers are so far from being a divisive sect, that, whereas the authors of sects use to be governed by *secular interest*, and to aim at wealth, honour, and grandeur; true religion, instead of preferring a man to honour, lays him open to disgrace; and lays him obnoxious to fines and forfeiture, to flames and faggots, racks and imprisonments, when religion is persecute openly, as was the common lot of the primitive Christians, and of several after-ages of the church; and hath been the lot of some in Britain, yea, in Scotland, since the Reformation: and that it is not the lot of our day, is owing to restraining Providence; but how soon it may be your lot, it is hard to tell. However, in this respect, it is far from being a sect governed by secular interest.

We read likewise of the *sect of the Pharisees*; and they proved themselves to be a sect, by thirsting after the praise of men, by *divouring widows houses*, and the like: but some sworn enemies to the Christian religion, such as Cæsar Vaninus, who was industrious in searching out all objections against it, owned there was nothing in it that favoured of carnal and worldly designs. True Christianity is a heavenly calling, not under the conduct of fleshly wisdom.

But if, notwithstanding of all this, the true followers of Christ be nicknamed a sect; if a strict and sober conversation; if a zealous contending for the faith; if a diligent attendance upon, and adherence to the gospel,  
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and its truths and ordinances; if joining in religious societies, for prayer and Christian conference, and endeavouring, in our places, the suppression of error, immorality, and profaneness; if a vigorous opposition to every thing that incroaches upon the prerogative of Christ, or tendeth to hurt the doctrine, worship, discipline, and government of his house; if these, and the like, be called and counted the badge of a sect, or party, let us not be moved at it; but rather say as David, 2 Sam. vi. 22. *If this be to be vile, I will be more vile.* Let us not be deterred from gospel-principles and practices, by the invidious name of a sect: it is better to be under the reproach of men, for following of Christ, than to be under the curse of God for forsaking him.

The *fifth* mark of reproach cast upon them is, That sometimes they are held as monsters of *error*, and as signs and wonders for *novelty* of doctrine and deportment, Acts xvii. 19, 20. *What new doctrine is this? For thou bringest certain strange things to our ears:* and yet it was nothing but the doctrine of Christ and his gospel, preached from the beginning of the world in Paradise, and professed of through the Old-Testament; however, it was reproached as a new scheme, and a doctrine subversive of the law; *This fellow persuades men to worship God contrary to the law*, Acts xviii. 13. Christ himself was obliged to vindicate himself, from this charge, saying, Mat. v. 17. *Think not that I am come to destroy the law and the prophets; I am not come to destroy, but to fulfil.* And Paul vindicated himself, Rom. iii. 31. *Do we make void the law, through faith? God forbid! Nay, we establish the law.*

The *sixth* mark of reproach is, They are held as monsters of *melancholy*, *dulness*, and *stupidity*; that is an ordinary reproach cast upon religion, as if it turned men dumpish and fottish, dull and melancholy: which is occasioned especially by the *humbled* and *dejected circumstances* of new beginners in religion; while they are under a spirit of bondage, and under a law-work of conviction and humiliation. But let poor humbled souls, that are weighted under a sense of sin, and fear of wrath, and grievous reflections upon their mispent time;

and with a concern about what will become of them at death and judgment, and through a long vast eternity; let them remember, that it is better to bear that yoke, for a while, till the Lord himself give an outgate, though they should be called mad and melancholy both, than to bear the yoke of God's everlasting wrath, which will be wreathed about the necks of all despisers of God and godliness. — Sometimes this reproach is occasioned by the *different dispositions* that true religion works upon its followers, from that of the world. True godliness makes a man leave all sinful pleasure and delight, as well as all sinful profit and gain: and this being contrary to the way of the world, the man that is thus mortified to the world, is presently censured for melancholly: whereas no pleasure in the world is comparable to the pleasure of religion; *Wisdom's ways are pleasantness*. And religion is so far from being a melancholy, uncomfortable thing, that nothing fills the religious man with more grief and melancholy than this, that he is not religious enough; and that he thinks he hath no religion. Some prospect of eternal happiness, in Christ Jesus, freedom from divine wrath, communion and fellowship with God, and religion, in the life and power of it, is the best antidote against melancholy that I know; and the greatest advancer of sober mirth, and spiritual gladness.

In a word, manifold are the marks of reproach fastened upon true religion, and its friends. — Sometimes they are reproached as monsters of *ingratitude* to the world, because they will not humour and please them, in the way of wickedness; because they will serve them only, *usque ad aras*, according to the Latin proverb; that is to say, *as far as is lawful*, and no farther. — Sometimes they are reproached as monsters of *wrath* and *spite*, while their zeal for God comes under the name of anger, and canker, and rancour. The meek of the earth can bear injuries against themselves: but if they cannot bear the injuries that are done to the honour of God; if they cannot *bear evil*, as it is said to the commendation of the church of Ephesus, Rev. ii. 2.; then they are censured and stigmatized for hot-headed zealots.

zealots. If they be faithful in reproving of sin, and testifying against other general defections, or particular enormities, then they are ready to meet with the prophet Micaiah's entertainment; *This fellow never speaks good of me.*—Sometimes they are reproached as *bunglers* and *babblers*, Acts xvii. 18. The Athenian philosophers, Epicureans, and Stoics encountered Paul, and insulted him saying, *What will this babbler say?*—Sometimes they are reproached for the very *grace of God itself*, that appears in them; Gal. iv. 29. *He that was born after the flesh, persecuted him that was born after the Spirit.* So also it is now: and the persecution here especially pointed at, was that of scorning and mocking, viz. as Ishmael mocked Isaac. And, indeed, mocking and derision, which arises from an hatred and contempt of our brother, is a degree of murder; *But I say unto you, that whosoever is angry with his brother, without a cause, shall be in danger of the judgment: and whosoever shall say to his brother, Raca, shall be in danger of the council: but whosoever shall say, Thou fool, shall be in danger of hell-fire*, Mat. v. 22. Here RACA signifies all signs and gestures that express contempt; such as, hissing, and flouting, and looking contemptuously on our brother. Now, the mocking wherewith Ishmael mocked Isaac, proceeded from the contempt and hatred of the grace of God in Isaac; which Paul observes, when he says, that he *persecuted that which was born after the Spirit.* Thus Cain hated his brother, because of the grace of God in him; because his *deeds were good*, 1 John iii. 12. A great part of the sufferings of Christ stood in this, that he was *mocked for his confidence in God*, Psa. xxii. 8. Mat. xxvii. 43. The children of Bethel mocked Elisha, 1. For his *person*, saying, *Go up thou bald-head; go up thou bald-head.* 2. For the *grace and favour of God* shared to Elijah his master, saying, *Go up, or ascend, as Elijah did; go up, not to Bethel, as some remark; but go up to heaven: and this profane scorning he cursed in the name of God.* Let this learn children to beware of being mockers of the godly: the curse of God lighted upon these children; and *she-bears came forth out of the wood, and tare to pieces forty-two children of them,*

*them*, 2 Kings ii. 23, 24.—Now, these are some of the many marks of reproach, that are cast upon religion, and the followers of it, while they are *for signs and for wonders in Israel*.

IV. The *fourth* thing was, To give the *reasons* of the doctrine, whence it is, *That Christ and his children have been, and are thus for signs and wonders in Israel*: or, why they have been, and are thus stigmatised with marks of reproach and contempt. And,

I. They are for signs and wonders, because they are *not known*, 1 John iii. 1. *The world knoweth us not, because it knew not him*. The world know not CHRIST; and therefore they abused him: if they had known, they would not have *crucified the Lord of glory*. Christ was despised because the world knew him not, John i. 10. 1 Cor. ii. 8. The world did not know the *dignity* of his person, that he was the Son of God: yea, when he called himself the Son of God, they called him a blasphemer, and stoned him. They did not know the *excellency* of his doctrine, otherwise they would never have said, that he deceiveth the people. They did not know the *design* of his coming, or that he was the Saviour of the world, and was to die that they might live. They did not know him in the *power* of his resurrection, or the fellowship of his sufferings: and therefore, they reproached him.—The world doth not know his *followers* and *friends* neither: though the world may know them, with respect to their outward circumstances, yet the world doth not know the people of God. The world doth not know them in their *spiritual relation* to God, as being the children of God. The world doth not know them in their *spiritual state* of favour and friendship with God. The world doth not know them in their *spiritual privileges, graces, and endowments*. The world doth not know them in respect of their *love to God*, and God's love to them, and his disposition toward them. The world doth not know them in their *acts of faith* toward a God in Christ. The world doth not know them in their *secret duties*, and secret fellowship with God: *their life is hid with Christ in God*. As in a frosty night the stars will

will appear to them that live in that climate ; while those that live in another climate, cannot discern them : so will the graces of the godly appear, like so many glistering diamonds, to the spiritual discerning of those, who live in the same spiritual climate. But the world cannot see them ; they live in another climate ; *The natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: they are foolishness unto him.* The world doth not know them, in respect of their *usefulness* ; how useful they are to bring down blessings on these among whom they live ; and how useful they are, in holding off many sad judgments ; so ten righteous men, in Sodom, would have saved it from destruction. The world doth not know them in these respects ; they do not know them because they are spiritually blind : they do not know them, because they do not converse with them ; they do not keep company with them ; they may outwardly trade with them, but have no spiritual correspondence with them. And, O how excellent are the ways of God, which none reproach but those that know them not !

2. They are for signs and wonders in the world, because they are not *like the world* ; they are unlike to the wicked. As men will wonder at a person that is not like other folk : so they are for wonders because they are a different species from the world ; yea, they are men of another world, John xv. 18, 17. : where you see the world hates the people of God, because they are like Christ, who was hated of the world ; and because they are unlike unto the world : they are new-born ; and have another nature : they are strangers here, and have their face set toward another world. They are many ways unlike the world.—The world and they are *objects of different affections* ; the one is loved, and the other is hated of God.—They are *subjects* of different Lords, *viz.* God and the devil : and these two Lords command contrary things ; they promise contrary rewards, and they threaten contrary punishments. The devil commands men to serve their lusts ; he promises them temporal pleasures, and he threatens temporal miseries to these that will not serve him. Now, God's commands, promises, and threatenings are of another nature : and so there

there is vast odds between the one and the other, while they are subjects of different Lords; the godly being brought *from darkness to light*, and *from the power of Satan unto God*; the wicked being led captives by Satan, at his pleasure; *he rules in the hearts of the children of disobedience*: yea, *the god of this world blinds their eyes*; and suggests all manner of evil unto them, and fills them with prejudice and enmity against the faints.—But then, as they are objects of different affections, and subjects of different Lords, so they are *persons of different principles*, that they act from: the one acts merely from the flesh, the other acts from the Spirit: contrary spirits act them severally; *Ye have not received the spirit of this world, but the spirit which is of God*.—Further, they are a people of *different ends*, whether we consider the end proposed by them, or the end designed upon them. As to the end *proposed* by them; the godly man proposes the *glory of God*, as his great and ultimate end: the wicked man proposes the *satisfaction of his own lusts*, as his end. As to the end *designed* upon them; the end of the godly man will be, that *he shall enter into the joy of his Lord*, to be for ever with him: the end of the wicked will be, that *he shall be turned into hell*, to be tormented with the devil and his angels.—Now, seeing they are every way so unlike to the world, no wonder that they be for signs and wonders in the world; for, *What fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness? Or, what concord hath light with darkness? What communion hath Christ with Belial? What part hath he that believeth with an infidel?* 2 Cor. vi. 14, 15. Now, because they are so unlike the world, and cannot follow the course of the world; therefore they are reproached therein: *They think it strange, that they run not with them, to the same excess of riot; speaking evil of you*, 1 Pet. iv. 4.

3. They are for signs and for wonders in the world, because they are *enemies to the way of the world*. The *wickedness* of the world is a vexation to them; *For that righteous man Lot, dwelling among them, in seeing, and hearing, vexed his righteous soul from day to day, with their unlawful deeds*, 2 Pet. ii. 8. *An unjust man is an abomination*

*abomination to the just; and he that is upright in the way, is an abomination to the wicked,* Prov. xxix. 27. The godly hate their ways, not their persons: we are obliged to love your persons, but to hate your vices, Pſal. cxxxix. 21, 22. They cannot but be as signs and wonders to the wicked, eſpecially when they hate that which they love, and love that which they hate. And the world is not behind with them, in their hatred: for, as the godly hate the wickedneſs of the wicked, as far as he is godly; ſo the wicked hate the godly, and their godlineſs both; *The carnal mind of them is enmity againſt God:* and the heart being full of enmity, *out of the abundance of the heart the mouth ſpeaketh,* and ſpeaketh reproachfully. The very root of all this oppoſition, is the enmity that is put between the ſeed of the woman, and the ſeed of the ſerpent.

4. They are for ſigns and for wonders in Iſrael, and in the world, becauſe they *reprove the world,* and do what they can to cauſe them leave their carnal joy, their darling pleaſures, and ſinful delights, of which they are ſo fond.—The children of God are the *lights of the world,* Phil. ii. 15. *That ye may be blameleſs and harmleſs, the ſons of God without rebuke, in the miſt of a crooked and perverſe generation, among whom ye ſhine as lights in the world.* Now, the natural man loveth not to come to this light; *Every one that doth evil, hateth the light; neither cometh to the light, leſt his deeds ſhould be reprov'd,* John iii. 20. They will not come near the godly, ſo to ſpeak; they will not ſo much as come in ſpeaking terms with them, upon any ſpiritual heavenly diſcourſe: they love not to talk with them, otherwiſe their talk would reprove theirs, which is nothing but the language of Aſhdod: they love not to walk or converſe with them, otherwiſe their walk and converſation would reprove and condemn theirs; and hence they care for none of their change: their company is but a burden to them; they are in bondage when they are obliged to be in their company any time, eſpecially if they be very ſpiritual Chriſtians: the more ſpiritual their converſation is, the more hateful it is to the carnal man.—The godly are the *ſalt of the earth,* to keep the world from ſtinking; this ſalt will ſmart their

wounds and sores; and they cannot endure to be crossed: hence *they hate them that rebuke in the gate, and they abhor him that speaketh uprightly*, Amos v. 10. *Reprove a scorner, and he will hate thee*, saith Solomon, Prov. ix. 8. See also ver. 7. *He that reproveth a scorner, getteth to himself shame: and he that rebuketh a wicked man, getteth to himself a blot.* Men speak against religion, because it speaks against them. Why were the Pharisees so exasperated against Christ, but because he spake his parables against them? John vii. 7. He was a sign every where spoken against, because his doctrine every where speaketh against the way of the world: and no wonder then that all these speak against it, who hate to be convinced by it, and fear to be condemned by it. Why are faithful ministers so much hated in the world, but because they shew people their transgressions, their drunkenness, whoredom, swearing, lying, and Sabbath-breaking; their villainy, knavery, and vice? Though none pretend it is for that cause they hate them, but, perhaps say, it is for some ill thing they alledge against them: for Satan hides his calumny and cruelty best under a cloak of pretence for religion. But, however, if they would flatter men, and speak peace to them, to whom God speaks no peace, they might avoid a great deal of reproach and censure; but they dare not do it: they are not to make a new law, or a new gospel, but to preach that which is made, Jer. xv. 19. There we have the ministerial commission; *Let them return unto thee, but return not thou unto them.* The hearts and lives of men must be brought to comply with the word of God; for the word of God can never be made to comply with the humours and fancies of men: if they aim at pleasing men, they cannot approve themselves the servants of Christ; and therefore they are reproached and evil spoken of.

V. The *fifth* thing was, The *application* of the subject; which we shall essay in an use of information, trial, and exhortation.

The *first* use then is of *information*. Is it so, as has been said, *I hat Christ and his people, are hated, contemn-*  
*ed,*

ed, reproached, and wondered at by the world? Then hence we may see,

1. The necessity of the day of judgment: for, if the world might be judged here, the best in the world would be run down with reproach and condemned; yea, hated as monsters. But what a wonder of divine patience is it, that this glorious One, who hath so much said against him and his followers, while he and his children are loaded with reproach, doth not answer all these reproaches with thunder and lightening? Why, it is a *day of patience*: but there is a *day of vengeance* coming, wherein he will no longer keep silence, Jude ver. 14, 15, &c. This day God will not anticipate, for he knows it is coming, Psalm xxxvii. 13.

2. Hence see the *duty* of all that *hear these tidings*: the duty of professors, the duty of profane persons, and the duty of saints.—See the duty of *professors*, to beware that they be not a *scandal* to the wicked, 1 Tim. v. 14. Your scandalous conversation may *occasion the reproaches*, that are cast upon the saints by the wicked world: for, when you that profess religion, are but vain and frothy in your conversation, double and deceitful in your dealings loose and untender in your walk, you bring up an ill report upon religion, and make enemies think that religion is but a sham.—See the duty of *profane* folk: that they beware of *reproaching* and *contemning* religion, and religious people, upon whatever pretence. And if none but saints shall win to heaven, what will become of them that look upon such as monsters!—See also the duty of *saints*, and of all the children of God that are reproached: they are not to account it a *strange thing* though the world look upon them as monsters; yea, so blind is the world, that they may reckon you the very folk, that should be banished out of the world. Paul, before his conversion, looked upon the saints as *worthy of death*; Acts xxvi. 9, 10, 11. *I verily thought with myself, that I ought to do many things contrary to the name of Jesus: which thing I also did in Jerusalem; and many of the saints did I shut up in prison, having received authority from the chief priests; and when they were put to death, I gave my voice against them. And I punished*

*them oft in every synagogue, and compelled them to blaspheme; and being exceedingly mad against them, I persecuted them even unto strange cities.* Think it not strange, that the world should condemn you, and contemn you; you are contemned and despised with good company, even with the best of company, with Christ himself: *Behold, I and the children whom the Lord hath given me are for signs and for wonders.* I fear, to enlarge on this subject were to purchase to myself more of that reproach\*.

3. Hence see the reason why the godly, in all ages, have been *persecuted* and *barbarously used* as monstrous persons, and religion as a monstrous opinion. The Lord's people need not look upon it is a rare thing; *Think it not strange concerning the fiery trial, which is to try you, as though some strange thing happened unto you,* 1 Pet. iv. 12. We need not think it strange if religion itself be ridiculed; *Ipsa religio in opprobrium vertit*, said Bernard. Here many things might be condescended upon for the illustration of this point; but having assigned a variety of instances above, on the second head, concerning *Popery*, &c. we shall supercede any further enlargement.

4. Hence see what reason the godly have to bear reproach and contradiction with *patience*, seeing Christ himself, and all his followers, have been thus treated. We are ready to represent any reproach very hainously, saying, *We do well to be angry; it is not a thing to be endured*: yet, O how much doth God bear with the contempt cast upon his name! How much doth Christ bear with the reproach cast upon his name! And surely this should moderate our resentment of any indignity done to our name. This doth not hinder our taking all proper methods, for vindicating our own reputation, and *good name*, which is as *precious ointment*: but only it should mitigate our resentment; for, who are we

\* About the time when this sermon was preached, there were mighty alterations amongst both ministers and people about the *Marrow Doctrine*; our Author, being a favourer of that doctrine, got his own share of the contumely and obloquy of these times. See p. 238.

that we should not be contradicted, seeing Christ himself endured the contradiction of sinners against himself?

5. Hence see what a wonder of divine power it is, that true Christianity and its followers have been kept up, and maintained, and preserved in the world, notwithstanding of the universal contradiction and opposition it hath met with. The plantation of the gospel-church, at first, was opposed by all the powers of darkness; and in all ages it hath met with such opposition, that if it had not been of God, it had come to nought: *This is the doing of the Lord; and it is marvellous in our eyes.* That a profession, so opposite to the carnal thoughts, and sensual delights of men, should be yet preserved in the world, is a wonder, seeing it is every where spoken against, reproached, and reviled, and yet strangely victorious, not only without, but against secular power and force, for some ages. Here is the *bush burning*, and yet not consumed.

Mahomet's delusions could never prevail in the world, till, getting the power of the sword, he discharged, upon pain of death, speaking against him or his doctrine; and by such barbarous methods it hath been supported now, above these thousand years.—Thus antichrist also had maintained his interest, by causing as many as would not worship the image of the beast, to be killed, Rev. xiii. 15. Thus have errors and false religion been propagated: but strip them of these supports, and they fall to nothing of course. Where is all the splendor of the heathen deities and idolatries? Are not their oracles silent, their altars deserted, their gods famished and perished from the earth? We may not only say, *Where are the gods of Hamath and Arphad? Where are the gods of Sepharvaim, Hena, and Ivah?* But, where are the gods of Babylon and Egypt, Greece and Rome; and the illustrious names of Saturn, Jupiter, Juno, and Diana, &c. Where are the gods of our British ancestors, before they received the light of the glorious gospel? Their names are written in the dust. But, behold! Christ and his glorious doctrine still flourish, in some place of the world, to this day; though, for many ages destitute of all secular support, and assaulted on all hands, by daring and implac-

implacable enemies, yet still it is upheld by its own intrinsic truth and excellence, and that divine power that accompanied it: yea, to the end of the world, the *Captain of salvation* will ride forth, in the chariot of this gospel, with his crown upon his head, and his bow in his hand, *conquering and to conquer.*

6. Hence see the *folly* and *wickedness* of those, that reproach the way of the Lord, who speak against Christ and his holy religion, as monstrous: surely we should lament their case, because of the dishonour hereby done to the name of God and Christ. How should it affect us, that the God that made the world should be so vilified in the world! That Christ, who so loved the world, should be hated by the world! What should we do with the reproach cast upon him and his followers, but as king Hezekiah did with Rabshakeh's blasphemous letter; *He spread it before the Lord, saying, Now, Lord; what wilt thou do for thy own name?* and with the psalmist; *O God! how long shall the adversary reproach, and enemies blaspheme thy name, for ever?* Psal. lxxiv. 10, 18, 22. What a miserable condition are they in, who thus presumptuously reproach the way of the Lord? Though they may do it with an air of assurance, as if there was no hazard; yet, he that rolls this stone, it will certainly return upon him: Zion will be a burdensome stone to her enemies; and on whomsoever this stone falls, it will grind them to powder. How little do reproachers consider what mischief they do to the souls of others? Unwary souls are easily beguiled, and brought over to entertain rooted prejudices against that which they hear every where spoken against and reproached. Few have consideration and resolution enough to maintain a good opinion of that, which they, who set up for wits, make it their business to ridicule and cry down. Many poor souls have their minds quite debauched, by these means: and, under a pretence of free thought, a fashionable conversation, and a generous disdain of professing singularity, atheistical and deistical principles are imbibed, restraints of conscience are shaken off, brutish lusts are indulged, yea, pleaded for; and serious godliness, and fervent devotion, looked upon with contempt; and thus  
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the heart impreguably fortified against Christ and the gospel.

Again, This doctrine may be improved by way of *trial*. People may try their state by this doctrine. Though every mark of reproach be not a mark of grace; for, some may be justly spoken of, and yet be gracious persons; and others may be unjustly reproached, and yet be graceless persons: yet there are some things whereby we may try, if we be reproached, whether the reproaches cast upon us meet with such reception from us, as to determinate our being the children of Christ, that are bearing his reproach with him. I may apply to this what the apostle says of chastisement, Heb. xii. 8. *If ye be without chastisement; then are ye bastards, and not sons*: and yet chastisement of itself, as an affliction, is no mark of sonship, if it be not sanctified: even so here, if ye be without reproach, then are ye bastards, and not children; and yet reproach of itself is no mark of being children, if it be not accompanied with saving good, and if it be not sanctified.

QUEST. *How shall we know if we get any saving good, out of reproach, such as will discover us to be children?* Behold, I and my children are for signs and wonders.

1. It is a mark of one's getting saving good out of reproach, if he receive them with the *same mind and spirit*, with which Christ received them. How did Christ receive them? Why, he received them as out of his *Father's hand*. Reproach was a part of his bitter cup; Now, says Christ, *the cup which my Father giveth me to drink, shall I not drink it?* So, the child of God looks upon reproach, as coming from the hand of God: though he sees the sinful hand of man, yet he sees the holy hand of providence; this is observed in the text: *We are for signs and wonders, from the Lord of hosts, that dwelleth in mount Zion*: we see the hand of our God. Thus David; God hath *bidden Shemie curse David*. -- Again, Christ received reproach with *meekness*; for, *He was meek and lowly; when he was reviled, he reviled not again; when he suffered, he threatened not*:  
yea,

yea, he was so far from reviling again, that he prayed for forgiveness to his reproachers, Luke xxiii. 46. Something of the same spirit will be in us, if reproach do us real good.—He received them *submissively*; *He committed himself to him that judgeth righteously*, 1 Pet. ii. 23. So will we be submissive to God's providential afflicting will, and thereby be more humbled.

2. It is a sign of one's getting saving good of reproaches, if thereby they are brought to *examine themselves*, if they have given just occasion for reproach: and though they find they have given no just occasion before men, yet are they made to search their own souls, to see and lament the sin that hath provoked God to afflict them with the scourge of tongues; and thereupon are made to pray, with Job, *Shew me wherefore thou contendest with me*, Job x. 2. And, withal being thankful to God, ascribing it only to his grace, that they have been kept from giving any just occasion for such an aspersion.

3. It is a mark of one's getting good of reproach, if reproaches have come while we were in a *course of backsliding*, and they have been the means of recovering us; whence we are made to bless the Lord that he hath sent them, to put a stop to our defection. This is an evidence of our getting good by reproach, as David said of affliction: *It is good for me, that I was afflicted; before I was afflicted, I went astray, but now I have kept thy word*, Psal. cxix. 67. And that reproach was a part of his affliction, is evident from ver. 69. *The proud have forged a lye against me*.

4. It is an evidence of one's getting good of reproach, when a person is, in a spiritual manner, *suitably affected*, according to the rise of the reproach.—If it arise from our *sin*, so that we have given occasion for the reproach, so as God is dishonoured: if in that case the soul be more grieved for the dishonour done to God, than for any thing relative to his own particular interest; this is an evidence of his getting good thereby, why, the man in this case lays his own honour in the dust, and grieves for the dishonour done to God.—If the rise of the reproach be from our *duty*, and thereupon the soul be

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more confirmed in the way of duty, as those, Neh. v. 8. *Ought we not to walk in the fear of the Lord, because of the reproach of the brethren?* And as David, Psal. cxix. 69. *The proud have forged a lye against me: but I will keep thy precepts with my whole heart.* When a man, instead of being deserted from a duty, by reproach cast upon him, is more confirmed, and made more circumspect, in the way of duty, than ever.—If the reproach hath risen from our zeal for the concerns of Christ and his interest; and thereupon, the man hath been made to count it his glory, *Esteeming the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures of Egypt:* and the man is more grieved for the aspersions cast upon Christ, than what concerneth himself, saying, as Psal. lxix. 9. *The zeal of thine house hath eaten me up; and the reproaches of them that reproach thee, are fallen upon me.*—These are evidences of reproach doing good to a man: when thereby, also, he is made to long for the day of the *manifestation of the sons of God*; when our reputation will be cleared up, and aspersions cast upon us wipt away.—Thus much for marks in order to trial.

Again, The doctrine may be applied for *exhortation*. Having no time for addressing myself to particular sorts of persons, I shall offer these following *advices*, and drop them in the general.

*Advice 1.* Let all professors of religion take care, that they give *no occasion* to any to look upon them and their religion too as monstrous. Some that wear Christ's livery may be taxed, as a scandal to his family, by their lying, cheating, drunkenness, whoredom, and other vices: though it is unjust and unfair to reproach religion, because some who profess it expose themselves to reproach; yet, it is no doubt a grievous sin in those who give *any occasion* to do so, 1 Tim. v. 14. We should pray with David, *Lead me in a plain path, because of mine enemies*; in the Hebrew it is, *because of mine OBSERVERS*. Our enemies are our observers; and though no sinful practice is consistent with religion, yet enemies will think, and say so, if they find us making it consistent with the profession of religion.

*Advice 2.* If the world be set upon speaking reproachfully of religion, let us be the more engaged to speak *favourably* of it. Every believer should be both a witness and an advocate for his religion, and for the truth. When you hear how God's name is abused, his people reproached, his truth contradicted, have you never a word to say for him? Whoever is ashamed of him now, of him will he be ashamed when he comes in the glory of his Father. If we hear our dearest friends in the world slandered, we will be ready to appear for their vindication: and have we no resentment of the contumely and contempt cast upon God, and Christ, and the scriptures of truth? If we fear we are not able to speak for the truth, as we ought, we may take encouragement from that promise, *It shall be given you in the same hour, what ye shall speak. Out of the mouth of babes and sucklings he can ordain strength; and so, still the adversary and avenger.*

*Advice 3.* Reckon the godly to be the *excellent ones of the earth*, however contemptible and hateful the world judge them to be. *The righteous is more excellent than his neighbour*, however reproached; and it is the wicked that are the monsters. Let none think the worse of the way of religion and godliness; neither be frightened from walking in that way, because of the contempt poured upon it.—Consider *who* the reproachers are; generally men of debauched consciences, and profligate lives: if you choose such for your leaders, then the *blind leads the blind*, and *both will fall into the ditch*.—Consider how *trifling* their reproaches are: they that speak against religion, they make *lies their refuge*, and *under falsehood they hide themselves*.—Consider *how much* is to be said in favours of the *good old way*, whoever they be that reproach it: *Wisdom's ways are pleasantness, and all her paths peace*.—All the wealth and pleasure of the world is not worth an hour's communion with God in Christ, in the way of believing the gospel, and embracing the truth.—Consider, that however the godly may be run down, they shall be *raised up*; for the reproaching of them is the reproaching of Christ and his religion: though none pretend it is religion they reproach, but

but only such and such professors of religion ; yet Christ reckons himself concerned in the quarrel. If his people be persecuted with tongues or hands, it is a persecution of Christ ; *Saul, Saul ; why persecutest thou me ?* And iurely Christ will be too hard for his enemies : he will concern himself in the cause of his friends and children ; and therefore, he and his people, and his cause and truths, will successfully prevail, and have the ascendant, ere all be done, let the world do and say what they will.

*Advice 4.* Beware of reproaching your neighbour in any case, lest you come to be amongst the reproachers of Christ and his children : *Speak not evil one of another,* saith the apostle.

(1.) God *discharges* this practice ; *Thou shalt not raise a false report : put not thine hand with the wicked to be an unrighteous witness,* Exod. xxiii. 1. *Thou shalt not RAISE a false report ;* it may be rendered, *Thou shalt not RECEIVE a false report :* and it says, that *raising,* or *receiving,* of false reports, are equally discharged.

(2.) God *observes* this bad carriage, in a special manner ; *I have heard the reproach of Moab, and the reviling of the children of Ammon, how they have reproached my people,* Zeph. ii. 8.

(3.) God *threatens* such as are chargeable with this impiety, in the same place ; *As I live, saith the God of Israel, Moab shall be as Sodom, and Ammon as Gomorrah ; this shall they have for their pride, because they have reproached and magnified themselves against the people of the Lord of hosts,* Zeph. ii. 9, 10. *What shall be given to thee ? or what shall be done to thee, thou false tongue ? Sharp arrows of the mighty, with coals of juniper,* Psal. cxx. 3, 4.

(4.) The scripture shews this to be the *ordinary practice* of the wicked, and of the devil's children. Christ says to his reproachers, *Ye are of your father the devil, for his works ye do,* John viii. 44.

(5.) Yea, revilers are put among the number of such, as shall be *excommunicate* from the presence of the Lord ; *Know ye not that the unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God : be not deceived, neither fornicators, nor idola-*

*ters, nor adulterers,—nor revilers—shall inherit the kingdom of God, 1 Cor. vi. 9, 10.*

(6.) Bonds of *humanity* should oblige us to take care of reproaching one another; the bonds of mutual obligation, fraternity, neighbourhood, and brotherhood: the breaking of these bonds was what imbittered the reproach of David; Pſal. lv. 12, 13, 14. *It was not an enemy that reproached me, else I had born it, &c.; but it was thou, a man, mine equal, my guide, and mine acquaintance: we took sweet counsel together, and went to the house of God in company.*

In order to shun this great evil, observe your *heart*, for that is the fountain from which *false witnesses*, and *all blasphemies proceed*, Matth. xv. 16.—Seek to have the heart freighted with *love* to God and man: *Love thinketh no evil*, and speaketh as little.—Beware of giving *credit* too hastily to any ill report, concerning your neighbour: it is God's command, as I instanced already, *Receive not a false report*.—If you would not be a reproacher, beware of *idleness*; that is the root of much reproach: *They learn to be idle, wandering about from house to house: and not only idle, but tattlers also, and busy bodies, speaking things which they ought not*, 1 Tim. v. 13. If you would not be a reproacher, beware of *pride* and *self-love*; this stirs up to reproachful language; such was that of Sanballet, Neh. iv. 2, 3, 4. *What do these feeble Jews? will they fortify themselves? will they sacrifice? will they make an end in a day? will they revive the stones out of the heaps of the rubbish which are burnt? Now, Tobiah the Ammonite was by him, and he said, Even that which they build, if a fox go up, he shall even break down their stone wall. Hear, O our God, for we are despised: and turn their reproach upon their own head, and give them for a prey in the land of captivity.* As of pride cometh contention; so of pride cometh reproach, while a man cannot endure that others should be above him.—If you would not be a reproacher, beware of being a *neglector of prayer*; if we be reproached, we are not to reproach again, but to make the reproach cast upon us to be an errand to God, that our spirits be not exasperate; this was the method that Nehemiah took, chap. iv. 4. And  
David,

David, Pſal. lv. 16. after he had conſidered Ahitophel's reproaches; *But as for me, ſaith he, I will call upon God.*—In a word, if you would be no reproacher, beware of *hypocriſy*, and hunting after the *praiſes of men*, like the Pharifees: ſuch will be careleſs how much their neighbour be reproached, providing they be applauded: they all take meaſures and methods for raiſing up their own name, upon the ruins of the reputation of their neighbour. But if any, under a cloak of religion, or pretence of ſtrictneſs, ſtudy to make others contemptible, and themſelves famous, they take but a method to make their own name to ſtink: *They ſay, Stand by, for I am holier than thou; theſe are a ſmoke in my noſe, a fire that burneth all the day,* Iſa. lxxv. 5.

*Advice 5.* To thoſe that are reproached for Chriſt, that they would bear reproach for him: it is the expreſs command of God, Heb. xiii. 13. *Let us go forth to him, without the camp, bearing his reproach.* Iſa. li. 7, 8. *Fear not the reproach of men; neither be afraid of their revilings: for the moth ſhall eat them up like a garment, and the worm ſhall eat them like wool.* Chriſt bore many a reproach for us; and ſhall we not bear a reproach for him? *If they called the maſter of the houſe Beelzebub, how much more ſhall they call them of his houſhold?* Saints, in all ages, have been injured to this croſs: *For thy ſake have I born reproach,* Pſal. lxxix. 7. The Old-Teſtament ſaints mentioned, Heb. xi. had the trial of *cruel mockings*. But there is a bleſſing even in this part of the croſs: *Bleſſed are ye when men ſhall revile you, and perſecute you, and ſhall ſay all manner of evil againſt you falſely, for my name's ſake,* Matth. xv. 11. And 1 Pet. iv. 14. *If ye be reproached for the name of Chriſt, happy are ye; for the Spirit of glory and of God reſteth upon you: yea, it tends to the glory of God; for it follows, On their part he is evil ſpoken of, but on your part he is glorified.* There is a day coming, wherein ſuch as bear reproach for Chriſt, ſhall be openly vindicated and owned by him: *Whoſoever ſhall confeſs me before men, him will I confeſs before my Father which is in heaven;* that is, whatever affronts they meet with from men, for owning of my goſpel, there is a day coming wherein I will openly vindicate

vindicate them from such malicious reproaches. Reproachers at that day will be obliged to account for all their *hard speeches*, 1 Pet. iv. 3, 4. Jude ver. 14, 15. Reproaches for Christ betokens a good condition; *Blessed are ye when men shall hate you, and when they shall separate you from their company, and shall reproach you, and cast out your name as evil, for the Son of man's sake. Rejoice ye in that day, and leap for joy: for behold, your reward is great in heaven; for in the like manner did their fathers unto the prophets*, Luke vi. 22, 23. Whereas it is no good sign when all men speak well of us; *Wo unto you when all men shall speak well of you: for so did their Fathers to the false prophets*, ver. 26. The people of God are, for the most part, in a more lively exercise of grace, when under reproach, than at other times; *I take pleasure in infirmities, reproaches, persecutions, and distresses, for Christ's sake; for when I am weak, then am I strong*, 1 Cor. xii. 10. We are pilgrims here, in a strange land, in our enemies land, and are not to stay; therefore we should bear reproach for Christ: *Let us bear his reproach; for here we have no continuing city, but we see one to come*, Heb. xiii. 13, 14. Christ hath forewarned us of reproaches for his name; *Remember the word that I said to you, The servant is not greater than his Lord; if they have persecuted me, they will also persecute you*, John xv. 20.—Upon these considerations, we should bear reproach for Christ when called thereto.

QUEST. *What help, in order to bear reproach for Christ, will you offer us?*

ANSW. A man that would bear reproach for Christ, must be a *Christian* indeed, a believer indeed; otherwise he will never bear his reproach aright. It is he and the children whom the Lord hath given him, that are signs and wonders: if you be not amongst his children, you cannot be a zealous sufferer for him.—Yea, a man that would bear reproach for Christ, needs to be, not only a believer, but a *strong* believer, having much Christian courage, that he may bear an hiss, as well as a hymn; I mean, a hiss of reproach and disdain, as well as a hymn of applause and commendation: to bear this, requires

requires the armour of patience and spiritual courage, for marching through the world's contempt and hazard, being looked upon as a monster, and made the scorn of fools: and all this requires the strength of faith; *Looking unto Jesus, the author and finisher of faith; who for the joy that was set before him, endured the cross, despised the shame, and is set down at the right-hand of the throne of God*, Heb. xii. 2. And, in the following words, we are called to *consider him who endured such contradiction of sinners against himself, lest we be wearied and faint in our minds; for we have not yet resisted unto blood, striving against sin.*—It requires much zeal for God and love to him. Alas! who can say, *The zeal of thine house hath eaten me up?*—It requires a good cause, and a good conscience: if a man be firmly persuaded of the goodness of the cause, it will help him to bear reproach; while he doth not suffer as an evil doer, though he be reproached as such: and a good conscience is an encouraging thing in this warfare; also, *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*, 1 Pet. iii. 16. iv. 15.—In a word, it requires constant dependence upon the Captain of salvation, who was made perfect through sufferings.

Finally, Let us all consider and remember, that the cause of Christ will be a prevailing cause in the issue, however it be reproached in the world. There is a schism, a rent, and division in the world, Sirs, ever since the fall of Adam; a battle between the seed of the woman and the seed of the serpent; between Michael and his angels, and the dragon and his angels: but Michael and his angels, Christ and his children, will carry the day; and contradicted truths will be effectually cleared and vindicated; if never fully here, yet the day of the Lord will be the valley of decision, when the great cause of true religion will be decided, and the serpent's head broken so, as he shall never hiss nor spit his venom any more.

It is now a day of reproach, a day to be lamented, for the bitter calumny that takes place therein: yea, I may call heaven and earth to witness, whether ever gos-  
pel

pel preachers and professors suffered a hotter persecuti-  
of the tongue, than in this apostate age, wherein, if  
some ministers fall foul upon the sins and errors of the  
times, the very naming thereof is enough to offend,  
though yet the nation be sinking under the weight  
thereof. Never was a gospel ministry more contempt-  
ible than in our day: Satan hath used many instru-  
ments, and most of them have had their effect, to bring  
the dispensers of gospel ordinances into contempt: and  
it is still more lamentable, that many have had a sinful  
hand in bringing their own ministry under a reproach,  
and laying stumbling-blocks in the way of the success of  
the gospel, and marring the edification of souls, by sad  
compliances with the public defections of the day, and  
errors of the age.

It is a day wherein the *gospel* of Christ is contemned.  
The time has been, when some have thought it worth  
crossing the seas to enjoy the everlasting gospel: but  
now, that it is become so plenty and cheap, many are  
loth to cross the streets to hear it upon a week-day, un-  
less they have some other errand, perhaps to compli-  
ment a neighbour with their presence, at a baptism or  
a marriage. How much are we sousing upon the gos-  
pel, and loathing the hony-comb!

It is also a day wherein some of the *friends* of Christ  
are openly bantered, and lampooned, and gazed upon  
as signs and wonders; and wherein many *sacred truths*  
are publicly defamed and ridiculed; and *heart-enemies*  
to revealed religion, and to the gospel in its purity, in  
the mean time, taking occasion utterly to run down the  
gospel. What am I saying! In the name of the great  
God, I defy all the powers of earth and hell to run it  
down: they may sooner run down the flowing tide, or  
the sun rising in its strength, than run down the least of  
the dictates of eternal truth; *Not one jot or tittle thereof*  
*shall fall to the ground.* Dagon shall fall before the ark;  
and the rod of Aaron shall swallow up the rods of the  
magicians.

It is likewise a day wherein *providence* is shaking both  
*church* and *state*; and particularly the ark must needs  
shake, when they who carry it are stricken at with axes  
and

and hammers, and many are knocking at all the four corners of it at once, namely, the doctrine, worship, discipline, and government, to get it broken to pieces, while open enemies, (*viz.* curied Popery and abjured Prelacy) are making inroads upon all corners of the land, in the public view of the church: she, in the mean time, unthoughtful of her danger, seems to be doing nothing, but, by intestine broils, cutting off her right-hand with her left.

In a word, it is a day wherein that word seems to be made out, that there *shall be scoffers, walking after their own lusts*: drunkards, whoremongers, atheists, blasphemers, debauchees, and profane scoffers of the age, now have their day: it is now their hour, and the power of darknes. This is matter of lamentation, and deep lamentation. But, however, God will have his day ere long; and it will be a glorious day when Christ will appear, in all the glory and grandeur of the upper world, to the everlasting terror and confusion of all his adversaries, and to the eternal joy and honour of all his friends, who, though now they are for signs and wonders, by way of reproach, will then be for signs and wonders by way of renown; when Christ will present them blameless unto his Father, saying, “*Behold, I and the children whom thou hast given me, who, as they have suffered with me in my reproach in time, must now reign with me in my glory through eternity.*”

O Sirs, let us seek, above all things, to be on Christ's side, on the side of truth now, and on the right-hand road to heaven, whatever rubs we may meet with by the way, so as we may come to be on the right-hand of the throne, in the day of the manifestation of the sons of God.

*May the Lord bless what hath been said; and to his name be praise.*

## S E R M O N VII.\*

The VANITY of *Earthly* Things and  
*Worldly* Enjoyments.

ECCLES. i. 2.

*Vanity of vanities, saith the Preacher; vanity of vanities,  
all is vanity.*

THE words of a king are commonly reckoned very witty: the words of a wise king, speaking by experience, deserves special consideration; and much more the words of a wise king speaking, by divine inspiration, deserve the greatest regard, attention, and credit: all these do here concur. The words of our text are the words of Solomon, king of Israel; the words of the wisest of mere men; the words of one who spoke from his own experience; and, moreover, who spoke by the inspiration of God.

The *sum* of the discourse stands in these two particulars. 1. That the *chief good*, and *chief happiness* of the sons of men, is not to be had in the *creature*, or in any worldly thing. And, 2. That it is only to be found in *God in Christ*, and in the true knowledge of him, and gospel conformity of heart and life unto him; which he expresseth by *fearing God and keeping his commandments*; which presupposes a gospel-state of union to Christ by faith, and communion with him in his merit, for the justification of our persons; and of his Spirit, for the sanctification of our hearts and lives.

The first verse gives us an account of the *penman* of this book. Where we have a threefold description of him; from his present office, his pedigree, and his royal dignity.

\* This Sermon was preached at Broomhall, January 1723. This is the Second impression.

1. He is called *the Preacher*; and commentators observe, that it comes from a word that signifies *to gather*; intimating, that now he was a penitent soul, gathered in from his wanderings, gathered home to his duty, and come at length to himself; and that now he was a preaching soul, gathering in straying souls to God: seeing he himself was reduced, here was his penitential sermon, his recantation sermon; wherein, from the bottom of his soul, he sadly laments his own folly, in promising himself satisfaction, in the things of this world, and in the forbidden pleasures of sense: which now he finds more bitter than death. And hence two things should be learned,

(1.) We should be persuaded here of Solomon's *repentance* after his *fall*. Those who think he fell totally and finally, are not only refuted by this, but by all the arguments which prove the perseverance of the faints, which are many and impregnable: and also by other arguments, which concern Solomon himself, *viz.* the name that he gets, *Jedidiah*, 2 Sam. xii. 25. which signifies, *Beloved of the Lord*. Now, whom *God loves, he loves to the end*. And more especially the testimony of Christ, that *all the prophets are in heaven*, Luke xiii. 28. Now, Solomon was a *prophet*, seeing the whole scriptures were penned by no others than *prophets* and *apostles*, 2 Pet. i. 19, 20. Eph. ii. 20.

(2.) We should hence learn to accept of this book with the *greater regard*. The sun never shines more gloriously, than when it breaks out of some dark cloud; nor yet the graces of God's Spirit than when broken forth out of the clouds of sins and temptations, into repentance. And thus it was with David also, Psal. li.

2. The penman of this book here is called, *The Son of David*. And his calling himself *the Son of David*, teaches us, That he looked upon it as his great *honour*, not only that he was the son of a Prince, but the son of so good a man, a *man after God's own heart*; and that he looked upon it as a great aggravation of his sin, that he had such a father, who had given him such good education, and put up many prayers for him.—Again,

his calling himself *the son of David*, faith, that he looked upon this as an *encouragement* to his repentance, and a ground of his hope of mercy, seeing though David fell into sin, by which he should have been warned not to sin, yet David repented; and therein he took example from him, and found mercy as he did.--But there is more here. His calling himself *the son of David*, intimates his *faith*, that as he was *the son of the promise*; he was the son of David, concerning whom God had said, that though he would *punish his iniquities with the rod*, yet he would *not break his covenant with him*, Psal. lxxxix. 32, 33, 34. It was comfortable to Solomon, that he was the son of David, both for the sake of the covenant and the promise made to David and his seed after him, 2 Chron. vii. 17, 18.--In a word, he calls himself *the son of David*, to procure the more *reverence*, that he was a Prophet, the Son of a prophet; and it should procure the more reverend acceptance of the doctrine of this book, for the penman's sake: for, though it is little matter what the pen be, whether it be the pen of a goose, or a swan, or a raven; yet when God makes use of such an instrument, so richly adorned, it challenges from us the more due respect.

3. The penman of this book is here called, *King of Israel*. This intimates, that his sin was greatly *aggravated*, seeing God had raised him to a *throne*, and yet he had so ill requited him: his dignity also, in being king of *Jerusalem*, the holy city, where God's temple was, made the ill example of his sin, and the influence it would have upon others, the more dangerous. It intimates also, that being such a one as king in Jerusalem, what he preached and wrote was to be the more *regarded*; for, *where the word of a king is, there is power*. He thought it no disparagement to him, though he was a king, to be a preacher. If men of honour would lay out themselves to do good, what a vast deal of good might they do! Solomon looked as great in the pulpit, preaching the *vanity of the world*; as in his throne of ivory, *ruling the people*.

Here we may learn, that God uses instruments of all sorts in penning the scriptures; *kings*, as David and Solomon;

Solomon; some *herdsmen*, as Amos; and *priests*, as Jeremiah; *fishermen*, as some of the apostles: this he did, that all sorts might meet with stile and phrase of speech suitable for them.-- We may learn, that it is no *disgrace* to any man, or any man's children, to be preachers: Solomon and David, both kings and both prophets, are of the number; Solomon studying to *teach the people knowledge*, Eccl. xii. 9, 10. The *Angels*, higher than the highest man, are *all ministering spirits*, Heb. i. 14. Yea, CHRIST, *the Prince of the kings of the earth*, was the great New-Testament Preacher.— Thus you have the *Penman* described in the title of the book; *The words of the Preacher, the son of David, king of Israel*.

The second verse lays before us the *general doctrine* of the book; *Vanity of vanities, saith the Preacher; vanity of vanities, all is vanity*. Where, more particularly, we have, 1. The *judgment* past upon all earthly things. 2. The *person* passing this judgment.

1<sup>st</sup>, To begin with the last of these; we have the *person* that passes this judgment, that *all is vanity*; it is said to be the *Preacher*. I told you already what was the meaning of the word, *viz.* one that is *gathered by grace to God*, who had learned, by his experience, the vanity of all things in time; and was convinced, that there was no real advantage in pursuing after these things. Who is it that thus speaks lightly of the world? Indeed, it is one who was a very competent judge, as much as ever any man was. Many speak contemptibly of the world, either because they are hermits, and know it not; or beggars, and have it not: But Solomon knew it, and had enough of it too; and he spoke of it as one having authority, not only as a king, but as a prophet and preacher; he spoke in God's name, being divinely inspired. And, as some think, one main thing he designed, was, to shew that the everlasting throne and kingdom, which God had been lately promising to David and his seed, (for Christ was also the son of David) must be of another world: for all things in this world are subject to vanity; and therefore have not in them sufficient to answer the extent of that promise.

mife. If Solomon found all things to be *vanity*; then the kingdom of the Messiah must come, in which only we can inherit *substance*. And, indeed, the very end and design of our preaching to you, concerning the *vanity of the world*, is to recommend *Christ* to you; seeing, though you should inherit all things your heart can desire in time, you do but inherit passing shadows and vanity: but in *Christ* you will inherit everlasting and substantial goodness, saith the Preacher, Prov. vii. 21.

Solomon set the seal of his testimony to the vanity of all earthly things, after the trial of them: they that have had the most trial of earthly comforts, are most ready to avouch, and most able to preach the vanity of them. Experience is a divine testimony, as being taken from the works of God, in the event of things coming to pass by providence: and experience is of great authority with men, as being an argument more sensible, and less subject to ignorance and error.—And hence we may see the great difference between earthly and heavenly things: for earthly things seem good, till men get a trial of them, and then they are found vain, altogether vain; but heavenly things seem vain, till men get a trial of them, and then, upon a sufficient trial, they are found to be excellent.

*All is vanity, saith the Preacher.* There is one that draws a very strange inference from this word, *viz.* that *reading* is *preaching*; because Solomon calls his book, though read, *the preacher*. But in answer to this, Solomon doth not call his *book*, but HIMSELF, *the preacher*.—And again, one might rather infer from this, that *writing* is *preaching*; and that one may deliver his sermon by writing. But that *reading* is *preaching*, doth not follow from this. Why, in *writing*, a minister may and doth make use of spiritual gifts, requisite in a prophet or preacher, to the exercise of his ministerial gifts; but not so in *reading*, which even a school-boy may perform, that never attained any spiritual gift at all.—Thus much concerning the *person* passing this judgment.

2dly, We have the *judgment* past upon all earthly things,

things, VANITY; *Vanity of vanities, vanity of vanities, all is vanity.* Where observe three things, 1. The *subject* of the determination; or the *thing* he passes his judgment upon, in the particle *all*. 2. The *determination* itself, or the judgment he passes upon them, it is *vanity*. 3. The *aggravation* of, or *emphatic manner* wherein he passes his judgment; *Vanity of vanities, vanity of vanities, all is vanity.*

1. The *subject*, or the *thing* he passes his judgment on, namely, ALL; *viz.* all that is in the *world*: all the pleasures, all the profits, all the honours, all the preferments, all the lusts of the world; all things under the sun that a man can set his heart upon; all worldly employments and enjoyments; all things besides God, and considered as abstract from him.

2. The *judgment* he passes upon all these is, VANITY. The things of the world are either to be considered in *themselves*, as the creatures of God, and so they cannot be called all vanity; because they were *all very good*, shewing forth his power and glory: but consider them with respect to *men*, and his expecting satisfaction in them, and thus they are *vanity*; they will disappoint them who seek happiness in them; they are vain: and not only so, but,

3. Observe the *aggravation* of this judgment, or the *emphatic manner* of the preacher's expression of this matter; they are not only *vain*, but *vanity* in the abstract; and not only so, but vanity over and over again, three several times repeated: As if he had said, They are *vanity, vanity, vanity*; and not only so, but the *fountain* of vanity; and therefore called, *Vanity of vanities*; and again, *vanity of vanities*: intimating, the vainest vanities; vanity in the highest degree, nothing but vanity; such a vanity as is the cause of a great deal of vanity: And again, not only this, but the redoubling of the expression, intimating the *certainty* of the thing, and with what a strong conviction the preacher spoke, what a deep sense he had of this vanity of all things. So that his judgment is here exaggerated, 1. By expressing it in the concret, *Vanity*. 2. By calling it, *Vanity of vanities*. 3. By repeating and redoubling

this sentence, *Vanity of vanities, vanity of vanities.*

4. By tripling the doctrine which he intended to make good, *Vanity of vanities, saith the preacher; vanity of vanities, all is vanity.* The truth of which doctrine he proved at large, by many cogent arguments, in the sequel of his sermon in this book.

The doctrinal proposition we intend to illustrate from these words, thus explained, shall be the following.

OBSERV. *That all earthly enjoyments, and worldly things, are vain and empty.*

And in speaking to Solomon's text here, *viz. The emptiness and vanity of the world,* we would incline, through divine favour, to do the following things.

- I. Consider what it is *in the world* that is so vain and empty.
- II. Enquire what is *imported* in its being *vain*, and *vanity* itself; and in the phrase, *Vanity of vanities, vanity of vanities.*
- III. Offer some *arguments* to prove the *truth* of the doctrine, *viz.* that all is vain and empty.
- IV. Give the *reasons* of it, why it is so.
- V. Deduce some *inferences* for the *application*, to shew what improvement we ought to make of this doctrine.

I. We return to the first thing proposed, To consider what it is *in the world* that is so vain and empty. Here, for preventing all mistakes, and obviating every wrong turn of thought, in the progress of this discourse, I would have you remember, that I speak not of the things of the world *absolutely* considered in themselves; for thus many things in the world are good and useful, in many respects, when used according to God's allowance: but I consider the *world* here, and the *things* of it, as wholly vanity, in the following respects.

I. When *separate from God*: without God the good things of the world are not seen as coming from him, nor improved for leading to him; but esteemed in themselves

elves above God, so as men are lovers thereof more than lovers of God. And so,

2. When it is made a man's happiness, or any part of his happiness; and so he makes it his end, his satisfaction, his rest, his God: for thus many make the world their god, their belly their god.

3. When opposing or hindering the service of God: when it steals away the heart from duty; and steals away the heart from ordinances, and so obstructs the service of God.

4. When it furthurs and promotes sin, and is made the fuel for feeding and maintaining corrupt lusts and affections: when it is but the food of pride and ambition, the food of covetousness and carnality, the food of sensuality and lasciviousness, or the like. Why, in such respects as these, the world, and things in it, ought to be looked upon as base and contemptible vanity: and to be despised, opposed, and mortified.

But now, if the question be asked, *What is it in the world that is vain and empty?* Why, saith the Preacher, *All is vanity.* This word comprehends more than we can tell; for we will not get through all that is included in it. We shall name a few of these things in the world that are but vanity.

1. All the profits and riches of the world are vanity; *He that loveth silver, shall not be satisfied with silver; nor he that loveth abundance, with increase: this is also vanity. When goods increase, they are increased that eat them: and no good is to the owners thereof, saving the beholding of them with their eyes?* Eccl. v. 10, 11. Let a man find as much riches as ever Solomon found, he cannot find happiness therein. Where is it that satisfying riches are to be had? No where but in Christ: *Riches and honours are with me; yea, durable riches and righteousness,* Prov. viii. 18. All the riches of grace and glory are to be found in Christ.

2. All the pleasures and delights of the world are vanity; *I said in my heart, Go to now, I will prove thee with mirth, therefore enjoy pleasure: and behold this also is vanity. I said of laughter, It is mad: and of mirth, What doth it?* Eccl. ii. 1, 2. See how he enumerates,

in this chapter, manifold sensual pleasures; and the upshot of all is still, *All is vanity*. No true pleasure shall we ever find but in Christ; *Wisdom's ways are pleasantness; and all her paths are peace*, Prov. iii. 17.

3. All the *honours and grandeurs* of the world are vanity; *I made me great works, I builded me houses, I planted me vineyards, I made me gardens and orchards, and I planted trees in them of all kinds of fruits; I made me pools of water, to water therewith the wood that bringeth forth trees — I gathered me all silver and gold, and the peculiar treasure of kings, and of provinces: I gat me men-singers and women-singers, and the delights of the sons of men, as musical instruments, and that of all sorts: So I was great, and increased more than all the men that were before me in Jerusalem; my wisdom also remained with me. And whatsoever mine eyes desired, I kept not from them; I withheld not my heart from any joy; for my heart rejoiced in all my labour, and this was my portion of all my labour*, Eccl. ii. 5, — 10. Well, what was the upshot of all this worldly grandeur? Why, it was *all vanity*, ver. 11. *I looked upon all the works that my hands had wrought; and, behold! all was vanity and vexation of spirit*. Where is true honour to be had? It is only in Christ; *Riches and honours are with him*. They who get in to Christ, they become *kings and priests unto their God*; and *this is the honour of all the saints*.

4. All the *wisdom and policy* of the world is vanity; yea, even the moral endowments of the mind, and the knowledge of arts and sciences. So long as a man is destitute of spiritual wisdom, let him have the knowledge of all that is knowable in time; let him have the utmost skill of mathematics, philosophy, astrology, astronomy; *All is vanity*. Solomon laboured to acquire wisdom, and actually attained a vast deal of it; and we have his verdict of the whole matter: *I gave my heart to seek and search out by wisdom, concerning all things that are done under heaven: I have seen all the works that are under the sun: and, behold! all is vanity and vexation of spirit. — And I gave my heart to know wisdom; I perceived that this also is vexation of spirit: for in much wisdom is much grief; and he that increaseth knowledge,*

*increaseth sorrow*, Eccl. i. 13, 14, 17, 18. Where will a man get true wisdom? Why, it is in Christ; he only can make you *wise unto salvation*, because he is *made of God unto us wisdom*, 1 Cor. i. 30. *In him are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge*, Col. ii. 3. Solomon had no small share of wisdom, being indeed the wisest of all men; but he gives this for the motto of all worldly wisdom, VANITY. Well then, *Let not the wise man glory in his wisdom*, Jer. ix. 23.

5. All the *strength and power* of the world is vanity; *Let not the strong man glory in his strength*. Let not either kings or subjects glory in their strength, in the strength of their armies or allies. What says Solomon of this? *The race is not to the swift, nor the battle to the strong*, Eccl. ix. 11. Where is that to be had that deserves the name of strength? It is only in Christ; *Be strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might*, Eph. vi. 10. *I can do all things through Christ strengthening me. He is the strength of Israel: and his name is a strong tower to which the righteous run and are safe*, Prov. xviii. 10.

6. All the *beauty and bravery* of the world is vanity; *Beauty is vain*, saith Solomon, Prov. xxxi. 30. *When God with rebukes doth correct man for his iniquity, he maketh his beauty to consume as a moth: surely every man is vanity*, Psal. xxxix. 11. Solomon was famous for the beauty and bravery of his court, and the splendor of his government; but he saw all to be vanity: and Christ preferred even the beauty of a pile of grass to his; for he saith of the *lillies of the field*, that *Solomon and all his glory is not like one of these*, Luke xii. 27. Such, indeed, is the fading beauty of men, so much thought of by many, that it is but skin deep, and fades like a flower. If you would be a true, spiritual, and durable beauty, it is to be had in Christ, whose Spirit and grace makes a man beautiful, and *all glorious within*, Psal. xlv. 13. *Thou wast beautiful through my comeliness put upon thee*, Ezek. xvi. 14.

7. All the *righteousness and feigned false religion* of the world is vanity. There is much unrighteous righteousness in the world, much irreligious religion, much graceless grace, and faithless faith; *Except your righte-*

ousness exceed the righteousness of the Scribes and Pharisees, saith Christ, *ye can in no wise enter into the kingdom of God*, Mat. v. 20. *Neither circumcision nor uncircumcision availeth any thing, but faith that worketh by love*, Gal. v. 6. And again, *Neither circumcision nor uncircumcision availeth any thing, but a new creature*, Gal. vi. 15. For, *Except a man be born again he cannot enter into the kingdom of God*, John iii. 3. The natural religion that the world hath is but vanity. If the righteousness even of the godly, be but *filthy rags*, and cannot avail him for justification; what account shall be made of the righteousness of those who are yet out of Christ, and are nothing but mere moralists, formalists, and hypocrites? If you would have righteousness, you must have it in and from Christ; he is the *Lord our righteousness*, and *made of God to us wisdom, righteousness, and sanctification*. He has to give you both an imputed righteousness, for justifying you; and an imparted righteousness, for sanctifying you.

8. All the *favour and friendship* of the world is vanity; *Favour is deceitful*, Prov. xxxi. 30. They who put confidence in the favour and friendship of men, they will find themselves deceived: therefore, saith the prophet Micah, *Trust ye not in a friend; put ye no confidence in a guide: the best of them is as a brier; the most upright is sharper than a thorn hedge*, Mic. vii. 4, 5. Where will you get a true friend? O seek to have Christ to be your friend: *He is a friend that sticketh closer than a brother*. His friendship doth not vary like those friends that love you to-day, and hate you to-morrow.

9. All the *fashions and customs* of the world are vanity; they *whirl about like the wind*, as Solomon speaks, Eccl. i. 6.; and the vain eye is *never satisfied with seeing them*, ver. 8. There are many vain fashions of bodily gestures, vain fashions of apparel, vain artifices of the world; whereof, and of all other worldly vices, the apostle saith, *Be not conformed to this world; but be ye transformed by the renewing of your minds*, Rom. xii. 2. The best fashion and conformity that ever a soul studied, is conformity to the Son of God: this study would be an evidence of election from eternity; *Whom he did fore-*

foreknow, them he did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son. Rom. viii. 29. Whereas all other fashions, and fond studying of conformity to the world, is but a mark of vanity.

10. All the *great* and *mean men* of the world are vanity: this Solomon shews in this book when he is proving that *all is vanity*. And his Father David saith it expressly; *Surely men of low degree are vanity; and men of high degree are a lye: to be laid in the balance, they are altogether lighter than vanity*, Psal. lxxii. 9. Here the prince in his robes, and the peasant in his rags, are both declared to be vanity. *Surely every man, in his best estate, is altogether vanity*, Psal. xxxix. 11. What is man to be accounted of? A piece of rotten dust. In *wisdom* they are vain; *The Lord knoweth the thoughts of the wise, that they are vain*, 1 Cor. iii. 20. In *power* they are vain; therefore saith the Lord, *Cursed is the man that trusteth in man, and maketh flesh his arm*, Jer. xvi. 5. In *comfort* they are vain; *They comfort in vain*, Zech. x. 2. Let us never expect in man, what is not to be had in him: it is only in the God-man, Jesus Christ, that we ought to place our confidence, and expect our comfort: *The true circumcision rejoice only in Christ Jesus, and have no confidence in the flesh*, Phil. iii. 3.

In a word, *all these things together* are but vanity; satisfaction is not to be had therein: *I have seen all the works that are under the sun; and, behold! all is vanity*, Eccl. iv. 4. The apostle gives a sum of all the things in the world, and writes vanity upon them; *All that is in the world, the lusts of the flesh, the lusts of the eye, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world; and the world passeth away, and the lusts thereof*, 1 John ii. 16, 17. All these things are vanity.

II. The second thing proposed was, To enquire what is *imported* in its being called *vain*; nay, *vanity* itself: *All is vanity*. And to enquire into the *emphasis* of the phrase, *Vanity of vanities, vanity of vanities*.

1<sup>st</sup>, As to the first of these, *viz.* what is *imported* in its being called VANITY; *All is vanity*. It imports, among others, these eight following things.

1. *Vanity*

1. *Vanity* here imports the *unprofitableness* of all things; *What profit hath a man thereof?* Eccl. i. 3. And to this purpose, saith Christ, *What shall it profit a man, though he had the whole world, if he loose his own soul?* Matth. xvi. 26. Treasures of wickedness profiteth nothing. The world is an useless thing to the soul; it cannot save the soul from hell: *The redemption of the soul is precious, and ceaseth for ever*, for any thing that either the world, or the things of the world can do for its recovery, Psal. xlix. 8. As to the world, it cannot deliver a man from the sentence that shall pass at the great day; it will rather aggravate the misery.

2. *All is vanity*; the word imports *emptiness*: VAIN; that is, void of substance, worth, and sufficiency. Thus the words of Balaam are said to be *vain words*, Isa. xxxi. 5.; that is, *empty*, having nothing but wind in them: even, so, the world is *vain*, i. e. *empty*; it promises great things, but performeth nothing: like the God of this world that said to Christ, *All these things will I give thee, if thou wilt fall down and worship me*, Mat. iv. 9. The world promises much, and boasts much; but yet can give nothing, and do nothing.

3. *All is vanity*; the word imports *hurtfulness*, while they make the heart more and more vain; and draw the affections away from God, and heavenly things. They are hurtful; like a man lying down to rest upon a bed of thorns and briars: he shall never find the rest there that he would be at.

4. *All is vanity*; the word imports *unsatisfactoriness*; Eccl. i. 8. *The eye is not satisfied with seeing, nor the ear with hearing*. As there is no true profit, so no true comfort therein, abstract from God. It is but a vain comfort that men have in that which is but vainty.

5. *All is vanity*; the word imports *falsehood* and *lying*; Psal. iv. 2. *O ye sons of men, how long will ye love vanity, and follow after leasing?* And hence the things of the world are called *lying vanities*; *They that observe lying vanities, forsake their own mercy*, Jonah ii. 8. The world seems to be something; but it is a lye: it is not what it appears to be.

6. *All is vanity*; the word imports *frustration* and *disappointment*;

*disappointment*; Jam. i. 26. *If any man seem to be religious, and bridleth not his tongue, that man's religion is vain; that is, he will be disappointed; he deceiveth himself. Thus the world is a cheat and a deceiver.*

7. *All is vanity*; the word imports *folly*; Job xi. 12. *Vain man would be wise, though he be born like the wild ass's colt. All is vanity, all is folly. He that followeth vain persons, is void of understanding.*

8. *All is vanity*; it imports *frailty and inconsistency*; vanishing away as smoke: *The world passeth away, and the lusts thereof*, 1 John ii. 17. *All flesh is grass; and all the goodness thereof as a flower of the field: the grass withereth and the flower fadeth; surely the people is grass*, Isa. xl. 6, 9.

2dly, We propos'd next to enquire into the *emphasis* of the phrase, *Vanity of vanities, vanity of vanities*. Why, this phrase, and the repetition of it, imports these six things.

1. The *excessiveness* of the vanity of these worldly things. *Vanity* implies, that they are not only *vain*, but *exceedingly vain*; as vain as *vanity* itself. *Vanity of vanities* is, in the Hebrew, a superlative form of speech, to set forth the *highest* vanity: as the *Song of songs*; i. e. the *most excellent song*: the *King of kings*; i. e. the *most excellent king*. So, *Vanity of vanity*; i. e. the *greatest vanity*.

2. It imports the *multitude* and *variety* of vanities that are heaped up in earthly things; as Sampson speaks in another case, *Heaps upon heaps*, Judges xv. 16. There are vanities upon vanities; one heap upon the top of another.

3. It imports the *strangeness* of these vanities; he speaks by way of *admiration*, to shew the wonderful and strange vanity of these things; *O vanity of vanities!* He breaketh forth into this exclamation.

4. It importeth the *inexpressableness* of it; it cannot be uttered with words: and therefore the same words must be uttered again and again; to shew what we cannot sufficiently comprehend, or express, the vanity of things below.

5. It imports the *fertility* of these vanities of the world;  
one

one vanity begets another: one piece of vanity brings on another; therefore called, *Vanity of vanities*: such vanity as is the cause of other vanities.

6. It imports the *certainty* of the vanity of worldly things, and what impression it should have upon us, when vanity is five times repeated in this one short text: these repeated strokes should make impression upon us, to affect us with the certainty of the thing. *Surely all is vanity.*

III. We proceed to the third thing proposed, *viz.* To offer some *arguments* to prove that all is *vain* and *empty*; or to prove the *vanity* and *emptiness* of the world.

1. The world is *treacherous*; it betrays both the hopes and the souls of men at once. How big is man with *expectations* of remote distant enjoyments! Like a man looking at a picture, or statue, at a distance; but coming near to it, and taking a close view, he sees it but a cheat, a dead lifeless thing: so, when a man comes to the enjoyment of the world, he falls infinitely short of his expectations. Like children that think the cloud is just touching such a hill, and if they were at it, they would be just in the cloud; and when they go there, they find the cloud removed away to another hill.—Yea, the world betrays the *soul*, as well as the hopes; it betrays a man's soul to ruin: like sweet poison, that goes down pleasantly, but kills presently. The silken cords of the world have taken away a prisoner; and they have proven their fetters, which they could never break again. As Judas said of our blessed Lord, *Whomsoever I kiss, take him; hold him fast*: So the world, being the devil's agent, says, "Whomsoever I kiss and embrace, and embraceth me mutually, and setteth his heart upon me; take him, hold him fast." So the creature betrays the soul as well as the hope of the man.

2. The world is vanity, because it is *vexatious*; for, *All is vanity and vexation of spirit*, Eccl. i. 14. You cannot grasp the thorn of this world but you must be hurt.—The world is vexation in the *purchase* of it. A man spends night and day for a conquest: he sits up late and rises early; sets his invention upon the rack  
how

how to conquer such a fortune, how to make such a purchase.—The world is vexation in the *possession* of it: when a man hath it, what cares, what fears, what solicitude about the keeping of it! He knows not how to secure it. If but a tyle or slate falls off his house, he thinks the whole fabric will be down next. If he takes but a penny out of a large sum, he thinks it will melt and diminish away to nothing. He is vexed in keeping it.—And again, the world is vexation in the *loss* of it. When the man loses it, he cries, “*Alas! they have taken away my gods, and what have I more? My hope is gone, my all is gone, my portion is gone.*”

3. The vanity and emptiness of the world appears in this, that a *little cross* will imbitter all the pleasures and enjoyments of time. Solomon saith, *That the dead fly makes all the box of the apothecary's ointment to stink*, Eccl. x. 1. So the whole box of the world's greatest enjoyments, one small cross, such as a tooth-ach, a touch of the stone, of the cholic or gout, will imbitter all, and make all to stink. We have an eminent instance of this in Haman, Esther v. 11, 13. If any man in the world might have promised himself satisfaction from the world, Haman now might have done it: he was raised from a low degree to the highest pinnacle and dignity of a subject; being the chief minister of state to one of the greatest kings on earth. If a man be born to a great estate, it turns, as it were, natural to him; it never increases, never elevates him: but promotion from a low estate to an high, doth enhance the value of the estate, and gives a relish to the enjoyment, if we may speak so. Well, Haman had all riches; he had a numerous family, plenty of children; he was the greatest favourite of the king, and reckoned himself a favourite of the queen also; and *yet all this avails me nothing*, saith he: Why? what is the business, man? What hath poisoned your box of ointment? There is a wretched Jew, saith he, an ill-natured, ill-mannered fellow, that will not give me a hat, when I go in to the court, and come out again. And that marred all his happiness, because a poor man would not yield him obeisance. A little cross will imbitter the greatest enjoyments.

4. The world's emptiness and vanity appears in this, that it is so *changeable*, and of such a *short duration*. It is compared in scripture to the motion of an eagle; *Riches take wings, they fly away as an eagle toward heaven*, Prov. xxiii. 5. When they fly away, they will not fly like a tamed bird, to return to you again; they go away like an eagle out of sight. Many a man thinks, by his good rights and security, by his heritable bonds, and the like, he will clip the wings of the world, that it shall not fly away from him: but for all that, it will take the *wings of the morning*, whose wings cannot be clipped. The world is compared to the *moon*, Rev. xii. 1. which is sometimes full, and shining brightly; but instantly it changes again. Men are ready to say, in a worldly sense, as David in a spiritual, *My mountain standeth strong*; and, behold! instead of health we have sickness; instead of reputation, we have disgrace; instead of ease we will have pain; instead of riches, we have poverty.

5. The vanity and emptiness of the world appears in this, that it will never be of *service* to you in a day of need. Are you in sickness? all the riches of the world will not heal you; it will not cure you of a gout or a gravel: make an experiment of it, lay your head on a pillow of gold, see if that will make you sleep sound. Nay, all the enjoyments of time will not ease you of the pain of a cholic. And then, in the day of death, when death says, "I am coming; I am at the door; the tribunal is fixing to judge you:" what will the world avail you! Nay, it cannot secure you from the wrath of God, from a hell, from a tribunal.

IV. The fourth thing proposed in the general method, was, To give some *reasons* of the vanity and emptiness of the world, and unsatisfactoriness thereof. Why,

1. God alone is the *centre* of a man's soul; Christ alone is the bread of life, the solid food of the soul. God is the centre of the intellectual world, the centre of spirits; and no rest shall spirits, souls, have till they centre in him; and the soul that never centres in him, shall never find rest to eternity. Every body hath its centre; the stone goes downward, and the fire goes upward.

upward. Every body is, as it were, in motion, or hath a tendency to motion, if obstacles were out of the way, till it comes to its centre: now, God alone being the centre of the soul, the creature can never give rest to the soul; the soul is still in disquiet, till it come to a God in Christ, which is the true rest; *Return to thy rest, O my soul*, Psal. cxvi. 7. The covetous man, if he has riches, will say, *Return to thy rest, O my soul; Soul, thou hast goods laid up for many years*. But he was mistaken of his centre; for he had no rest at all: he was disinherited that night, and sent out the world. No quarters for the soul in the creature; there is no suitability to the soul in the creature. Why? The soul is a spirit; the creature is a body: the soul hath vast infinite desires; the creature is finite: the soul is eternal and immortal; the creature is but of yesterday, and perisheth to-morrow: and so there is no suitability between the soul and the creature. It is only between God and the soul that there is a suitability; and therefore the creature is empty and vain, and cannot satisfy the vast and immense desires of the immortal soul. But then,

2. There is the *curse* upon the creature, a manifold curse; a curse by Adam's fall, a curse after Cain's murder, a curse after the deluge: a curse upon every enjoyment of every wicked man; *He is cursed in his basket and his store*; cursed in his children, cursed in his table, cursed in all his comforts. How then can the creature, and worldly things, be any other than vanity and emptiness to us, seeing the curse is lying upon them since the fall! Gen. iii. 17.

3. All is vanity, because of the *end* for which God made them; they were made for us, not we for them. The Lord never designed the things of the world for the use that men would turn them to, namely, to be a god, a portion, a happiness to them: and therefore they shall never find an happiness in them. And so,

4. Because they seek *happiness* in the creature, therefore they shall never find it in the creature: because they put *confidence* in it, therefore God will blast that confidence; *The Lord hath rejected thy confidences; thou*

*shalt not prosper in them*, Jer. ii. 37. Since the fall, man's corruption makes him promise more from the creature; trust more to it, and delight more in it than before: the virtue of the creature is on the weaning and decaying hand, yet man's expectation from it is on the waxing and growing hand. How then can there be any thing but disappointment and emptiness?

5. No wonder then that it is vain, empty, and unsatisfactory, seeing the world is the great *occasion* of sin, and the fewel of lust. Many corruptions are starved till the world minister, to their support: and it is the root of manifold sins; *The love of money*, the love of the world, *is the root of all evil*. It is the root of damnable *neglect* of the gospel; *One went to his farm, another to his merchandise, and made light of the gospel offer*, Matth. xxii. 5. It is the root of *heart-wandering* from the Lord, and *enmity* against God; *The carnal mind is enmity against God. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him*. It is the root of *unfruitfulness* under the means of grace: *The thorns of this world choke the good seed of the word*. It is the root of woful *apostacy* from the Lord; *Demas had forsaken me, having loved this present world*.

V. The last thing proposed in the method, was the *application* of the subject; which we shall essay in an use of information, reproof, lamentation, examination, and trial: and in the whole study all brevity.

*Use* 1. The first use that we make of the doctrine then, is for *information*. Is it so, *That all earthly things, and worldly enjoyments, are vain and empty?* Then we may hence see,

1. The *folly* of mankind, in placing their happiness where it never was. Men would have happiness: but the general error is, they imagine the creature can give it; and therefore they pursue pleasure, and court honours, and hoard up riches, thinking their happiness lies there: but *they are seeking the living among the dead*; they are seeking hot water among cold ice, who seek happiness among the creatures. Alas! what a woful exchange do they make, who sell their souls commit sin, for any earthly benefit, which is but *vanity*! Jonah

ii. 8. *They who observe lying vanities, forsake their own mercy.* Temptations from earthly things may draw on sin like cart-ropes; but they are cart-ropes of vanity, Isa. v. 8.

2. See what a *great change* sin hath made in the world; it doth, as it were, blast the virtue and beauty of the creature. The time was before sin entered, when God saw all the creatures to be *very good*, Gen. i. 31. Now, after sin hath blown upon them, he looks upon them again; and, lo! *all is vanity*. Such a change will sin make in us, and in our counsels and courses, if it be not removed by the blood of Christ.

3. See what *little reason* they have to *envy the wicked* of their portion: they have *all their portion in this world*, Psal. xvii. 14. What a portion must it be, when it is but a sowing of vanity, and a reaping lies! *All is vanity and vexation of spirit*. Why should a godly man grudge when he sees the prosperity of the wicked, seeing it is all their portion? A godly man may have a portion in the world; but he never hath this world for a portion; no: *The lines are fallen to him in more pleasant places; he hath a goodly heritage: The Lord is the portion of his soul*.

4. See that the godly are no *losers*, though they should lose all things in the world for Christ's sake. What makes them venture the loss of all for the cause and interest of Christ? Why, they know Christ to be all, and the world nothing but vanity. They may easily forsake all things, and follow Christ; for they lose but vanity, and reap solid comfort, solid happiness. We see this abundantly clear from Mark x. 29, 30. *Jesus said, There is no man that hath left house, or brethren, or sisters, or father, or mother, or wife, or children, or lands, for my sake and the gospel's, but he shall receive an hundred fold now in this time, houses, and brethren, and sisters, and mothers, and children, and lands, with persecutions; and in the world to come eternal life*. This seems to be a contradiction: but though they lose their *houses and lands*, &c. yet they shall reap them *equivolently*; yea, what is more than the equivolent; they reap true comfort here, and true happiness hereafter: so that *their light afflictions*  
work

work for them, a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory.

Use 2. The next use that we make of the doctrine, is for *reproof*. Since all things here are but *vanity*, this doctrine reproves these that set their *hearts upon vanity*, upon the *world*, so as to forget God, and Christ, and religion, and their souls: O my dear friends, *What will it profit a man, though he gain the whole world, if he lose his own soul?* All is but wind and vanity that the world can afford. What will become of the worldling in the day of death, when they must part with these things? What a miserable parting must it be, if you have no other thing for your happiness! I mean not to persuade men to a voluntary poverty; so the church of Rome make some of her votaries swear to be beggars all their life-time; and they have gone, and abstracted from all secular affairs, under pretence of employing themselves wholly in devotion: and yet many of them are so ignorant, that they know nothing at all of religion. I have read of one who lived always in a mountain, and was appointed to spend his whole time in religion: and he told that he cried to God, and said his *Pater-Noster* all the day, over and over, and over again, to the Virgin Mary: just a horrible blunder in religion, a damnable delusion, that no man, in his wits, could be guilty of. They think, that by turning to a solitary desert, and abstract life, they may overcome the world: but as Luther saith well concerning it, “A monk in his closet says, he thinks he is crucified to the world, and the world to him; but, alas! poor wretch, he is crucified to Christ, and Christ is a stranger to him.”

But, Sirs, the thing that we are reproofing is, that the world gets so much of your heart, and God so little. The creature should have but a small portion of your affections, if it be not the creature, but God, that is your portion. But, alas! many are like the great man, that, being asked if ever he saw an eclipse of the sun, said, “He had so much adoe upon earth, he never had time to look up to heaven.” Just so may it be said  
of

of multitudes in the world, they are so much taken up with the things of time, the vain and perishing things of the world, they never get time to look up unto, and call upon God. Therefore we have reason to bewail the matter.

*Use 3.* Let our next use then be for *lamentation*, that notwithstanding of the *vanity of the world*, yet many discover themselves to be *wholly destitute of religion*, by their inordinate desire after the world. For clearing this, I would shew you, 1. What sort of a desire the wicked have after the world. 2. Prove and make it evident, that their desires are after these vanities. 3. Shew whence it is. 4. Point out the evil of it. And in all these we will see much ground of lamentation.

[1.] What *sort* of a desire is it that the wicked have after the world. Here we shall condescend on a four-fold desire they discover themselves to have after the world.

1. It is an *original* desire; they are born with a world in their heart: any thing in the world is better to them than God, or Christ. Had we continued in our original, primitive integrity, the first words of the infant would have been, the praises of God; the first breathings would have been after communion with God: but now they are after the world, and earthly things, which gratify the outward senses.

2. It is *universal*, after any thing that is in the world; *Who will shew us any good?* The beggar, who wants grace, before he make God his portion, he will rather make his staff or his meal-pock his portion; as well as the king his crown, or kingdom: *Who will shew us any good?* any good whatsoever, Psal. iv. 6.

3. It is a *strong* and *violent* desire they have after the world: notwithstanding all the experience they have of the emptiness and vanity of the world; yet they pant after the dust of the earth. If a man was panting for breath, he would pant after the free air: but to pant after the dust, that stops the breath, that is very strange!

4. It is a *growing* desire that the wicked have after the world: the more they drink, the more their thirst increaseth. O, saith the man, if I had a hundred pound a year, I would live on it. Well, perhaps he gets it. Is he now pleased and satisfied? No. O, if I had a thousand pounds a year, I could be content. Well, perhaps he gets it. Is he content? No. He would have a million. Well, if he gets that, is he satisfied? No, by no means. I would have a kingdom, a crown. Well, if he gets that, is he content? No. I must be the son of Jupiter; I must be a little god, and an universal monarch. Well, is Alexander the great content with the whole world under his command? No. *O if there were more worlds for me to conquer!*—There is the nature of the desire that the wicked have after the world.

[2.] The second thing on this use was, To prove and make it evident, that the desire of the wicked is after the *world*. This will appear evident, if we consider these four things.

1. It is clear from this, that they make the world their *portion*; they are content with it, they seek nothing else: *Preserve me, O Lord, from the man that hath his portion in this life, whose belly thou fillest with thy hid treasures,* Psalm xvii. 14.

2. It is clear from this, that they *prefer* the world to all the duties of religion, and ordinances of divine worship: if Christ and the world come in competition, they choose the world and let Christ go. Public ordinances, family worship, secret and social prayer, all must stand by, that the world may get room. The gospel is slighted; Why? They choose their *farms* and *merchandise*, and their hearts are wedded to these; they will not be espoused to the Son of God.

3. That the wicked desire the world is clear, if we consider the unwearied *pains* and *diligence* they are at about the world. O what toil and travel! What racking of thought, late and early, will they have about the world! What joy will they have about a good worldly bargain! More joy than ever they had in hearing, praying, reading, or any religious duty: they have *gladness*  
*when*

when their corn and wine increaseth. What sorrow, what tormenting grief are they haunted with, when they lose the world! Then they say, with Micah, *They have taken away my gods, and what have I more?* They think nothing of God, or Christ, or heaven, if they want the world.

4. It appears from this, they will not stand to *commit the greatest sin*, to make a purchase. If they can any way in the world purchase an estate, or a sum of money, even with the loss of their soul, they think they have made a good bargain. Judas thought he had made a good bargain, when he had sold the Prince of life for thirty pieces of silver. *Demas hath forsaken me, having loved this present world.*

[3.] We proposed next to enquire, *whence* is it, that wicked, carnal persons have such a desire after the world.

1. Man hath no *self-sufficiency*; he cannot, in the enjoyment of himself, be happy: hence he reckons himself miserable to be alone. Aristotle said, "A man that could live alone, was either a God, or an idiot." Now, man seeks to be happy in the enjoyment of something besides himself: but he misses the true mark, and so seeks it in the world, where it cannot be found.

2. God, who only can satisfy the soul, is out of sight: he is to them an unknown God; *The world by wisdom knew not God.* They are *destroyed for lack of knowledge*, saving knowledge.

3. The world is at *hand*, and a well-garnished world: this little ball, full of wind and vanity, blown up in the air, it sparkles and shines with a lustre and beauty, in their eye; and they are, like children, mightily taken with it.

4. Because of the *vanity of the heart*. There is a world within them, answering the world without them: the *lust of the eye* within, answering the riches of the world without; the *lust of the flesh* within, answering the fordid pleasures of the world without; the *pride of life*, answering to the honours and grandeur of

the world. And thus the world within them draws out the desire after the world without them.

[4.] We would next shew the *evil* of this, to have the desire running only out after the world. Why,

1. It is *idolatry*; hence *covetousness* is called *idolatry*, and ranked, by the apostle, amongst the other things which are to be *mortified*, Col. iii. 5. Many worship gold in the coin, that will not worship it in the image: *They say to fine gold, Thou art my confidence.*

2. It is *sacrilege*. The heart and affections of a man are like the royal mines that are annexed to the crown. The heart of a man, his love and delight, should be devoted to God, and consecrated to him. Why hath God given him such vast desires? Was it to throw them out upon the world? No surely.

3. It is monstrous *folly* to let the soul run out upon the world: *Be astonished, O heavens!* Why? what is the matter? *My people have committed two great evils; they have forsaken me, the fountain of living waters, and hewed out to themselves cisterns, broken cisterns that can hold no water,* Jer. ii. 12, 13. It is the height of folly to conclude, that there is more excellency in the stream, than in the fountain; in the creature, than in the Creator.

4. It is a *degrading* of the soul. If you saw an angel licking the dung-hill, would you not say, that is not food for such a glorious creature? It is far below it. Our souls are the younger brethren of angels, if we may be allowed the expression. Who can tell the difference exactly between the nature of angels and the souls of men? Now, for that heaven-born soul to lick the dust of the cursed serpent; what a degrading of it is this!—Is not all this then matter of lamentation, that Christ is despised, and the world embraced?

*Use 4.* The next use that we make of the doctrine may be for *examination*. Try then whether you be weaned from the vain world, yea or not.

1. Are you content and satisfied with a *little* of the world's *good*? And can you bear much of the world's *evil*? Have you got a discovery of Christ, even such as  
darkens

darkens all the glory and excellency of the world; and been brought to consider, that you have a better portion than the vanity of time? Can you consider, that the *Heir of all things*, the Son of God, had no place to lay his head, had not a penny in his purse? *Women came and ministered unto him*; a fish came and gave him as much as paid his tribute to Cæsar. Are you deaf to the reproaches of the world, so as the loss of its applause doth not break your heart? Are you deaf to the profits and honours of the world, so as the want of them doth not afflict you?

2. If you be weaned from the vanity of the world, then you will bear the *want* of the world with profound submission. If God, in providence, takes your houses, your lands, your children, your riches, your loving friends and dear relatives, you will lay your hand on your mouth, and your mouth in the dust, and justify God; *In all this Job sinned not*. You will see your all in God and Christ; *My God liveth, he is mine inheritance*: for you cannot be disinherited, if God be alive. Whereas the wicked faith, in this case, *They have taken away my gods, and what have I more?* Their all is gone.

3. If weaned from the world, your affections will not *ebb* and *flow* with the world. There are some fountains that have immediate communication with the sea: whenever the sea flows, they flow; when the sea ebbs, they ebb and dry up. If it be thus with you, when the candle of providence shines upon your tabernacle, then you rejoice at it and dance to it; and when it is removed, then you roar, and weep, and pay a tribute of tears: this is a token you are not weaned from the world. As for the believer, when the world goes out, the Lord comes in its room, and makes him joyful and cheary: and this has such an effect upon him, that he would be content to loose a wife, a child, a worldly comfort every day, upon condition he got God in the room of them.

4. If you be weaned from the world, you will know what it is to carry your *closet frame* to your *worldly affairs* with you. There are some people who have more

of God upon their spirit, more fellowship with heaven in their shop, selling their wares, or when they are about secular work, than others have in their closet upon their knees: more of God sitting at their trade, than others in the house of God, hearing a good sermon. Some will have more intercourse with Heaven, at their own table, than ever the worldling had at a communion table. They carry a heavenly frame to their worldly and earthly employment. As for others, they bring the world still along with them; they bring it to the church, as well as to the market; they are glued to it.

*Use 5.* We shall improve the doctrine in an use of *exhortation*. If all be *vanity*, then, O seek to have your *hearts disengaged from all things in the world*: be persuaded to *forsake lying vanities*, Jonah ii. 8. If it be enquired, *What is it to forsake the world?* We might give both a negative and a positive reply to this. *Negatively*; It is not to go out of the world. It is not to forsake personal society; though a vitious society must be forsaken. It is not to vow a voluntary poverty, with the Papists. It is not to be idle and improvident.—But, *positively*, we are to forsake it in the four following respects.

1. In respect of the *immoderate use* of the enjoyment of the world, 1 Cor. vii. 29, 30, 31. We are to use it as stewards that are to give an account.

2. In respect of *service*. Be not servants or slaves to it; *For you cannot both serve God and Mammon*.

3. In respect of *confidence*: trust not to it. Although you have worldly advantages, make them not your staff, your stay, your choice jewels.

4. In respect of *adherence*: be not glued to the world. Let not the world be like the skin on the hand, that will not easily come off; but like the glove on your hand, or the hat on your head, that you can easily part with.

Try your repentance by this doctrine, which was the evidence of Solomon's repentance. Such as see nothing but glory and goodness, in these outward things, Satan hath

hath bewitched them, Matth. iv. 8.; but such as see the extreme vanity of them, have repented with Solomon.

We shall now conclude the subject, by laying before you the following *remedies* against a worldly disposition. Consider, for this end, the six following particulars.

1. These vanities will not yield you *pleasure* in the time of the greatest trouble: they cannot ease you of the least pain. When you make a gash in your conscience, and wound your spirit, and so expose yourselves to the wrath of God, what will the things of the world avail you? Who loved the world better than Judas did? But when God burnt his fingers with it, if we may be allowed the expression, then he threw it away with a fury. What will become of you at death, man? Will it be any comfort to you, that you die in a well hung room? or that your chamber floor is laid with silver? or that you die possessed of such a large estate, or ample fortune? Will not the man then cry out, "O if I had but spent some of this time in securing an interest in Christ, that I have bestowed in hunting after the world, that can now stand me in no stead!"

2. Seek a *law-work*; something of it is absolutely necessary to shake the world out of its place: *He will shake heaven and earth*, Heb. xii. 26. People will never leave the world till God shake it out of their heart.

3. Be conversant with your own *sensible experience* of the world. Have you never found the vanity and emptiness of it? Nay, hath it never been a sting and gall to your poor soul, that the world hath got all your time, thought, and care?

4. Be persuaded, that God in Christ is the *only good*. Seek the discovery of the glory of God in Christ. Persons may harangue never so long about the world's emptiness and vanity; but they will never part with it till they get something better in the room of it. Something the man must have to set his heart upon: Therefore, till the unfearchable riches of Christ be discovered to the soul, so as your soul's desire run out after him,  
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the husks of the world will be your portion. People may think it is their principle, that the world is but vanity; yet still they are taken up with the vanity thereof, till they see the glory of God. The Lord is a full and sufficient good: he is a proportionable good, suiting the soul: he is an everlasting good, suiting the immortal soul.

5. Believe the *providence* of God: he that made the world by creation, doth still preserve it by providence, allotting every man his portion; and by making every man's condition, in the world, best for him: *Your heavenly Father taketh care of you*, saith Christ.

6. O beware of *valuing* yourselves for what you have of the world: I assure you, in God's name, it will be one of your challenges when death comes, or some time a day or other, *Oh! I neglected my poor soul!* Like the woman that left her child in the flame; many leave their soul thus, to be consumed in the flame of divine wrath. Seek to have Christ for your everlasting portion. Many say, *Who will shew us any good?* But say you, *Lord, lift thou upon me the light of thy countenance; then shall I have more gladness than they, when their corn and wine abound.* Never rest till you came to that, *Whom have I in heaven but thee?* And then you will be able to say also, *When heart, and flesh, and all fail, the Lord is the strength of my heart, and my portion for ever.*

7. Take up Luther's resolution, that you will not be *put off* with this world for a portion. If God, for holy ends, see fit to imbitter worldly felicity to you, pray for weaning influences, improve weaning dispensations, and weaning words, weaning rods, and weaning ordinances.

## S E R M O N VIII.

SELF-CONCEIT incident to a *Multitude of Professors*; or, the imaginary pure Generation found not washed from their Pollution \*.

PROV. XXX. 12.

*There is a generation that are pure in their own eyes, and yet is not washed from their filthiness.*

THE subjects I lately treated, as formerly observed †, hold out to us, 1. The FATHER'S exhibition of Christ, saying, *I have given thee for a covenant of the people.* 2. The SPIRIT'S operation upon the hearts of the people, in order to his being known and believed in; *He shall testify of me.* 3. The SON'S declaration of his own excellency, as being God equal with the Father; *I and my Father are one.* And so Father Son and Holy Ghost concur in their commendation of him to us. But, 4. We treated a little of the WORLD'S disapprobation of this glorious One, and their harsh entertainment of him; *Behold, I and the children whom the Lord hath given me, are for signs and for wonders in Israel ‡.* And now, 5. This text may be looked upon as the ground and reason, why there are so many, even in Israel, that entertain Christ and his followers with marks of reproach, and look upon them as signs and wonders: why? *There is a generation that are pure in their own eyes, and yet are not washed from their filthiness.* There

\* This subject was handled in several discourses; but we are uncertain when or where delivered: though it is more than probable, they were preached in his own church at Dunfermline, some time in the year 1723. The place they have in his notes seems to determine it. This is the second impression.

† See Serm. VI. p. 249.

‡ See Serm. VI. p. 249.

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self-conceit makes them value themselves, to the undervaluing and contemning of others: though yet, while they suppose themselves to be pure, their impurity remains.

We may observe two sorts of persons in the visible church.

1. Some truly *exercised persons*, who, looking more to their spots and weaknesses, than to their graces and privileges, are ready to conclude themselves to be hypocrites and dissemblers with God. There are a few of these.

2. There are those who have nothing but a *profession of religion*, being strangers to the *power of it*; yet entertain an high opinion of themselves: who, looking more to their seeming righteousness, than to their real cases; more to their gifts than to their spots, conceive themselves to be, what they really are not. They have an high conceit, a towering imagination, and raised opinion of themselves; and there is a *multitude* of such: *There is a generation that are pure in their own eyes, and yet are not washed from their filthiness.*

This chapter contains, 1. Agur's *confession of faith*. 2. His *prayer*, and the parts of it. 3. His sixfold *quaternary*; that is, his coupling of four things together, and making a comparison among them; as you may see them divided in the contents of the chapter, upon some of your Bibles.—The *first* four is a fourfold generation of sinners that are most detestable to God: though this be not expressed, yet it is clearly implied; and you will find a parallel where it is expressed, Prov. vi. 16. Now, of the four generations he here speaks of, the second is in our text: *A generation that are pure in their own eyes, yet are not washed from their filthiness.* The scope whereof is to shew, That it is a fault incident to vast multitudes, to have an high opinion of themselves, while yet they are naught; to think themselves pure, while yet they are impure: they take external reformation for true conversion; outside holiness, for inward sanctification; and common grace for saving.

In the text these persons are described two ways; both negatively and positively.

1. *Negatively*, from what they are not in reality; they are not washed from their filthiness: where, as the defilement of sin is expressed by the word *filthiness*, signifying *excrement*, and denoting the pollution and defilement of sin; so the necessity of *purity* is supposed; they are not washed: they were never cleansed in the fountain opened for sin and for uncleanness; they never washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb; their hearts and natures remain polluted, and under the power of corruption.

2. They are described *positively*, from what they are in their own opinion: they are *pure in their own eyes*: they have a spiritual pride. For it is of this, I think, the text chiefly means: because carnal pride is spoken of, ver. 13. They have an high opinion of themselves. And they are set forth by their number: There is a *generation* of such. This word is sometimes taken for the *succession* of one age to another. Sometimes it imports a *multitude*; and in this sense I chiefly take it: *There is a multitude of people that are pure in their own eyes, yet are not washed from their filthiness.*

The farther explication I refer to the prosecution of these three doctrines. 1. *That sin is an impure thing, of a polluting and defiling nature.* 2. *That purity is an excellent thing, and of absolute necessity to denominate a true saint.* Whatever we think of ourselves, if we be not washen from this defilement, we are naught. 3. *That self-conceit is incident to a multitude of professors.* Many who are most impure, do yet look on themselves as pure, and labour under a sad and woful delusion; a gross and damnable mistake, about the state of their immortal souls: they have a good heart, they think; and yet, alas! it is the worst part about them. *There is a generation that are pure in their own eyes, and yet are not washed from their filthiness.* The two former doctrines are clearly implied, the last is plainly expressed, and is what I mainly designed in fixing on the text: but I shall touch at the two other also. I begin with the first of these, and would speak a little to it at the time.

DOCT. I. *That sin is a pollution and defilement.*

The method we propose for handling this subject, through divine aid, shall be the following,

- I. We would consider what the scripture saith about the *pollution* of sin.
- II. We would compare the *pollution* of sin with the *guilt* of sin, for clearing the difference between the one and the other; and for evidencing the greatness of this defilement.
- III. Speak of the *nature* and *qualities* of this pollution.
- IV. We would shew *whence* this pollution comes, and how it is derived into the world.
- V. Make *application* of the whole subject.

I. The *first* thing proposed was, To consider what the *scripture* saith about the *pollution* of sin. Indeed the scripture compares it to all the greatest deformities imaginable. Sometimes it is compared to the blood and pollution of a *new born infant*, Ezek. xvi. 4, 5, 6. Sometimes to a *dead body*, or a *rotten carcase*, hanging upon a man, Rom. vii. 24. *O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from this body of sin and death?* Sometimes to a *stinking exhalation* of a green open grave, and the rottenness of the land of darkness, Rom. iii. 13. Sometimes to the *poison of asps*, or *serpents*, Rom. iii. 13. Sometimes to the *vomit of a dog*, and the *puddle of swine*, 2 Pet. ii. 22. Sometimes to a *canker*, or *gangren*, 2 Tim. ii. 17. Sometimes to the *dung* of filthy creatures, Phil. iii. 8.; or human dung: we read of the dung of mens sacrifices cast in their faces. Sometimes to the *plague* and *pestilence*, to a *putrifying sore*, Isa. i. 6. —But, not to name any more; surely if sin had not been such a pollution and abomination, the Spirit of God would not have made use of so many terms, to lay before us the odious nature of it: yet none of these things, to speak properly, are pollutions in themselves, being part of the ornament of the creation, though they be poison to man, or disagreeable to our senses:  
but

but sin is ugly in itself, and in the eye of God and holy angels.

II. The *second* thing was, To compare the *pollution* of sin and the *guilt* of sin together.

1. The *pollution* of sin hath a reference to the *command* and *precept*: the *guilt* of sin hath a reference to the *threatening* and *execution*. God enjoins us to do so and so; we do it not: or he forbids us to do, and we do it: here is the stain, blot, and pollution of sin; being a deformity of soul, and contrariety to the law of God. The *pollution* of sin hath a relation to the *command*; the *guilt* of sin looks to the *sanction*: whoe'er sins shall die, shall be punished; guilt looks to that.

2. The *pollution* of sin looks more directly to the *holiness* of God; the *guilt* of sin hath a relation to the *justice* of God. The pollution of sin is the direct opposite to that purity that is in him; it is a direct contrariety to his holiness: but guilt looks to the justice of God, which chains the moral evil and the penal evil together.

3. Though *guilt* of itself, properly speaking, cannot be said to be a *good* thing, it being evil to the rebel and criminal; yet it is a good thing that sin should be punished with suffering, and misery, and hell: it is the emanation of God's justice and sanction of his law, and obligation upon the rebel, to give God as much glory by his suffering, as he robbed him of by his sin. This *guilt* in a manner brings all into order again. The *pollution* of sin breaks the order of the universe: that moral dependence, that the intellectual reasonable world had upon their Maker, is broken by the pollution of sin: but *guilt*, by punishment, brings all into order again; while either the guilty man suffers in his own person, which, alas! he can never fully do; or his *guilt* is transferred upon a Surety.

4. The *pollution* of sin is *inseparable* from it. Though sin be pardoned, it is still pollution: but *guilt* may be *separate* from sin. There may be sin without *guilt* in two respects. (1.) When God gives a *law*, and adds no *sanction* with it: as the greatest of our divines assert,

*That a law may be without a sanction.* (2.) When *pardon* comes and takes away the *guilt*. I say, *fin* may be where there is not *guilt*: as in the case of the pardoned *finner*, who is no more liable to the punishment due to *fin*. And *guilt* may be where there is no *fin*, as in the case of *Christ*, who had no *fin* of his own, yet as *Surety* was liable to the punishment of all the *fin*s of an elect world. But though, I say, *guilt* is separable from *fin*, yet the pollution of *fin* is inseparable from *fin*; the very nature of *fin* must be destroyed, ere it can cease to be a pollution.

III. The *third* thing was, To speak of the *nature* and *qualities* of this pollution. As to the *nature* of this pollution, there are two words I would say concerning it. There is in it a *privation*, or want of that *beauty*, which the soul had, when the image of *God* was upon it: it is a want of conformity to the holiness and beauty of *God's* nature and law. There is also in it a *positive foulness* and *defiledness* of mind and conscience: an introducing of the image of the devil; yea, a deformity of soul, body, and conversation. But this will further appear from the properties of this pollution: and therefore, as to the qualities of it,

1. It is a *natural* pollution; *Who can bring a clean thing out of an unclean! no, not one. Whatsoever is born of the flesh is flesh.* Adam, after his apostacy, begat a child after his own likeness: had he stood, he would have had children after *God's* image; but having fallen, he begat a son after his own image. This is natural: *In sin was I conceived,* says *David*; *and in iniquity did my mother bring me forth,* Psalm li. 5.

2. It is a *deep* and *indelible* pollution: it is of a *crimson* hue, Isa. i. 18. It is like the *blackness* of the *Ethiopian*, and the *spots* of the leopard; much *nitre* and *soap* cannot purge it away, Jer. ii. 22. The deluge of water did not wash it away from the earth: the fire that came down upon *Sodom* did not burn it out. The fire of hell to eternity will not take away the stain of *sin* out of the souls that shall be there. It is deep; nothing but the blood of *God* can wash it away.

3. It is *universal*: it hath invaded all the faculties of the soul, and set up its trophies of victory in all the powers thereof. The *understanding* is polluted with ignorance, darkness, error, enmity, and prejudice: in the *will*, there is a contrariety to God's will, a rebellion, a contempt; in the *memory*, a forgetting of God; all his favours to us are written like characters in the sand: the *conscience* itself, God's deputy, is defiled; *To the pure all things are pure; but to the impure and unclean, even the very mind and conscience is defiled.* This witness is bribed to favour the rest of the polluted faculties. Soul and body are contaminated: we read of the *filthiness of the flesh and spirit*, 2 Cor. vii. 1.

4. It is a *diffusive* and *infectious* pollution; a spreading gangrene. All the children of men are overspread with it, and defiled. The whole man is over-run. It spreadeth itself to our best duties: all our acts of obedience are thereby rendered like filthy rags; like a menstrous cloath. It infects others that are near the polluted sinner. It is hard to be in the company of a man that hath the plague, and not to be infected: Even so, it is one of the hardest things in the world to be witness to sin, and companions to wicked sinners, and not be infected: *Can a man take fire in his bosom, and not be burnt?* Yea, it infects the very timber and stones of the house where the man lies; hence they are said to *cry out against him.* Yea, it infects the very ground on which he trades. Yea, the *whole creation groans and travels in pain*, because of the sins of men.

5. It is a *growing* and *increasing* pollution: *He that is filthy, let him be filthy still*; that is, more filthy, Rev. xxii. 11. *Evil men and seducers wax worse and worse*, 2 Tim. iii. 13. Sin, once given place to, makes gradual and successful advances upon the sinner.

6. It is a *mortal* pollution, a *deadly* pollution: *I said unto thee, when thou wast in thy blood, Live: yea, I said unto thee, when thou wast in thy blood, Live.* The doubling of the expression, shews the deadly nature of the pollution; *In the day when thou wast born, thy navel was not cut, neither wast thou washed in water to supple thee; thou wast not salted at all, nor swaddled at all: No*  
eye

eye pitied thee, to do any of these offices unto thee, to have compassion upon thee; but thou wast cast out into the open field, to the loathing of thy person in the day that thou wast born. And when I passed by thee, and saw thee polluted in thy blood, I said unto thee, when thou wast in thy blood, Live; yea, I said unto thee, when thou wast in thy blood, Live, Ezek. xvi. 4, 5, 6. A new-born child, exposed in that case, would soon expire. Oh! but sin puts confusion amongst men; it puts fire into hell; it puts rottenness in the grave: it was only he that went to the grave without sin, that rose without corruption: yea, sin put wrath in the heart of God against man. It is a mortal, deadly, destructive pollution.—Many other dismal qualities of it might be assigned: but I proceed,

IV. To the fourth thing proposed, which was, to shew how this pollution is conveyed into the world, and from one to another. This is a great mystery, and we must be modest on it. Let us only consider then shortly these two things about it.

1. That *Adam*, once being polluted himself, he cannot but beget a polluted *child*: hence we read, Gen. v. 3. that *he begat a son in his own likeness, after his image*. An *Etheopian* begets an *Etheopian*; and a *blackemoor* begets a *blackemoor*: *That which is born after the flesh is flesh*, John iii. 6.

2. Consider, when God makes the soul of a man of *Adam's* race, he looks upon him as a branch and piece of the *old Adam*; of the old rebel and apostate, to which he gave original beauty, and made it like himself, the glorious work of his hand: but it soon deformed itself. Now, when he makes the faculties, the mind, the will, he goes no further in making them: he does not recreate the original beauty he once gave to man: he is under no obligation to restore what they threw away. Indeed, the elect soul, in the day of conversion, gets all restored to advantage, by the Lord Jesus Christ: *Then he restores that which he took not away*, Psalm lxix. 4. As he restores the favour of God in justification; so the image of God in sanctification: not till then.

V. The

V. The fifth thing proposed was the *application* of the subject; which we shall essay briefly in several uses.

1<sup>st</sup>, By way of *information*. If sin be such a pollution and defilement, then hence see,

1. Why sin keeps men out of *heaven*. Sin stands directly opposite to the rectitude of God's *holy nature*; it is that *abominable thing* which he hates: and it is a positive law of the God of heaven, that *nothing that defileth* can enter into the heavenly Jerusalem. And therefore sin, considered in its own nature, as *exceeding sinful*, excludes from the presence of God.

2. See what matter of *humiliation*, before God, we have: we should *ly down in our shame*, and *our confusion cover us*, crying out, *Unclean, unclean*; humbled to the dust. Alas! what an unreasonable thing is pride! To see a proud sinner is as ridiculous a thing, as to see a man vain, with a contagious distemper, boasting of bodily comeliness.

3. See hence the *dreadful infatuation* of the most of the children of men, that are in love with sin, for as filthy as it is: yea, the doleful state of all men by nature. It is a vile state; a state of pollution: it is a state of separation from God; a state of enmity to God, the chief good; and mad love to sin, the chief evil and pollution. Whence is it that the world are in love with dung and filth? Surely it proceeds from blindness of mind: men do not see the evil of sin. It proceeds from unbelief, the power of unbelief; men do not credit the account given of it in the word. It proceeds also from the fair and pleasant varnish that the devil puts upon sin.

3. Hence see the *miserable condition* of these who are under the *total power* of sin, and never had the pollution of it washed away: why, it renders you abominable in the sight of God, who is of *purser eyes than to behold evil*: abominable in the sight of all good men, *In whose eyes a vile person is contemned*, Psal. xv. 4.: in the sight of good angels; they cannot but loath iniquity, being such spotless and holy creatures: yea, abominable in your own eyes; if ever God open them, you will  
loath

loath yourself and your sin, as much as ever you loved it.

5. See what need we have to stand at a *distance* from sin. Sin has brought the greatest desolation upon nations and kingdoms; ruined the most famous and flourishing churches; brought destruction upon the greatest and most opulent cities; vanquished and overcome the greatest men; and turned the most fertile land into barrenness. Therefore, we have much need to stand at a distance from it, seeing it has brought such devastation on the earth.

6. Hence see the *righteousness of God* in punishing sin. How just and righteous is he in punishing it, whether here or through eternity? Damnation itself is a most holy, pure, and righteous action. The punishment is not above the fault. Thou that by sin dost trample upon God, how just is it that he should trample upon thee? Sin is an infinite evil, objectively considered; and therefore an infinite evil must follow. How unreasonable then are mens complaints of the punishment of their sins in time? Complain not against the Lord, for any thing that can come upon you: it is the *punishment of your sin*; accept of it: *Why should a living man complain?* So long as it is below damnation, it is far below your desert: *He hath punished us less than our iniquities deserve.*

7. Hence see the *excellency of holiness*: If sin be most vile, holiness is most lovely. Sin is our deformity, holiness is our beauty: sin is a shame, holiness is a glory.

8. See the *impossibility* of satisfying God by ourselves; and the *necessity* of flying to the blood of Christ. How impossible is it for you to satisfy God by your own duties, reformation, and righteousness? Can this repair the wrongs done to God, while we have cast the dung of sin upon all the perfections of God? We have, as it were, trampled God under our feet, and *trodden under foot the Son of God*, Heb. x. 29. This is worse than that all the world should burn in hell. Can we then make reparation or satisfaction by our duties? or be justified by our works, while our works themselves are full of sin, and so full of pollution? No, no. See then the absolute necessity of flying to the blood of Christ:

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This is the only sanctuary and city of refuge for guilty finners; the only purgatory and laver for filthy finners to be cleansed in: *The blood of Christ*, and that only, *cleanseth from all sin*.

The next *use* that we make of the doctrine, is of *examination*. From this we may try, if ever we got a *right sight*, a *saving sight* of sin, so as to see it in its polluting and defiling nature. There is a law-sight of sin that ushers in a gospel saving sight. Law-work is necessary; I do not speak of the degrees: but the bankrupt will not run to the surety, till he see himself a dyvour, quite insolvent. The polluted soul will not fly to the fountain till he see himself polluted and defiled.

But possibly it may be asked, *How shall a person know, if, after some law-work of this sort, he hath got a gospel saving sight of the pollution of sin?*

We shall answer to this only in these two particulars following.

1. If so, then you have seen it in the *gospel-glass*, and that is a crucified Christ: *They shall look upon him whom they have pierced, and shall mourn*; that is, on a crucified Christ. Christ, on the cross, is a glass wherein we see the sinfulness of sin more than any where else. Here God's hatred against sin appears most clearly; and at the same time his love to the sinner, in giving his Son to the death for his sin: and this love melts the heart, and breaks and dissolves it more than all the terrors of the law or flames of hell could do.

2. If so, then the sight hath wrought a *gospel-effect*, such as that upon Job, chap. xlii. 5, 6. *Now mine eye seeth thee; wherefore I abhorre myself, and repent in dust and ashes*. This sight hath made you look upon yourself with abhorrence; and made you displeas'd with yourself, and even to loath yourself before God; and loath your sin, and see yourself more filthy than the most loathsome creature on earth; yea, than the blackest devil in hell: And you will also find some disposition, under a sense of daily defilement, to make a daily improvement of the fountain of the blood of Christ, for cleansing. When any pollution is contracted, you will anew

find yourself uneasy, till you get a new dip in the fountain. If it be thus with you, I think the Lord hath begun to cleanse you from your pollution. But, alas! the most part who hear me, ly stinking in the filthy mire of the pollution of sin.

Therefore, in the next place, permit me to apply the doctrine in an use of *exhortation*. Let me exhort you,

1. To see and be convinced of your *sad, sinful, and polluted* state and condition. Alas! what is your natural state, man, woman? You that are unregenerate, you are lying in the mire, and loving to wallow like swine in it. A sheep may run into the mire, but cannot rest there till it get out: but the swine love to ly in it, to wallow in it, and seek no better place to stay in. *The whole world lieth in wickedness*, 1 John v. 19. They ly in it like a vessel in the dub, that must needs be full. They are full of sin; never emptying, but always filling: yea, when the man thinketh he is emptying of sin, when he thinketh he is repenting and reforming, then he is filling with it, and carrying a fulness of it about with him; in so much that he is dropping off that fulness of sin wherever he goes. You will say, that beggar is so full of vermin, that he is dropping his vermin wherever he goes: So, many people discover their fulness of sinful pollutions, by dropping this vermin wherever they go. If they come into good company, they are dropping their vermin there: if they come into bad company, they are diffusing their pernicious pollutions there. Why, they are so full of pollution, so full of sin, that sometimes it drops out of their eyes in proud looks, or wanton glances; sometimes it drops out of their lips, in vain discourse, or profane language, such as, swearing, lying, slandering and idle words; and drops out of their whole behaviour and deportment. Alas! what a miserable case and condition are they in? Their heart is the source of all corruption; a nest of vermin that was never herried, a stay that was never cleansed; and out of that receptacle creeps a multitude of noxious vermin every day, and every hour of the day; for, out of the heart proceedeth all the wickedness of the heart and life: *Out of the*

*the heart proceedeth evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, fornications, thefts, false witnesses, blasphemies: these are the things that defile a man,* Mat. xv. 19, 20. Oh! see and lament your sad state; and know, if ever you dwell with a holy God, you must be washed, Psa. xxvi. 3, 4. If your filthiness remain, the filthy devil and you must lodge together in hell for ever. Therefore,

2. O seek to be washed: *Wash ye, make ye clean,* Isa. i. 16. This was an exhortation to the church of the Jews, when very corrupt and degenerate. In which exhortation, there is something *supposed*, namely, that the church was greatly defiled. Indeed, the church of God is sometimes black like a pagan nation; yea, blacker by reason of sin against clearer light, greater love, stronger vows, and contempt of an offered Christ. Again, in this exhortation there is something *expressed*, even their incumbent duty; *Wash ye, make ye clean.* It is a new-testament duty under an old-testament phrase. But who can cleanse his heart? Indeed, when God commands us to make a clean heart, the design is, that we may turn the precept into a prayer, and say, “Lord, *create in me a clean heart; wash me, and I shall be clean.*” This seems to be the native view, and plain import of the text. *Wash your hands, ye sinners; purify your hearts, ye double minded,* saith the Lord, by the apostle James. O what filthy hands are there amongst us! and much more filthy hearts! Heart-unbelief, heart-hardness, heart-enmity, heart-stupidity, heart-hypocrisy, heart-atheism, heart-deadness and indisposition, heart-wandering and wickedness, and innumerable such plagues, discover the pollution of the heart. Do you not need washing?

There is a fourfold water that God makes use of for this end; and you should improve these waters.

(1.) The water of *affliction*: *By this shall the iniquity of Jacob be purged. It was good for me that I was afflicted.* This water, indeed, washes not of itself, but only as a mean in God’s hand when he blesses it: this water, washes subserviently, as the saw hath a subserviency to cut the timber, when in the workman’s hand. Therefore, improve dispensations of providence; and cry, “Lord, let not this affliction pass without some effica-

“cy upon my foul, to wash and cleanse me from my  
“fin.”

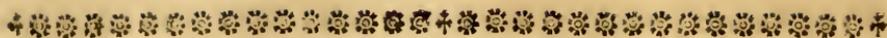
(2.) The water of the *word*, the waters of the sanctuary; these are healing, medicinal, and cleansing waters: *Now are ye clean, through the word that I have spoken unto you. Sanctify them through thy truth, thy word is truth.* This water washes instrumentally; not by an intrinsic virtue of its own, but by the power of God accompanying it. Therefore, when you hear the word, cry for power to attend it for washing you. The word discovers the spot of sin, James i. 23, 24. The word proposes the rule of holiness, and the most noble pattern of purity: *Wherewith shall a young man cleanse his way? By taking heed thereto according to thy word,* Psalm. cxix. 9. The word hid in the heart is like a fire to burn and consume the dross of sin. The word holds forth the grace of God, and the love of Christ, which constrains to purity: *Having these promises, dearly beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness.*

(3.) The water of the *Spirit's* saving influences: this water washes efficiently. It is only *through the Spirit*, that we *mortify the deeds of the body*. O Sirs, employ the Holy Ghost to wash, to cleanse, to purify, regenerate, and sanctify you: we are said to be *washed, justified, and sanctified in the name of the Lord Jesus*, and by *the Spirit of our God*. It is the work of the Spirit to cleanse and purify: it is his function, it is his office; and he loves to be employed.

(4.) There is the crimson water of the Redeemer's *blood*; and this water washes meritoriously: this is the *fountain opened to the house of David, and inhabitants of Jerusalem, for sin and for uncleanness*, Zech. xiii. 1. The blood of the Lamb is a fountain; it is not a *rivulet*, but a *fountain*, gushing out with freedom: it is not a fountain *sealed*, but a fountain *open*; every man, every woman is welcome to wash and purify themselves at it; welcome to bathe in it, till he be whiter than the snow: It is open, not only to the *house of David*, the royal family; but to the *inhabitants of Jerusalem*; to the poorest and meanest of the visible church. This is the *river that makes glad*, because it  
makes

makes clean, *the city of God*. O Sirs, run to this blood of the Lamb; wash there every day. There is an *original* washing in the day of conversion; this is the initial washing that many hearing me stand in need of: O but you stand in need to be plunged well then, in a day of power, that the filthy nature may be washed and changed. There is also a *progressive* daily washing, from the daily pollutions that are contracted; and this washing the godly themselves daily need: though they need not to be regenerated again, or a new regeneration of their nature; yet they need always a new conversion and washing of their heart and way: hence Christ saith to Peter, John xiii. 10. *He that is washed, needeth not save to wash his feet.* Sins contracted, by daily unwatchfulness, put the people of God under a necessity of daily washing, though not a washing of the whole person; for that is done in regeneration, wherein the state is changed: *He that is washed, needeth not save to wash his feet*; the feet of his affections, the feet of his conversation, the steps of his daily walk. But there are multitudes that were never washed at all; they must wash head, and heart, and all; their nature and state need washing, as well as their heart and life.

In a word, employ the Lord Jesus to do all the work, who said in that context, *If I wash thee not, thou hast no part in me.* Know you cannot wash yourselves by any of these means, unless he put to his hand and do the whole work: put your polluted souls into his hand, saying, “Lord, wash me; apply thy cleansing blood by the power of the eternal Spirit.”



## S E R M O N IX.

P R O V. XXX. 12.

*There is a generation that are pure in their own eyes, and yet is not washed from their filthiness.*

[The second Sermon on this text.]

**I**T contributes much to set forth the excellency of the scripture, as being indeed the word of the infinitely wise God, that it points out the lively picture of people, in all times, and ages, and generations; infomuch that the scriptural account of people are never out of date. It were well if the world were mended, since the Spirit of God dictated this sentence, so many thousand years ago: nay, but I think it is as applicable to the present generation, as if it had never concerned any other. Try it when you will, Sirs, either with respect to yourselves or the generality of people round about you, and you will find it to be the very image and picture of the day. As face answering face in a glass; so, in the looking-glass of this text, you may see your own face, man, woman; and the face of a multitude in our day. Was there ever more filthiness and impurity of thought, word, and action; of heart, speech, and behaviour; and yet in what a proud, self-conceited, self-justifying delusion and dream are many into; as if they were pure, good, civil, sober, honest, and righteous enough. Well may it be said, *There is a generation that are pure in their own eyes; and yet is not washed from their filthiness.*

Having, in the preceding discourse, opened up and applied the first doctrinal observation we laid down from the words, we shall now proceed to the second doctrine.

OBSER. II. *That purity is an excellent thing, and of absolute*

*absolute necessity to denominate a true saint, a true Christian.*

In the handling of this proposition, we propose, through divine aid, to observe the following method and order.

- I. Touch a little at the *nature* of this purity.
- II. Mention some of the *qualities* of it.
- III. Enquire into the *necessity* thereof.
- IV. Point out the *excellency* of this purity.
- V. Make *application* of the subject.

I. We shall return to the first of these, *viz.* To touch a little at the *nature* of this purity. And what we intend to offer upon this head may be comprised in these two things. 1. The removal of the filthiness. 2. The conferring of cleanness.

*1<sup>st</sup>*, This purity lies in the *removal of the filthiness* that the text speaks of. The man that is pure is washed from his filthiness in the blood of Christ. And there is a threefold filthiness that is washed away.

1. The filthiness of our *nature*. We are naturally unclean and defiled; for, *that which is born of the flesh is flesh*, John iii. 6. And, *who can bring a clean thing out of an unclean?* Now, it is the purifying grace of God in Christ, that only can remove this defilement of our nature; *Such were some of you; but ye are washed, but ye are sanctified, but ye are justified, in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God*, 1 Cor. vi. 11. He saveth, by the *washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost*, Tit. iii. 3, 4, 5. Now, how far original pollution is removed, in those whom the Lord purifies, we need not dispute: it is certain, the soul is made fair and beautiful in the sight of God; though the sin that doth defile remains, yet its habitual defilement is taken away, when the person is purified.

2. The filthiness of our *person*, in actual transgression, is taken away in this work of sanctification and purification. There is a defilement attending every actual sin: Now, it is the *blood of Christ that cleanseth from all sin*. Besides the defilement of the nature, which he  
*purges,*

*purges*, Tit. i. 15. he takes away the defilement of our persons, by actual follies; for, *By one offering he perfected for ever them that are sanctified*, Heb. x. 14.

3. The filthiness and defilement of our *duties* is also taken away, in this work of purification. There is a defilement arises from our duties; unbelief and formality drop in into our best duties: we may be ashamed of our choicest performances. God hath promised, concerning the good works of the saints, that *their works shall follow them*, Rev. xiv. 13. Truly, if they were to be measured by the rule, as they come from us, it might be well for the saints, that they might be buried for ever: but the Lord Jesus Christ, as their High-priest, bears the iniquities, the guilt, and provocation which, in strict and severe justice, doth attend them, Exod. xxviii. 38. He *bears the iniquities of our holy things*; and not only so, but *washes away all filth* and defilement; and adds *sweet incense*, that they may be accepted. Whatever is of the Spirit, of himself, of grace, that remains: but whatever is of flesh, self, and unbelief, that is hay and stubble, and that he consumes and takes away; insomuch, that the good works of the believer shall meet him one day with such changed countenance, that he shall not know them: that which seemed black, deformed, and defiled, shall appear beautiful and glorious; they shall not be afraid of them, but rejoice to see them follow them.

This cleansing of the man's nature, person, and duties, from all defilement, is owing to the death of Christ meritoriously, to the power of the Holy Ghost efficiently: he is that *pure water* wherewith we are sprinkled from all our sins; that *Spirit of judgment and burning*, that *takes away the filth of the daughters of Zion, and purges the blood of Jerusalem from the midst of her*, Isa. vi. 4. But then,

2dly, This purity lies not only in the removal of this filthiness and defilement; but in the *confering of cleanness*. And this is also in a threefold gradation.

1. When God purifies a person, he gives the *Spirit of purity and holiness* to dwell in the man: our *renewing is of the Holy Ghost, who is shed on us abundantly through*

*through Christ*, Tit. iii. 6. The principal thing in sanctification and purification, is the indwelling of the purifying Spirit; and our following after the guidance thereof. The Spirit is the well within, the fountain of purity: *I will put my Spirit within you; and cause you to walk in my statutes*, Ezek. xxxvi. 26. No pure and holy step, till once this pure and holy Spirit be put within men.

2. He gives *habitual grace*; the principle of grace opposite to the principle of sin that is in our nature: this is that *incorruptible seed* that dwells in the man whom the Lord purifies. This grace, according to the distinct faculties of the soul where it is; or the distinct object, about which it is exercised, receives various names and appellations, though all be but one new principle of life: in the understanding it is light; in the will, it is obedience; in the affections, it is love; and in all, it is faith: but still one and the same habit of grace.

3. He gives *actual influences*, for the performance of every spiritual duty: for, though a man be purified in both the former respects, by having the Spirit dwelling in him, and a principle and habit of grace infused; yet, even to such as have both these, Christ saith, *that without him they can do nothing*; that is, without new influences of grace, new supplies, and motions, and operations of the Spirit. They cannot live and spend upon the old stock; for every new act they must have a new influence; and the Spirit that dwells in the man, must work in him. And as he hath implanted grace, so he must draw forth grace into exercise; and *work in us both to will and to do*, Phil. ii. 13.—Thus you have somewhat of the nature of this purity; it consists in the removal of filthiness, and conferring of cleanness.

II. As to the *qualities* of this purity, I shall express them both negatively and positively at once. And,

1. It is not a *natural*, but a *supernatural* and *spiritual* purity. The power of natural conscience, may engage a man to do many things, as Herod, while yet he is a stranger to gospel purity, which is supernatural; for it

is from above: the man that is purified, is born of the Spirit, and born from above; he is *God's workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works*. It is the Spirit of God that garnishes the soul with these spiritual embroideries; they are fruits of the Spirit. These that are no purer than when they were born; or than they are by nature, have no purity at all; they are not *washed from their filthiness*.

2. It is not an *hypocritical*, but a real *unfained* purity. Many hypocrites there are, that *draw near to God with their mouth, and honour him with the lip; but their hearts are far removed from him*. Their hearts are not right with God. The faint is said to have his *heart sound in God's statutes*; and to have *truth in the inward parts*; and a *spirit without guile*, in opposition both to gross and close hypocrisy. The *gross* hypocrite is one that knows he is juggling with God and religion: surely there is no purity there. The *close* hypocrite is deceiving himself, and is not aware of it.

But here a question may arise, *May one be a hypocrite and not know it?*

To which we may reply; No doubt of it: for many are playing the hypocrite, when they think they are very devout persons: their hearts are divided; not upright, but complex: and they have a complex portion; God and the creature make up a portion to them. The hypocrite gives God a part of his heart, and the creature a part of his heart: he gives heaven and duties a part of his heart and time; and he gives hell and idols another part of his heart and time. The worship of God, that gratifies his conscience; the way of sin, that gratifies his affections: and between the two he is pleased. God alone doth not satisfy him; the creature alone doth not satisfy him: but he runs between the two. But the cloven foot is a mark of the devil; the heart is divided. But the pure, the upright man, is one who dares not *regard iniquity in his heart*, and who takes a God in Christ alone for all his portion and happiness; that satisfies all the vast desires of his soul: and, *to whom shall I go, saith he? thou hast the words of eternal*

*nal life.* God is the centre of the soul's rest: *Return to thy rest, O my soul, Psalm cxvi. 7.*

3. It is not a *speculative*, but an *operative* purity. Some have all their religion in their head, but nothing in their heart and life: all the knowledge they are master of hath no influence upon the sanctification of either. Many people are like rickety children, their heads are swelled, but their backs are narrow and contracted: so they have heads full of light, but they are empty of piety and purity; *They profess that they know God; but in works they deny him.* Indeed, if they have a true knowledge of God, it would lead to true sanctity; but they are the liker the devil, who hath much knowledge, but no purity. People may be like the toad, who hath a precious stone in his head, but his belly is full of poison: they may have a head full of notional knowledge; but they have an heart full of unmortified enmity.

4. It is not a *common*, but a *special* purity. People may have common influences of the Spirit of God; not only may their understandings be much *enlightened*, like those, Heb. vi. 4.; but their will may be renewed, toward many good purposes and resolutions, like Agrippa, *almost persuaded to be saints*: their affections may be several ways touched. There are common gifts and graces of the Spirit, that may both warm the affection, and smooth the conversation; while yet the heart is not washed from its filthiness, in the manner that I have described.

5. It is not a *superstitious*, but a *scriptural* and *regular* purity. Many worship God vainly, while they worship him superstitiously; in a manner not required in his word: such are all these forms of worship, and of divine service, in those churches that are over-run with human inventions, and unscriptural ceremonies: *In vain do they worship me; teaching for doctrines the commandments of men.* The word of God is the standard of true piety and purity: *As many as walk according to this rule, peace be on them, saith the apostle, and on all the Israel of God. To the law and to the testimony; if they speak not according to this, it is because there is no*

*light in them.* No man can do any thing in faith, unless he can say, *So it is written*; or hath a *thus saith the Lord* to warrant it: and *whatsoever is not thus of faith is sin.* This purity is scriptural both with respect to the law and the gospel: the law is the *rule* of purity, and the gospel is the *instrument*, even the word of grace: *Now are ye clean, through the word that I have spoken unto you. Sanctify them through thy truth, thy word is truth*

6. It is not a *partial*, but an *extensive, universal* purity. It is not a *part* of the man, that is washed from filthiness, but the *whole* man: the whole man is renewed after the image of God. *If any man be in Christ he is a new creature; old things are past away; behold, all things are become new.* There is a new state, a new disposition; there is a new light in the understanding; the *light of the knowledge of the glory of God*: a new liberty in the will; being made *willing in the day of God's power*: a new order in the affections; they being *set upon things above*: a new peace in the conscience; a *peace that passeth all natural understanding*: a new lustre in the whole conversation; it being a *conversation becoming the gospel*: a new trade of communion with God, and intercourse with heaven: a new war against the devil, the world, and the flesh: *All things are become new.* Think not you are holy enough when free from the outward pollutions of the world. New desires and new delights must be inlaid and implanted in the soul: new faith, in opposition to the old dead faith; new hope, in opposition to the old natural hope; new repentance, in opposition to the old-covenant repentance; a new obedience, in opposition to the old-covenant obedience. And so,

7. It is not a *legal*, but an *evangelical* purity. *Legal* purity is built upon the ground of *personal righteousness* and *inherent strength*, like Adam's in a state of innocency: but *evangelical* purity is built upon the ground of *Christ's righteousness* and *strength*, Isa. xlv. 24. The man that is evangelically purified faith, *Surely in the Lord only have I righteousness and strength.* Gospel purity acts upon the divine *strength* of Christ, for being to itself, and for all its assistance: and it acts upon the  
divine

divine *righteousness* of Christ, for acceptation to itself, and for all its acceptance. — Legal purity acts by *compulsion* and *constraint*, from fear of hell, and the like: but gospel purity acts *freely*, and from love. — Legal purity levels at *self*, and the magnifying thereof: gospel purity levels at *free grace*, and the praise and glory thereof. — Legal purity is *mercenary*, expecting God will make out his part, because the pure creature thinks he has done his endeavour, to perform his condition on his part; and so imagines he has a right founded upon his purity and holiness: but gospel purity is *humble*, and takes all things freely; not in a conditional way, but in an absolute manner, with respect to him; and expecting all things promised in the covenant, only upon the condition performed by Christ, his obedience to the death.

8. It is not an *evanishing*, but a *permanent* purity. All the religion that many have is *evanishing* and superficial; it comes and goes like a flash of lightening. True purity is permanent and constant; it continues and grows: for, *he that bath clean hands shall wax stronger and stronger.* *The righteous holdeth on his way*, like a vessel sailing toward such a port, though it meet with many blasts to drive it hither and thither, and sometimes very far back; yet it goes on again, and makes out the harbour designed: so, though the believer may meet with blasts of temptation and corruption, that may set him far back; yet he holds on his way. A God in Christ is the centre of rest, to which he moves; yea, he hath taken up his rest in him, and there he resolves to stay for ever: he hath chosen a God in Christ for his portion, and he is determined to abide by his choice; *Whom have I in heaven but thee? and there is none in all the earth that I desire besides thee.* Psalm lxxiii. 25. As if he had said, I have been ranging and ransacking heaven, and looking to all the angels there; I have been traversing earth, and viewing all the children of men; but there is none worthy of my choice but thee alone: *Whom have I in heaven but thee? and there is none in all the earth that I desire besides thee.* Here is a characteristick and distinguishing quality of a pure and upright man. A hypocrite

critic can go to a preaching and a prayer; but he can never say, Now, I could live and die in this work; no, no: the man must be back to the world again, back to his idols again: there is something in the earth that is more his portion than God; so his religion is vanishing. But,

III. It is proper now to speak a word of the *necessity* of this purity. Here I would essay two things: 1. Shew that it is necessary. 2. Enquire for what it is necessary.

1<sup>st</sup>, We are to shew that purity is *necessary*. This will appear clear, if you consider these things following.

1. That purity is necessary, will appear from all the *typical works* under the law; the legal washings and purifyings. What meant the great sea of brass that was appointed for the high priests to wash in, before they made their addresses to the throne, before they compassed the altar? What needed all the washings of the people and of the sacrifices? Certainly, if we look not to the spirituality of it, but only to the letter, they seem a piece of pageantry, unworthy of the divine Spirit to concern himself in these outward washings: but having a further view, they point at a gospel spiritual washing and purification.

2. The necessity of it is evident from the *sacramental washing* in the new testament. What means the sacrament of baptism? Doth it not speak forth the necessity of our washing? Who no sooner enter on the threshold of life, than there is the laver of regeneration presented for washing and purification.

3. The necessity of it is evident from all the *commands of the law*. Every command hath a voice; and the general voice and cry of all is, *Wash ye, make ye clean*, Isa. i. 16. *The end of the command is love, out of a pure heart*, 1 Tim. i. 5.

4. The necessity of it is evident from the *promises of the gospel*. The great promise of the new covenant is, *I will sprinkle them with clean water, and they shall be clean; from all your filthiness, and from all your idols I will cleanse you,*

you, Ezek. xxxvi. 25. These promises were needless, if purity was not necessary: and we ought to make use of these promises, and plead them.

5. In a word, It was the end of Christ's coming into the world, that he might *redeem from all iniquity*, and *purify unto himself a peculiar people*: --It was the design of his abode in it, that he might *leave us an example*, set before us a *pattern of holiness*, that we might *follow his steps*, and *be holy as he is holy*: --It was the intention of his death, and the shedding of his blood; for, *he suffered without the gate*, that he might *sanctify the people*, and that his blood might be a laver for washing away all their filthiness and impurity, and a fountain for washing away all sin and uncleanness, because *his blood cleanses from all sin*.—Christ *prayed* for his blessing to us; *sanctify them through the truth*: he sent the Spirit for this end, that he might *convince of sin*, cause us to *walk in his statutes*, and apply his blood for *purifying our consciences from dead works*.—Thus we see that purity is necessary.

2dly, We proceed now to consider, for *what* it is necessary. Amongst others it is necessary for these things following.

1. It is necessary to evidence our *justification* and *pardon*. Why, if you be not purified, you are not pardoned; for, the pardoned man is a purified man. When God reveals the guilt of sin, he destroys, in some measure, the strength of sin; Rom. viii. 1. *There is no condemnation to them that are in Christ Jesus*; i. e. They are justified. Well, how do they evidence that? They *walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit*.

2. It is necessary to clear up our evidences for Heaven. —It is necessary to clear your *adoption*; *Touch not the unclean thing, saith the Lord; and I will receive you: I will be a Father to you, and you shall be my sons and daughters*, 2 Cor. vi. 17, 18. The meaning is, in a word: this purity shall be an evidence of my paternal relation to you; and hereby your adoption into my family will be cleared up: for, if you be of God's family, you will, thro' grace, study purity.—It is necessary to your *union* with him; I do not mean that the soul must first be purified before it be united

united to Christ; as if none were to come to Christ, till they first make themselves pure: nay, that is cross to the very scope of the gospel, which calls polluted sinners to come to him, that they may be washed by him. But I say, it is necessary to union, in regard that, in uniting a soul to himself, he purifies that soul: and there cannot be an union between Christ and the soul otherwise: *Of him are ye in Christ Jesus, who of God is made to us sanctification,* 1 Cor. i. 30. If Christ come into the soul, he comes in sanctifying and purifying the soul: for he cannot unite with impurity; light cannot unite with darkness, neither life match with death. Can Heaven mingle with hell, or flesh with spirit? No; there is no union but in this purifying Spirit to come in.—It is necessary to our *communion* with God. As I said of union, so I say of communion: when God vouchsafes to bring a person to communion with himself, he purifies that person: for, *what communion hath light with darkness?* And the more that a person is purified, the more communion with God: *If a man love me, and keep my words, my Father will love him; and we will come unto him, and take up our abode with him,* John xiv. 23. *And he that hath my commandments, and keepeth them, he it is that loveth me, and he that loveth me, shall be loved of my Father, and I will love him, and will manifest myself to him,* John xiv. 21.

3. It is necessary to the *acceptableness* of our services unto God. As in justification the believer is made *accepted*; so in sanctification he is made *acceptable*. I distinguish between *acceptance*, and *acceptableness*: *We are accepted only in the beloved*; but those that are loved of him, and *accepted*, they are also made lovely and *acceptable*. Justification and pardon makes a man loved and *accepted*: but sanctification and purity maketh him lovely and *acceptable*. The greatest performances, in obedience to the most express commands, are lost; they are unacceptable and abominable, in the sight of God, without purity; Isa. lxvi. 3. *He that killeth an ox, as if he slew a man; he that sacrificeth a lamb, as if he cut off a dog's neck; he that offereth an oblation, as if he offered swines blood; he that burneth incense, as if he blessed an idol:*

*idol: yea, they have chosen their own ways, and their soul delighteth in their abominations.* All duties, all actions; natural actions, civil actions, religious actions, they are all abominable to him, without this purity.

4. It is necessary to *access* to God: *I will wash mine hands in innocence, and so will compass thine altar,* Psal. xxvi. 6. *Who shall ascend into the hill of the Lord? Who shall stand in his holy place? He that hath clean hands and a pure heart, &c.* Psalm xxiv. 3, 4. It is necessary to *access*: not as the *ground* of access to God; but as the *qualification* of the person that shall have access. The legal dream of the natural bias of the heart, makes it necessary still to distinguish matters well upon this subject. The only ground of access is the blood of Christ; *In whom we have boldness and access, with confidence, by the faith of him,* Eph. iii. 12. Purity itself, in whatever measure communicated to us, is not the foundation of our access to God; but it is the qualification of the subject, or person, that hath access; he is a person who, being privileged with access by the blood of Christ, is also washed and purified by that same blood: and this is the character of the man that shall *ascend to the hill of the Lord, and stand in his holy place*, being thus put in a capacity so to do. Indeed, the believer comes always in the sense of impurity, and to be cleansed; and this very thing is some purity.

IV. The fourth general head we proposed, was, To touch at the *excellency* of this purity. We shall endeavour to point out the excellency thereof in the ten following particulars.

1. The excellency of it appears, in that it *assimulates* unto God: It is a resemblance of God, who is perfect purity; and purity is one of the most noble parts of his image. Every creature hath some resemblance of God: the very inanimate creatures resemble him, in respect of being; and living creatures resemble him, in something of life: nay, the very devils resemble him, in something of knowledge. But for the resemblance of that moral perfection, his holiness and purity, this is what devils and men, by their sin and fall, are oppo-

site and antipodes to: but it is the honour of all the saints, to have some resemblance of God, even in holiness.

2. It cannot but be excellent, for it *retrives* our original innocence, partly here, and fully hereafter. When man dropt out of God's creating hand, he was like the picture of God, in a cloud: O he was lovely! he was an absolute beauty, without any deformity! But, alas! he quickly was perverted, and his beauty defaced. Now, this purity retrieves our original beauty.

3. The excellency of it cannot but appear in this, that it is the design of the whole *Trinity*, in all their great actions.—It is the design of God the *Father* in electing a set of people, that they might be holy; *He hath chosen us in him, that we should be holy*, Eph. i. 4.—It was the design of *Christ* in dying, that he might *purify to himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works*, Tit. ii. 14. It was not merely to pardon, but to purify: pardon only keeps us from hell; but purity makes us like God himself, and fit for heaven.—It is the design of the *Holy Ghost* to purify: and why is he called the *Holy Ghost*? Not only because he is essentially holy; for, indeed, the Father and the Son are the same holy Spirit with him; but because of his function and operation, by the divine œconomy; it being his work to make a holy world, a pure world.

4. It is excellent, in regard it is a *distinguishing character* of the Christian religion, from all others. What is Mahometanism, but a mixture of distracted fancies, and erroneous pollutions? The Pagan religion is nothing but a pollution; their gods are brought in as murderers and liars. Piety and purity is the distinguishing character of the Christian religion, and the great design of it; *Let every one that nameth the name of Christ depart from iniquity*, 2 Tim. ii. 19. Their name should be, *Holiness to the Lord*.

5. It is excellent, in regard it is the *beauty* of the rational creature. We are called to worship him in the *beauty of holiness*, Psalm xxix. 2. This is a beauty that makes a man out-shine the sun in splendor. Impurity

is the greatest deformity. I have read of an old woman, who, seeing her deformity in a glass, did run mad. O Sirs! if God should show us our deformity, in the glass of the law, it were enough to make us run distracted, if there was no discovery of a fountain, for purification and washing.

6. It is excellent, in regard that it is the *real glory* and *honour* of a man that hath it; and it is *sin* that is a man's shame and dishonour. Naaman was general of the king's army, a man of great favour with his prince, a man of great honour and respect, a mighty man of valour: but he was a leper; this, *but he was a leper*, was a cloud upon all his glory, and a nail upon all his honour. So to say, There is a wise man, but he is unholy; there is a great man, but he is unholy; there is a good-natured man, a learned man, but he is a stranger to gospel purity: this is a cloud of darkness upon all his other excellencies. Whereas purity and piety, in a gospel sense, is the real glory and honour of a man: *Righteousness exalts a nation*, saith Solomon; *but sin is a reproach to any people*, Prov. xiv. 14. Purity exalts a man, exalts a people. God's holiness is his glory, Deut. xxvi. 18, 19. and much more must it be so to man. Yea, it is not only an honour to the man himself, that is indued with it; but it makes the man an honour to those that are concerned in him. The purity and piety of the father, is an ornament to the child: when it can be said, There is the child of a godly man; it is the child's honour: and the purity and piety of the child is also an ornament and honour to the parent. So was Abraham to Isaac, and Isaac to Abraham. Solomon calls a good and virtuous wife a *crown to her husband*; and so is a godly husband a crown of honour to the wife. Such persons are a crown and honour to the families where they reside; yea, to the place where they are born and bred: *Of Zion it shall be said, This man and that man was born there*, Psalm lxxxvii. 5.

7. It is excellent, in respect of its *gainfulness*, or the advantages accruing to it. True riches are to be had this way: *Godliness is great gain*, 1 Tim. vi. 6 *It is profitable in all things, having the promise of the life that now*

is, and of that which is to come, chap. iv. 8. It hath the promise of all things annexed to it: not as a promise of life that was made to works and doing, in the covenant of works; beware of that thought; for now, in the covenant of grace, all the promises are thus annexed only to Christ, and his obedience to the death, his perfect righteousness, and to the believer only in and through him, and through this obedience of his. The annexing of the promise to our works and obedience, as in themselves considered, as it is to turn the covenant of grace into a covenant of works; so, it is like to be the ruining error of many in our day, and even of tall cedars in our Lebanon, that are like to fall into the horrible pit of an old-covenant religion, notwithstanding of a new-covenant profession: but the promise is annexed to godliness thus, *viz.* as it is an evidence of union to Christ, and participation of his righteousness, in whom, and through which righteousness, *All the promises are Yea and Amen.* And now, what gain, what profit is here? It hath thus the promise of all things, temporal and eternal, Prov. xxii. 4. Profit is a bait that all bite at; it is the great god of the world, that competes with the true God, for a place in the heart and affections of men, in opposition to the first and great command, *Thou shalt have no other God before me.* But here is profit, infinitely beyond the world: it is present gain; it is the best, the true gain.

8. It is excellent, in regard of its *pleasantness*; here is pleasure, as well as honour and profit; which three are usually called the world's trinity. What pleasure is there to be had in the way of purity? Why, *wisdom's ways are pleasantness, and all her paths are peace*, Prov. iii. 17. This made David chuse rather to be a *door-keeper in the house of God, than to dwell in the tents of wickedness*; and to value a *day in his courts better than a thousand elsewhere*, Psalm lxxxiv. 10. It is true, many never tasted the sweetness that is in God's way; and hence they weary of means and ordinances: but they that taste the same, they find that *the work of righteousness is peace*; and the effect of *righteousness, quietness and assurance for ever*, Isa. xxxii. 17. And it is not only  
pleasant

pleasant to all that know it, but hath such a perfume and favour, that it is most pleasant and delightful to all that come near it. We have a bright example of this in the primitive Christians, Acts ii. 46, 47. *And they continued daily with one accord in the temple, and breaking bread from house to house, did eat their bread with gladness and singleness of heart, praising God, and having favour with all the people.* What was it that recommended them to the favour of all the people? It was the exercise of their graces, by reason of the Lord's presence with them. A pure conversation is a gaining thing; hence the apostle speaks of being *win by a holy conversation*, 1 Pet. iii. 1. We read of a pure virgin, Cicerilia, by her holy deportment at her Martyrdom, that she was the mean of converting four hundred to Christ.

9. It is excellent, in regard of its *antiquity*. Purity was the first suit that ever was upon man's back; he being created after the image of God. Sin is of a latter edition than sanctity: it is but an upstart. Sanctity is the first-born; *Ask for the old path*, Jer. vi. 16. Many boast of antiquity for the defence of their ceremonies and superstition: where was your religion, say the Papists, before Luther and Calvin? Why, it was even in the Bible, as well as among the church visible. But, what though men should pretend to the greatest antiquity that it is possible for sinful and superstitious customs to pretend to, let us hold by scripture antiquity. It will not justify sin, that it is as old as the devil: but purity and holiness is of an older date than the devil himself; he was a holy angel before he was an unholy angel.

10. It is excellent, in regard that it is the *excellency* of all other excellencies: it is the excellency of all the divine perfections, that they are holy. The angels that knew well what is the top of their excellency, discover this in their threefold repetition, *Holy, holy, holy*, Isa. vi. 3. It is the excellency of all accomplishments among men. Let a man have never so much excellency, birth and breeding, wit and wealth, honour and grandeur, learning and literature, if this be want-

ing,

ing, there is no true excellency therein. In a word, *Without holiness no man shall see God*, Heb. xii. 14. *Blessed are the pure in heart: for they shall see God*, Matth. v. 8.—So much for a short hint at the excellency of this purity.



## S E R M O N X.

PROV. xxx. 12.

*There is a generation that are pure in their own eyes; and yet is not washed from their filthiness.*

[The third Sermon on this text.]

**I**T is a sad sentence when God passes it upon any; *He that is filthy, let him be filthy still; he that is unjust, let him be unjust still*, Rev. xii. 11. *Ephraim is joined to his idols, let him alone*, Hof. iv. 17. O how sad is it when God says, concerning such a person, *Let him alone!* Ministers and ordinances, *Let him alone*; Word and Spirit, *Let him alone*: let no word that is preached do him good; let no threatening of the word awaken him; let no promise of the word allure him; let no precept of the word draw him: let him continue hardened against all that can be said from the word; *Let him alone*; let him live and die under the power and guilt of sin, under the wrath and curse of God: he is a filthy man, and she is a filthy woman, and let them be filthy still. Oh! dreadful sentence! And yet it seems to be passed against the generality of people in our day; and yet few or none touched with it: let us think on it in sad earnest; for, as my text saith, *There is a generation that are pure in their own eyes, and yet is not washed from their filthiness.*

We have finished what we designed on the doctrinal part of the second observation we deduced from the words, by enquiring into the nature, mentioning some

of the qualities, evincing the necessity, and pointing out the excellency of purity. We now proceed,

V. To the *fifth* thing proposed, *viz.* The application of the subject. This we shall essay in several uses.

1<sup>st</sup>, Let us improve this doctrine for *information*. Is it so, as has been said, *That purity is an excellent thing, and of absolute necessity to denominate a true saint?* Then,

I. Hence see the difference between *justification* and *sanctification*. Sanctification, or purity, is necessary and excellent, in all the respects that I have formerly named: but yet it is not necessary for *justification*, so as to be the *ground* thereof. It is necessary to be the *evidence* of justification; but not the *ground* thereof: the ground of justification is only Christ's righteousness. Many are utterly bemisted in this point; they confound justification with sanctification. Though, indeed, they be as inseparable as head and body to a living man, yet there can be nothing more different. They are most distinct. (1.) Justification comes from the *merit* of Christ; sanctification comes from the *Spirit* of Christ. (2.) Justification makes a *relative* change, by bringing us from enemies to friends, from condemnation to absolution; sanctification makes a *real* change, by healing our inward maladies and plagues. (3.) Justification gives us a *title* to heaven; sanctification gives us a *meetness* for heaven. (4.) Justification takes away the *guilt* of sin; sanctification takes away the *filth*, and *power*, and *pollution* of sin. (5.) Justification is by a righteousness *without* us; sanctification is by a righteousness *within* us. (6.) In justification there is the *imputation* of Christ's righteousness and sanctification; but in sanctification there is the *implantation* of grace, and something subjectively imparted; not imputed to us, but wrought in us by the Holy Ghost. (7.) Justification is but *one act* and once acted; sanctification is a continual action, or a progressive work. (8.) Justification is *perfect* and *absolute*; sanctification is *imperfect*, and but begun. And hence, (9.) Justification is *equal*, and alike in all believers; no man is more justified than another: sanctification is *unequal*, in some more, and in some less, according

according to the measure of the gift of Christ: justification is perfect the first moment; sanctification is never perfect till a man die. (10.) In justification we are *passive*, and do nothing; but in sanctification we are *active*; for, being acted, we act; being moved, we move and do work, being set on work by the Spirit of God: is there any thing more distinct than these two? (11.) Justification answers the *law*, as a *covenant*; sanctification answers it as a *rule*. (12.) Justification makes a man *accepted*; sanctification makes a man *acceptable*; as we formerly observed on the third general head of the doctrine.\*

2. Hence see, that there is no justification by *the deeds of the law*. Why? because, though this purity and conformity to the law, be thus necessary and excellent for denominating a *saint*, and evidencing of *justification*; yet it is *imperfect* in time, and so cannot be the *matter* and *ground* of justification: no righteousness, but a perfect one, can justify us before God. Do any of the saints reckon their purity and piety to be their righteousness before God? No, by no means: David trembles at the thoughts of this; and he deprecates it with abhorrence: *O Lord, enter not into judgment with thy servant: for in thy sight shall no man living be justified*, Psal. cxliii. 2. Purity may justify us before men; but we cannot appear before an infinitely holy God, without a perfect holiness; nor before an infinitely just God, without a complete satisfaction: and these are only to be had in Christ. For, when our purity and righteousness is laid in the balance of God's holy law, MENE TEKEL is written on it; it is *found wanting*: we are but *unprofitable servants*; and *our righteousness is as filthy rags, a menstrous cloath*. If any poor deluded soul be expecting that God will justify him, and accept of him, and shew favour to him, because he does as well as he can, and because he performeth this and the other good duty, and hath a good heart to God, meaneth well, and the like; it is evident the

\* The reader may see this point of doctrine, viz. the difference between justification and sanctification, further illustrated, Vol II. p. 35, 36; and their difference still more copiously held forth, and their *harmony* pointed out in a great many instances, Gospel Sonnets, Part VI. Chap. iii. Sect. 1, 2.

man knoweth not himself, that he knoweth not the purity of God's holy law, and the impurity of his own heart, otherwise he would fear to think of standing upon that ground before God.

3. Hence see the necessity of a *law-work*, in some measure and degree. No man will run to the Surety, till, by the law, he hath the knowledge of his being quite insolvent, and a bankrupt. What man will run to the fountain for cleansing, if he does not see that he is defiled and polluted. If purity be so necessary, then a law-work, discovering our impurity, is necessary also; that knowing the malady, we may apply to the remedy. †

4. Hence see the reason why God treats mankind as he doth, both with *judgment* and *mercy*. Why, the world is polluted; and God hath a mind to purify it. Why doth the Lord shine upon you with the sun of a kindly providence? It is even to melt you, that you may part with sin, and that *his goodness may lead you to repentance*. Why doth he cast you into a furnace of affliction? It is to purge away dross; and that you may come forth as gold tried in the fire. Why was the whole earth washed with a deluge? Why, it was polluted, and needed to be cleansed. And why will he again melt it with fire? Because it must be purified before it be a new earth.

5. Hence see the necessity of the *open fountain* for sin and uncleanness. The blood of the Lamb is a fountain: it is not a *rivulet*, or a *stream*, that quickly dries up; no, no: it is a *fountain*, a *never failing* fountain. It is not a fountain *sealed*: antiently, in these hot countries, when they got a fountain, they reckoned it a precious treasure, and sealed it; people had not promiscuous access to it. Yea, but here is a fountain *open*; every man, every woman is welcome to come and purify themselves at it, and bathe in it, to wash till they be whiter than the driven snow. It is not only open for the *house of David*, for the royal family; but to the *inhabitants of Jerusalem*: it is tendered to the whole

† The nature of a *law-work*, the measure and degree thereof, and how much of it is absolutely necessary, may be seen, by consulting Vol II. p. 270, 271, 272.

visible church. And it is open for *sin* and *uncleanness*; for all pollution whatever. O what need of this fountain among such poor polluted finners!

6. Hence see the reason of what is a *paradox* to many in the world, and yet what is the experience of the saints: it lets us see, I say, why some folk long so passionately for *death* sometimes; yea, would chuse rather to *die* than to *live*: why, the children of God know there is no perfect purification, but by death; and that death will purify them more than all the sermons ever they heard, than all the providences ever they were trusted with, than all the prayers they ever put up, and all the tears ever they shed. It is a mad fancy of the church of Rome, and it was an ignorant fancy of some mistaken divines, and Greek fathers, that there is a state of *purgation* between this and heaven: but we see from the Bible, that in a moment the soul, separated from the body, is made pure. The thief upon the cross, the same day that he is converted, he is glorified; *This day thou shalt be with me in Paradise*. O how will the believer, when groaning under a sense of sin, long for the day of desolation, saying, *When shall the day break, and the shadows flee away*, when there shall be no more sin, no more pollution?

2dly, This doctrine may be applied for *lamentation*, that there is such a scarcity of this necessary and excellent thing, *purity*; and such a plenitude of the contrary evil, even of all manner of *impurity*. Oh! may we not lament that there is such a famine of piety and purity, and such a fulness of impiety and profanity? I might here tell you, 1. Somewhat of the *evils* of impurity, that we should lament over. 2. Some of the *evidences* of it.

[1.] We are to acquaint you of some of the *evils* of impurity. It is a lamentable thing, that there should be so little purity, and so much impurity. For,

1. This impurity *mars all our excellency*. We lose our excellency by sin and impiety. It takes away the *peace* of a good conscience, which should be a *continual feast*: *There is no peace, saith my God, to the wicked*. It

takes

takes away *God* from us; *Your iniquities have separated between you and your God.* Is not this one of the reasons why *God* is so far from this generation? It is a filthy generation. And if our pollution take away *God* from us, should it not trouble us? Let a carnal man lose that which he makes his god, and see how he will be troubled for it: his heart will even die within him, as *Nabal's* did; and he will be much perplexed. Oh! how heavy should it be to us, that our impurity and defilement doth us such a mischief as this!

2. It *clouds all our profession.* Men may profess what they will; but if they remain defiled and impure, and if they do not fight against it, wrestle against it, profess against it, their profession is but a screen to their atheism; *They profess that they know God, but in works they deny him; being abominable and disobedient, and to every good work reprobate,* Tit. i. 16.

3. It brings on the *wrath of God*, if it be not removed; *God is angry with the wicked every day: if he turn not, he will whet his sword,* Psalm. vii. 11, 12. O Sirs, if *God* begin to fire against a sinner, or a sinful and impure people, his wrath will be insupportable. It is true, *God* stays long before he come forth with all his indignation against a polluted people: but then it is the worse, and there is the less hope of mercy when he begins to destroy; for then he will strike them dead with the next blow, and make a full end. Is not the Lord threatening to do so with this generation, whether we see it or not? When the cup of iniquity is full to the brim, be sure that the cup of wrath is full also; full of the vials of dreadful vengeance. But death, and hell, and wrath, are matters of jest and mockery to a filthy and impure generation, whose very *mind* and *conscience* are defiled: but though their consciences be seared, and their souls be sleeping in security, yet their damnation slumbereth not; for, the *abominable* shall have *part in the lake, that burneth with fire and brimstone, which is the second death,* Rev. xxi. 8. Oh! is not this matter of lamentation, that we are in such danger, by reason of the defilement and impurity of the day we live in.

But, say you, how do you prove the charge? This leads to the next particular, which was,

[2.] To mention some of the *evidences* of impurity: they, indeed, are many. May not he that runs read innumerable grounds of lamentation? What means the abominable whoredom, adultery, uncleanness, drunkenness, and all manner of wickedness; swearing, lying, cheating, stealing, Sabbath-breaking, contempt of the word and ordinances, that take place? Do not they all manifest, that the generation is not washed from their filthiness? Is not profanity, impiety, and immorality, become open, avowed, and professed, and shameless?—But I shall close at the time, by offering only these three general evidences of want of purity, that we may see matter of lamentation here.

1. The first evidence is in the impurity of our *affections*. Are they not carnal and impure? Surely where a man's treasure is, there will his heart be also. What are your morning thoughts, and daily meditations? Whether are they conversant about earthly or heavenly things? It is indeed matter of exercise to a child of God, that he finds his affections carnal, and earthly, and vain: but the impure man lets the devil, and the world, and a thousands lusts, run away with his affections all the day, and all the week, and all the year; and he hath never a sore and grieved heart for it.

2. Another evidence is, the impurity of our *speeches*, which are the fruits of the affections: for, *Out of the abundance of the heart, the mouth speaketh*, saith Christ: and, *A good man, out of the good treasure of the heart, bringeth forth good things; and an evil man, out of the evil treasure of his heart, bringeth forth evil things*, *Matth. xii. 34, 5*. When the heart is full of any thing, it will be ready to utter itself: as if you jog a full vessel it will run over; so the heart that is full of the world, will run over the lips, and be always speaking of that; or, if an impure man play the hypocrite, and vent his hypocrisy in some good speech, yet he is out of his element; it is not his natural dialect, or easy to him to employ his tongue for God. It is true, the godly may  
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sometimes have their tongue tacked, as it were, to the roof of their mouth; but it is not always so.

3. The next evidence is the impurity of our *actions*. How do you act towards earthly things, and heavenly things? What pains are you at about earthly things? And how little pains are you at about heavenly and spiritual things? Is not that an evidence of carnality and impurity?—How do you act with reference to *sin* and *duty*? How little care do you take to avoid sin yourselves, or reprove it in others? And how little care do you take to perform the duties of religion, whether secret or social?—How do you act with regard to *God* and *yourselves*? How much time do you take for yourselves and your own things? And how little time do you allot for God and the things of God? Doth not this evidence your impurity?—How do you act towards the *world* and *religion*, when they come into competition? The world saith, there is a business must be done; God saith, there is a business must be done: they interfere; the one of them must be neglected; well, the man lets God go, lets religion go, rather than his dear worldly affairs. This discovers impurity.—How do you act with reference to the *word*? The impure heart doth not relish the purity of the word, or the things that are of God: for, *he that is of the flesh, savours the things of the flesh; but he that is of the Spirit, savours the things of the Spirit*. Now, when you hear the word, do you favour nothing but earthly and carnal things? Why, the vain man will pick out the vanity in a sermon: if he can catch at any word, that will feed his vain mind, he lays hold upon that: the curious man will notice the curiosity that is in it, and relish that; he that is learned will observe the learning in it, and applaud that: but he that is spiritual, will find out the things that are spiritual, is well pleased with, and feeds upon them. See 1 Cor. ii. 6.—In a word, how do you act with respect to *conscience* and *interest*? When the keeping of a good conscience and worldly interest come to be in competition, by our way of acting then, we may know who is our master, God or the world; for, till then, we know not who is our master: but when

conscience commands one thing, and the world another, so that now the world and religion go not hand in hand, here is the trial of a pure heart. As a dog follows two men so long as they go together, and you know not who is the dog's master, of them two: but let them come to a parting road, and one go one way, and another go another way, then shall we know which of them owes the dog. Why, Sirs, sometimes religion and the world go hand in hand: while a man may have the world, and a religious profession too; while it is so we cannot know who is the man's master, whether God or the world: but stay till the man come to a parting road; God calls him this way, and the world calls him that way: why, if God be his master he follows religion, and lets the world go; if the world be his master, then he follows the world, and the lusts thereof, and lets God, and conscience, and religion go.

Oh! Is it not very lamentable that there are so many evidences of want of purity, that necessary excellent thing! And even among the children of God, O how little purity! Are they not fallen from their first love? Fallen from the heaven that sometimes they have been in, to the very centre of the earth? How far art thou grown earthly minded? How doth this declining come upon you by degrees, or ever you are aware? Like Nebuchadnezzar's image, whose head was of gold, the arms and breast of silver, the thighs of brass, the legs of iron, and the feet of clay; so it is with many declining Christians in our day; they have had a golden head, and begun with a golden age, but now they are come down to the clay feet. How heavenly-minded have you once been? but now, how earthly-minded art thou? How pleasant were duties and ordinances formerly, perhaps? But now, how tedious, wearisome, and irksome? How zealous have you been for God's glory, and against all sin? But now, how cold and lukewarm?—O sinner, see the necessity of more purification, and deliverance from that consumption of grace, and decay of purity, that is taking place in you: and cry to God to send the Holy Ghost, whose office and  
function

function it is to sanctify, wash, and cleanse you.—Lament the impurity of the day, and your own impurity; and lay your soul at the side of the purifying fountain, and in the way of purifying means, looking to the Lord to bless the means to you.

There are two things relating to this subject, that the generality of people are very great strangers to. The one is the *sin* of their *nature*; and the other is, the *nature* of their *sin*; and yet these two things should be much laid to heart by us all; namely, the sin of our nature, that we carry a dead corpse, and a body of sin and death about with us; and the nature of our sin; that it is a transgression of, and disconformity to the law of God. Though it be a misery to have a sinful heart, yet it is a mercy to see it to be so: For, conviction is the first step to conversion. And though there be many, as to their state, vile and filthy enough to be damned; yet there are few, as to their sense and conviction, vile and filthy enough to be saved: nay, they are vile in God's eye; and yet pure in their own. *There is a generation that are pure in their own eyes; and yet are not washed from their filthiness.*

3dly, The next use we shall make of the doctrine, shall be for *reproof* and *conviction*. This doctrine reproves all manner of *impurity*, *impiety*, and *unholiness*, that stands opposite to this purity and holiness, whereof I have shewed the necessity and excellency. It reproves all that filthiness that is opposed to this cleanness. And here is a large field, a vast theme: we know not well where to begin, or where to end; there are so many pollutions, and so much filthiness of flesh and Spirit to be reprov'd. We might here go through all the ten commands, and show how manifold sins and impurities are reprov'd, in opposition to every one of them. Oh! that God himself would fasten a reproof and conviction of sin upon our hearts and consciences, for carrying home this use the more closely, both upon the wicked, that are under the power, and upon the godly, that may be under the prevalency of sin and impurity. I shall, on this topic, 1. Produce some *kinds* of impurity

urity and filthiness, that we should all take with, and be convinced of. 2. Produce some *witnesses* for proving either the total or partial want of purity and holiness; that the crime being proven, we may take with it, and condemn ourselves.

[1.] I would tell you some *sorts* and *kinds* of impurity and filthiness, that we should all take with, and be convinced of. There are especially these three sorts. 1. The impurity and sin of our *nature*. 2. The impurity and filthiness of our *hearts* and *thoughts*. 3. The impurity and filthiness of our *life* and *practise*, especially living under the gospel.

(1.) As for the pollution of our *nature*. This, it is evident, many never thought of, never were convinced of, never challenged themselves for; and yet it is a great predominate root-sin: and if it be not removed we are filthy still. Now, in order to fasten a conviction of the greatness of this pollution of our nature, consider the greatness of it in these particulars.

1. That when the leprosy and contagion is *universal* and *over-spreading*, then it must be great: but so it is here; the pollution, and defilement, and sin of our nature, is an universal leprosy, it over-spreads all our faculties; our understanding, will, affections, reason, conscience, memory, and all are defiled; become altogether filthy: we, being *conceived in sin*, and *brought forth in iniquity*, are nothing by nature, but a *body of sin and death*.

2. When the leprosy and contagion is so great, in an house, that nothing will help against it, but the *pulling down* of the house; then the leprosy must be very great: but so it is here, the sin of our nature is such, that nothing will cure it, but the pulling down of the house. Some think to mend the house by education: but all the lime and mortar of acquired parts and accomplishments will not do, unless the nature be renewed by regeneration: and even after regenerated, his leprosy breaking out, nothing will wholly remove it, but death's pulling down the house intirely.

3. Consider, that sin which is most *unwearied*, and which a man is most *unwearied* in the *pursuit* of, that must

must needs be very great: but such is the sin of our nature, it is most unwearied, as the fountain is unwearied in sending up water. A man may be wearied in drawing up water out of the fountain; but the fountain is not wearied in bullering up water: so, a man may be wearied in sinful actions; but sinful nature is never weary. A man may be wearied with looking to some particular object; but his eye is never wearied readily with seeing and looking; because it is natural for the eye to see: so, a man may be wearied with some particular sin; but the natural man is never weary with sinning, because, it is so natural for him to sin.

4. Consider, that this sin that is the *ground* of all our relapses and returns to sin, must needs be very great. Now, what is the ground of all our relapses and returns to sin, after all our repentance and reformation? Even our *nature*, or the *sin* of our nature. Suppose water be heated and warmed, it cools again; heat it again, and it cools again; why? Because coldness is its nature: and so, why do men return again and again to sin, after all their repentance and reformation? why? It is their nature.

5. That sin that is least *lamented*, and whereby our other sins are most excused, must be a great sin. Now, of all sins, the sin of our nature is least lamented; and thereby our other sins are most excused. Bear with me, for it is my nature; I am passionate, but it is my nature; I am so and so disposed, but it is my nature: men excuse themselves by it; and hence it is not lamented, it is not mourned over.

6. That pollution that is most *predominant*, must be a great pollution: now, the sin of the nature is the pollution that is most predominant. Many marks have been assigned of the predominant sin; and some actual sin may reign above other sins. But the sin of the nature is the most predominant sin: it is the *sin* that *reigns unto death*, Rom. v. 21.—O then take home the conviction of this sin; and seek to have it broken in the power of it.

(2.) The impurity and pollution of our *hearts* and *thoughts* is what we are to take with, and be convinced

of. Alas! how little is the impurity of the heart bewailed! Many think their thoughts are free: but before God they are not free; but bound to obedience to his law, who *searches the heart and tries the reins, to give every man according to his ways, and according to the fruit of his doings*; and even according to the doing of his heart: for the thoughts are the deeds of the heart; and it is, indeed, *deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked*, Jer. xvii. 9, 10. Now, the sin and pollution of the heart is great, if you consider these following particulars.

1. The sin that is most *incureable*, is a great sin: but the sin of the heart is a most incureable sin. As a secret, hidden wound within the body, or a disease within the bowels, is the most incureable: And such are the sins of our thoughts, and the plagues of our hearts. We need, therefore, to know the plague of our hearts, and to be convinced of it.

2. The sin that is a *parent* to other sins, must needs be very great: now, sinful thoughts are the parents of sinful actions, both in the godly and ungodly.—In the godly: as in the case of Abraham, Gen. xx. 11, 12. *I thought the fear of God was not in this place*; and therefore I said, *She is my sister*. She was indeed his sister; and he lyed not in saying so: but he dissembled, and hid the truth, using an unworthy shift for his preservation. And where began this evil, but in a sinful thought? I THOUGHT *that the fear of God had not been in this place*.—In the ungodly, it is so likewise; Psal. l. 21. *Thou thoughtest that I was altogether such an one as thyself*. The wicked steal and lye, and drink drunk, and commit adultery, and deceive, and slander others. And how are they led into all this, but by thoughts? *Thou thoughtest that I was altogether such an one as thyself*.

3. By sinful thoughts our formerly committed sins, that were dead, are *revived* again, and have a resurrection by our bosom ones; by our contemplating the same with delight. As the witch at Endor called up Samuel that was dead; so, a delightful thought calls up a sinful action, that was dead before. Hereby our sins,  
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that were in a manner dead before, are revived, and have a resurrection.

4. By sinful thoughts a man may sin that sin, in effect, which he never did *commit* in act; and so the Lord may punish him for it. As the Lord said to David in another case; *Because it was in thine heart to build me an house, I will build thy house.* So saith God to a man, in a way of punishment; because it was in thine heart to do this evil, though thou didst it not, I will punish thee for it. By the sins of our hearts and thoughts, a man may sin that sin, in effect, which he never did commit in act. Christ reckons the adulterous thought, adultery; the malicious thought, murder. Alas! how will the day of judgment give other views of sin than now we have, when the whorish thoughts will be judged whoredom; and the adulterous intention, adultery; and the malicious thoughts, murder, though it was never actually committed!

5. By sinful thoughts, a man doth *repent* of his repentance. A man sins, and afterwards is sorrowful for and repents thereof; and then after his repentance, he thinks on his sin with delight. What is this but to repent of his repentance? As by your repentance, you are sorrowful for your sin; so, by musing on your sin, with delight, you repent of your repentance: now, is it not a great evil for a man to repent that he repented?

6. That filthy mud, that cannot be *searched* to the bottom; that deep mystery of iniquity, that cannot be founded, it is so deep, must be very great: and so it is with the sin of the heart; *It is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked, who can know it?* Jer. xvii. 9. In a word, *Out of the heart proceedeth all manner of evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, &c.* Matth. xv. 18, 19.

(3.) The impurity and pollution of our *lives* and *practices*, especially, under the gospel, is what we are to take with, and be convinced of. And sins under the gospel, are great sins. Why?

1. Sins under the gospel, are sins against the *remedy*: and of all sins, sins against the remedy are the greatest. The great remedy against sin, is the *gospel* of the grace

of God; the good news of a crucified Christ, a Saviour, whose name is Jesus, because *he saves his people from their sin*. The *promises* are the remedy also: and therefore, to sin under the gospel, is to sin against the remedy; yea, it is a sinning against the greatest obligations of mercy and grace that are offered: and so, by our sinning against these, we engage the very mercy and grace of God, our greatest friends, to become our greatest adversaries.

2. The more *repugnancy* there is between the sin and the sinner, the greater is the sin: even as it is worse for a judge to be unjust, than another man. Now, there is here a great repugnancy between the gospel, and the man that sinneth under the gospel; for he professes the contrary.

3. Sin under the gospel, is the most hurtful and *mischievous*, both to ourselves and others. To *ourselves*: as poison that is taken in sack, or something that is warm, is the most venomous; so, sin under the gospel is the deadliest poison: why? because it is warmed with gospel heat. And to *others* it is hurtful; because they are the more hardened thereby.

4. Sin under the gospel is most *deceitful*, having specious pretences and defences; and so it is the worse. A man under the gospel hath readily many shifts for his sins; many distinctions to palliate his sin; much knowledge to cover his sin. And by this knowledge, perhaps, he is able to defend his sin, by many distinctions: as, that it is a sin of infirmity; it is an occasion for grace and mercy to abound; and many such ways may grace be abused to the encouraging of sin. Now, those bred under the gospel, are able to defend themselves by knowledge fetched from the gospel; therefore they are the worst.

5. Sins under the gospel throw *contempt* upon the great things of God: even the glory of God, the grace of God, offered in the gospel. And how great is that sin that casts contempt upon the greatest love, the richest mercy, the sweetest offers, and upon the great salvation!

6. Sin under the gospel is the most *dangerous* sin; and

and therefore it is great. *How shall we escape, if we neglect so great salvation?* Heb. ii. 3. He that sinneth under the gospel, cannot sin at so cheap a rate as others though he sins the very same sins that others commit, who are not under the gospel. Why? *He that knoweth his master's will, and doth it not, shall be beaten with many stripes.*— O Sirs, be convinced of these sins, and the evil of them: the sin of your nature, the sin of your heart, and the sin of your way under the gospel; for they are great sins and impurities.

[2.] I would produce some *witnesses*, for proving of the great want of purity, whether total or partial. Many witnesses may be brought in to prove the charge.

1. The first witness is the *power* and *prevalency* of sin. Where sin is up, holiness is down. Are sins and corruptions as many and as strong with you, as they were ten, twenty, or thirty years ago, notwithstanding of all the means you have enjoyed, and sermons you have heard, and engagements you have made? The power of sin doth witness and evidence either the want or weakness of purity.

3. The third witness is the easy and frequent falling before *temptation* and *motions* to sin. When temptation touches, it takes. No sooner are you tempted than you are conquered. Does not this discover the want of purity; and that it is either wholly wanting, or at a low ebb? Those that were eminent in holiness, in scripture, were eminent in resisting temptation; as Joseph, Daniel, and others. When a man needs little, or has no temptation to lead him to sin, it witnesseth against him, that he is impure.

4. The fourth witness is *fears* and *faintings* in a day of adversity; *If thou faint in the day of adversity, thy strength is small*, Prov. xxiv. 16. Do you fret under affliction, or faint under adversity? That is an evidence of the want of purity, and the weakness of grace.

5. The next witness is *barrenness* and *soul-leanness*; Isa. xxiv. 16. *I said, My leanness, my leanness; wo unto me!* Look to them that have my grace, and see what poor and lean graces they have: how little faith, how little love, how little zeal, how little repentance, how little

little knowledge; how much unbelief, how much ignorance, how much untenderness in their walk, how much neglect of duty, how much of a legal spirit in duty, &c.; how much laxness of principle, and levity of spirit; how much pride of duty, how much pride of preaching, pride of praying; how much apostasy, unsteadfastness, and unconstancy: the goodness of many is like the *morning cloud, and early dew, that passeth away.*

6. Another witness is *indifferency*. The great indifferency that is among many professed Christians, shews their want of purity: they are indifferent whom, and what they hear; indifferent whether they perform duty or not; whether they attend ordinances or not: *Galio cared for none of those things.* Surely, where there is much indifferency, there is little holiness, little purity.

7. The seventh witness is *gross immortality*. And here, will not the gross abominations of the day and generation, and of the congregation witness against them, that they are not washen from their filthiness?—Is the drunkard washen from his drunkenness? Is the whoremonger washen from his whoredom? Is the adulterer washen from his adulteries? Is the malicious man washen from his malice?—Are not many become shameless in sinning, when the Lord is calling for mourning? *And in that day did the Lord God of hosts call to weeping and to mourning, and to baldness, and to girding with sackcloth; and, behold, joy and gladness, slaying oxen, and killing sheep, eating flesh, and drinking wine; let us eat and drink for to-morrow we shall die,* Isa. xxii. 12, 13. There were a pack that made a jest of dying, and made a mock of a future state: *Let us eat and drink, for to-morrow we must die:* if we must have a short life, let us have a merry one. Here is atheism rampant; denial of a future state lying at the root of their brutish sensuality.—Many discover their gross immorality by *mock confession*: like the French king that carried a crucifix in his hat; and when he had done any thing amiss he would kiss that, as a sufficient atonement. Many who call themselves Christians, when they have committed any gross sin, they confess it, with a *God forgive me*; returning with  
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the dog to the vomit.—They evidence their immorality by their *unreproveableness*; as is manifest from their carriage to them that admonish them: do they count them their best friends? Nay, their heart rises and rages against them. How stand they affected towards the word, when it reproves them, and rubs upon their lusts, and crosses their delights? They count it enmity and folly.—They evidence their gross immorality by their *filthy communications*, and *filthy conversations*, Col. iii. 8. 2 Pet. ii. 7.

8. The eighth witness is *carelessness* about, and *contempt* of the means of purity. Doth the neglect of the means of purity witness against you? For example, *prayer* is a mean; secret prayer, social prayer, family prayer, fellowship prayer: do you live in the neglect of these? Yea: then doth not this witness your impurity?—The *word* is a mean; hearing the word attentively, reading the word diligently, hiding the word in your heart carefully, like David; *Thy word have I hid in my heart, that I might not sin against thee*. Now, what diligent use do you make of the word? Are you careless in hearing, especially on week-days, notwithstanding of convenient opportunity? Are you careless in reading the Bible from Sabbath to Sabbath? Why, the very dust of your Bibles will witness against you. I have read of one, that presented Antipater, the king of Macedon, with a book, that treated of happiness; he refused it, saying, *I am not at leisure*. Many have the book by them; yea, presented to them by Christ, that treats of everlasting happiness, but they slight the present: *I am not at leisure*, say they. They have opportunity of hearing the word opened on week-days, as well as Sabbath-days; but they are not at leisure. They have means of knowledge, diets of catechising, for clearing the same word; but they are not at leisure. They have many precious seasons of grace, seasons of prayer, seasons of duty; but they are not at leisure. They take leisure to their own work, their worldly work; yea, for idle conversation: but they have no leisure for God's work, their soul's work, eternal work.

What! are not these things so many witnesses against you, that you are impure? I might produce multitudes of

of more witnesses; but by the mouth of two or three witnesses, every truth shall be confirmed: and these witnesses that I have adduced at the time, are sufficient for proving the charge. O then, will you take with the reproof; and take home the conviction of your impurity and unholiness?

I shall close with two *advices*, in order to deliver you from this impurity that prevails.

*Advice 1.* Seek after the *knowledge* of Christ, and the *things* of Christ. Knowledge of Christ, in a saving way and manner, will strike at the root of all impurity: for, *Beholding his glory, we are changed.* And particularly, seek after the knowledge of this purity and sanctity, that I speak of, in its agreement with, and difference from justification: for, the confounding of these two, makes many legal dreams in the world. Wherein it agrees with justification, and wherein it differs, I have had occasion formerly to enlarge upon \*. They agree thus; 1. In their *efficient*; the God that justifies, is also the God that sanctifies. 2. In their *end*; they are both for the glory of God. 3. In their *subject*; the elect sinner believing: the man that is justified, is also the man that is sanctified. 4. In the *instrument*, namely, *faith*. Though in divers respects we are justified by faith, and also sanctified by faith, or purified: yet, in *justification*, faith justifies as a *passive* instrument, as a vessel receiving the water; in *sanctification*, faith sanctifies and purifies as an *active* instrument, as a root and a spring bullering up the water.—In justification, faith is a hand receiving, a receiving hand: in sanctification, it is a working hand.—Also, justification is first, in order of nature; sanctification is next: as the good tree is before the good fruit.—In justification a man is reckoned righteous; in sanctification, he is made righteous: in justification, he is declared righteous, by a judicial sentence; in sanctification, he is fashioned, and made righteous, and holy, by a spiritual change.—In justification, I have *Christ for*

\* See these points farther touched above, p. 351, 352. and Vol. II. p. 35, 36.; and their *difference* still more copiously held forth, and their *harmony* pointed out in a great many instances, in the Gospel Sonnets, Part VI. Chap. iii. Sect. 1, 2.

*the Lord my righteousness*; in sanctification, I have him for the *Lord my strength*. Our righteousness for justification is in him, as the author and worker of it: our strength for sanctification is in him, as the root and fountain of it, from whence it is communicate to us.—In Justification, he works all our works for us, and we do nothing: in sanctification, he works all our work in us; and makes us do, while he *worketh in us both to will and to do*.

*Advice 2.* Having thus been brought by the knowledge of Christ and his grace, to a renewed state, then, *purſue your ſpiritual enemies and luſts*, and be daily throwing ſtones at them, till they be killed. I allude to 1 Sam. xvii. 40. where David, in defeating Goliath, took *five ſmooth ſtones out of the brook, and caſt at him*. In alluſion to this, I will tell you of five ſtones that you ſhould daily caſt at your luſts. (1.) The ſtone of *inſtituted means*, and appointed ordinances. Is prayer a mean? Is the word a mean? Uſe theſe means in the Lord's ſtrength. (2.) The ſtone of *ſcriptural arguments*; ſuch as Joſeph's argument; *Shall I do this great wickedneſs, and ſin againſt God?* David's argument; *ſhall I do ſo and ſo? Then would I offend the generation of the righteous.* (3.) The ſtone of *gospel promiſes*: ſuch as that; *I will ſprinkle clean water upon you, and ye ſhall be clean. I will give you a new heart, and a new ſpirit, &c. Having theſe promiſes, let us cleanſe ourſelves from all filthineſs of fleſh and ſpirit.* Plead the promiſes, and cry for the grace promiſed. (4.) The ſtone of *Chriſt's mediation and prayer*; John xvii. 15, 17. *Sanctify them through thy truth; thy word is truth. While they are in the world, keep them from the evil of it.* Improve the interceſſion of Chriſt. (5.) The ſtone of *Chriſt's death and paſſion*. His crucifixion is that, in the virtue whereof ſin is crucified. Improve his death, and look for virtue to come from thence.—Look to the Lord for grace and ſkill to caſt theſe ſtones into the head of Goliath.



## S E R M O N XI.

P R O V. XXX. 12.

*There is a generation that are pure in their own eyes ; and yet is not washed from their filthiness.*

[The fourth Sermon on this text.]

CIVILITY is a very comely thing ; but if it be not attended with sanctity, it but gilds a man over, and is not true gold. A man may have civility, and civil honesty, and yet go to hell : but sanctity and purity is the beginning of heaven. The one is not above the sphere of nature ; the other is supernatural : for as the earth naturally can bring forth grass, but cannot bring forth corn, except it be plowed and sown ; even so, any man may naturally be civil, but he cannot attain to any life of grace, or true holiness, except God plow up the fallow ground of the heart, sow the seed of grace, and make it to take root down-ward, and bring forth fruit upward. Therefore, trust not to common civility and sobriety, whatever external comeliness and excellency be in it ; but rather be afraid of it, lest you mistake it for real grace : why, because the sober devil carries more to hell than the profane devil ; for the profane man, being in a dirty way to hell, he is sooner convinced of his filthiness and misery, and more readily reclaimed : but the civil man, being in a more cleanly way to hell, is so conceited with an opinion that he has grace already, that it is harder to bring him to true repentance. *There is a generation that are pure in their own eyes, and yet is not washed from their filthiness.*

It is a very sad and a very dreadful thing for people to be dreaming, that they are going to heaven, and fancying that they are in very good terms with God, and yet are in the streight road to hell, having God for  
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their enemy, and enemies to God; *Enemies in their minds by wicked works*. Yea, there are many such, that if ministers deal plainly with them, and tell them that they are enemies to God, and never had a spark of true love to him; all that we get of them is, *God forbid; we hope it is otherwise*: or else, say they, *We hope it will be otherwise, and God will have mercy on us*: and so there is no more of it, they remain hardened in their enmity, and yet hardened in a vain imagination, that all is well. O Sirs, if that be your case, will you let the word of God sink into your conscience, for conviction. *There is a generation that are pure in their own eyes; and yet is not washed from their filthiness*. I now come,

4thly, To another use of the doctrine, which shall be for *trial and examination*. Examine and try whether or not you have any share of this gospel purity: whether or not you be washed from your filthiness. It is a matter of great moment that you are called to enquire into. God calls you to *examine yourselves, and prove yourselves*: and seeing purity and holiness is the great preparative for everlasting happiness, a mistake in your search may make you miserable to all eternity. I shall here, 1. Offer some *negative characters*, pointing out those that are not washed from their filthiness. 2. Some *positive evidences* by which we may try, whether or not we be washed from our filthiness, and partake of this gospel purity, which we have held forth in the nature, necessity, and excellency thereof.

[1.] We are to offer some *negative characters*, pointing out those that are not washed from their filthiness, but are filthy still. Upon the last use, I offered several *witnesses* to be produced for testifying the impurity of the day we live in; and shall not resume what I said, but offer some things further, by which we may try how impure we are and the generation is. And, though some of the particulars I am to mention may take place, in some measure, with the godly that are washed, yet those who are under the power of these evils, the unmortified power, unlamented and unrepented dominion thereof, were never washed from their filthiness: the

text says, *There is a generation that are not washed from their filthiness*, though yet they are *pure in their own eyes*, and *self-conceited*, which is the particular sin that I reserve to be spoken to in the third and last doctrine: and therefore shall not insist upon it here. But, you see, besides this, all other sins and abominations, and impurities are included in the text; and therefore it gives us occasion to speak of all manner of sin, while it says, *There is a generation that are not washed from their filthiness*.

1. There is a generation of *atheists*, that neither fear God nor regard man: that say in their heart, *There is no God*; and vainly wish there were none. There is a generation of *deists*, which is but a second edition of atheism, whereby the providence of God is denied; and so the God of providence blasphemed: but beside the gross, contracted, and almost professed atheism of many, what a huge generation is there, that was never purged from their natural atheism! And though they would take it ill to be called atheists, are evidently and practically so, while, though they *profess to know God*, yet *in works they deny him*. Surely these are not purged from their filthiness.

2. There is a generation of *ignorant persons*, that know not God, know not religion, know not the principles of Christianity; they are grossly and stupidly ignorant, notwithstanding the means of knowledge: they are artfully ignorant, neglecting the opportunities of instruction, diets of examination, and other seasons of learning. They are ignorant of Christ, and the way of salvation through him: ignorant both of law and gospel; the covenant of works and covenant of grace. Are these washed from their filthiness? No; *It is a people of no understanding*, saith God; *therefore he that made them, will not have mercy upon them; and he that formed them will shew them no favour*. And beside the grossly ignorant, there is a generation that hath a smattering of knowledge, some notional views of gospel mysteries: but they never had the eyes of their understandings opened; the *God of this world having blinded their eyes*: *My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge*. They are  
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not washed from their filthiness; no: the ignorant person is filthby still.

3. There is a generation of mockers, that despise all things, serious and sacred. If they come to church to attend ordinances, they but slight and despise these ordinances in their hearts. If they hear a preaching, they but despise and contemn the word that they hear, and know not what it is to hear to edification. If public prayers be an offering up, they but despise the same; their eyes are roving, and they know not what it is to join in prayer with their souls. If public psalms be a singing, they despise that piece of worship, and can sit with their mouths close, when the mouths of others are opened, to sing praises to God. I have sometimes observed, with regret, how, while the congregation were professing at least, to praise God with open mouth, some will sit with such a close mouth, as if they were openly professing that they despised and contemned that heavenly exercise. They that love not to join with a congregation on earth, to praise God, how unfit are they for joining with the heavenly company, whose exercise is to praise him for ever?—There is, I say, a generation of mockers and despisers; and some that slight and despise ordinances altogether, of whom God saith, *Behold, ye despisers, wonder, and perish.* Surely these are not washed from their filthiness.

4. There is a generation of hypocrites and formalists, that surely are not washed from their filthiness, that make a fashion of reading, and hearing, and praying, and praising, and singing; and rest satisfied with the external performance of duty, and were never acquainted with the love, the power, the life of religion; that have a name to live, but are dead. *Wo to you hypocrites! for ye make clean the outside; but are not washed from your internal filthiness: you are as whited sepulchres, having a fair outside; but within are full of rottenness and putrefaction.*

5. There is a generation of legalists and moralists: they go about to establish a righteousness of their own, and will not submit to the righteousness of God. They are your pretenders to works, and holiness, and righteousness; but

but discover their want thereof, by their estrangement from, and ignorance of the righteousness of Christ. They seek heaven in a legal way: they *seek to enter in, but they shall not be able*, Luke xiii. 24. They seek salvation, but they seek it not by faith; but, *as it were, by the works of the law*. They pretend respect to the law, and yet affront it by refusing the only law-biding, law-fulfilling righteousness of Christ. They profess holiness, and *yet are not washed from their filthiness*; for they are under the law. For that word, *Sin shall not have dominion over you; for you are not under the law, but under grace*, may be read just backward, with respect to them: Sin shall have dominion over them, because they are not under grace, but under the law.

6. There is a generation of *superstitious worshippers* and *ceremony-mongers*, who will worship God in ways not enjoined in his word. A heathen Socrates would say, "God will be worshipped with that kind of worship which himself hath commanded:" and surely, those that profess themselves Christians should fear and learn. Now, I not only hear mean, all gross superstition, of whatsoever sort, but all impurity of worship. Surely they are not washed from their filthiness, who have no concern upon their hearts to stand up for the purity of religion, in its worship and ordinances, in opposition to all mixtures and corruptions whatsoever. Nothing exasperates a holy God more than this, that there should be defilements in his worship; for mixture in his worship, not only crosses his command, but impeaches his wisdom, as if we should supply the defects of his word, by our inventions: therefore, God condemns it as will-worship, saying, *Their fear toward me, or their worship of me, is taught by the precepts of men*, Isa. xxix. 13. Col. ii. 22, 23. In a word, it makes God's worship a vain worship; *In vain do they worship me, teaching for doctrine the commandments of men*, Mat. xv. 6. As mixing copper with gold debaseth the metal, it cannot pass: therefore, God giveth that awful certification, Rev. xxii. 18, 19. *For I testify unto every man that heareth the words of the prophecy of this book, If any man shall add unto these things, God shall add unto him the plagues that are written in this book: and if*

*if any man shall take away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God shall take away his part out of the book of life, and out of the holy city, and from the things which are written in this book.*

7. There is a generation of *erroneous persons*; that err in heart, and err in practice, and err in principle. Some have no principles at all, but Latitudinarian; they are any thing you please. Others are of abominable and corrupt principles, subversive of the gospel, and destructive to pure religion and undefiled. It was an old principle long ago, which is yet living, "That the doctrine of free grace, and justification by faith, without the works of the law, was an adversary to the law of Moses and to holiness." No wonder then, that some have this doctrine to defend against such a charge, when Christ himself had this ado; *I am not come to destroy the law, but to fulfil it.* It is a day of error; and to speak of all the errors that are like to be imbibed and drunk in, were a task not to be managed in a passing word, but would take much time. Pollution in principle, is a great pollution: and where the error is in fundamentals, surely the person is not washed from his filthiness.

8. There is a generation that makes no manner of *bonds of offence*: to offend the generation of the righteous, is become a common and easy thing with many professors; and yet the Lord says, *Wo to the world, because of offences! better that a mill-stone were put about his neck, and he thrown into the midst of the sea, than to offend one of those little ones. Offences must come; but wo to them by whom they come.* Surely, these that have no regard whether they offend, and lay stumbling-blocks in peoples way, or not, they seem not to be washed from their filthiness.

9. There is a generation that are drowned in *security and stupidity*, having no sense of sin or danger: though sin be eminent and danger imminent; they go on incorrigibly, in their own evil way; and live securely notwithstanding all the means of mercy, and motives of judgment, the Lord gives for their recovery. When the language of providence, and the alarms thereof cry, *Arise, O sleeper, and call upon thy God.* While the stormy

stormy tempest threaten the shipwreck of the church and state: and particularly the storm of division and animosity threatens the overthrowing the church visible; yet they sleep on, saying, All is safe. *Yet a little sleep, a little slumber, a little folding of the hands to sleep.* When security is universal, surely it is a sign we are not washed from our filthiness.

10. There is a generation of *apostates*, who *begin in the spirit, and end in the flesh*; that begin, like Nebuchadnezzar's image, with a head of gold, but end with the feet of the image, that were feet of clay. Apostasy, and backsliding, and defection are no rarity in our day, wherein the love of many waxeth cold; and the church hath left her first love; and many backslide with a perpetual backsliding; and are, it is to be feared, or will be of these who *draw back to perdition*. Concerning all such the scripture speaketh very awfully: *The backslider in heart shall be filled with his own ways. Whoso putteth his hand to God's plough, and looketh back, is not fit for the kingdom of heaven.* Surely habitual apostates, who *return with the dog to the vomit, and the sow that was washed, to the wallowing in the mire*, are not washed from their filthiness. A generation that is making defection from God, his work, cause, and interest, are not washed.

11. There is a generation of *lukewarm Laodiceans*, who are neither cold nor hot, whom God threatens to *spew out of his mouth*: having no zeal for God, no public spirit to witness faithfully for the cause and interest of Christ. Instead of this, *carnal policy*, under the false notion of *prudence* and *moderation*, doth carry many off their feet, while they follow the counsels of flesh and blood, and condemn, reproach, and discourage those who take other measures, and desire to be faithful. If any zeal for the declarative glory of God appear with this or the other person, in a day of general lukewarmness, no wonder that the particular person, who would make any appearance against the common defection, be fluted for singularity, as if they set up themselves, and would be reckoned eminent beyond all others: But calumny will never make zeal culpable, nor lukewarmness justifi-

justifiable. However, the neutralising temporizer is abominable to God; he who cares not whether the ark or dagon be set up, whether Christ or antichrist prevail: *He that is not with me is against me*, saith Christ, upon this head. I have read of Anastatius the emperor, that he was, by the hand of God, shot to death with a hot thunder-bolt, because he was lukewarm in the catholic cause, and not zealous against the Arian faction, which became so universal, that it was said, *The whole world was turned Arian*.

12. There is a generation of *profane persons*, like Esau, who, for *one morsel of meat*, sold his birth-right. Many, for a little morsel of worldly good, will sell their souls, and sell their heavenly inheritance. Many, for fear of losing any little outward inheritance, or temporal advantage in the world, will make shipwreck of faith and a good conscience. Many think they make a good bargain at a public market, (such as you have in view this week,) though they cheat their neighbour with never so many lies and falsehoods, in buying and selling, if they may but gain a little worldly advantage upon them. They will quit with their conscience, before they quit with a sixpence. Surely these are not washed from their filthiness.

But what shall I say? There would be no end of speaking to this purpose.—There is a generation that have no care of their own *souls*, nor the souls of others: they are running fast to hell; and, by their ill example, drawing their children to hell with them; their friends and neighbours to hell with them.—There is a generation of *vile whoremongers*, and *adulterers*, and *unclean persons*, that go on, without remorse or reformation; and to whom the custom of the sin hath worn out the conscience of the guilt. Most certainly they are not washed from their filthiness.—There is a generation of *drunkards* and *tipplers*, that cannot mortify the lust of drunkenness unto drunkenness: it is their right hand and right eye, which, because it cannot be cut off, or plucked out, it is like to go to hell with them. They are not washed from their filthiness.—There is a generation of horrid *swearers*, and *profaners* of the name of God,

whether by broad oaths, or minched oaths; not to insist upon the open perjury, by the abominable use and abuse of state oaths. O the perfidy and perjury of the nation! Surely the Lord hath a controversy with the inhabitants of the land, because *there is no truth, nor knowledge of God in the land; by swearing, and lying, and killing, and stealing, and committing adultery, they break out, and blood toucheth blood; therefore shall the land mourn*, Hof. iv. 1, 2, 3.—There is a generation of *liars*, who make no conscience of speaking the truth to their neighbour: *They are of their father the devil, who is the father of lies*. Are they washed from their filthiness? No: *There shall in nowise enter into the new Jerusalem any thing that defileth, or worketh abomination, or maketh a lie*.—There is a generation of *Sabbath-breakers*, to whom God's holy day is as little hallowed and sanctified as any other day: though they come to the church for the fashion; yet they do not make conscience to abstain from *thinking their own thoughts, speaking their own words, or doing their own works on the Lord's day*: No; if it were not for the custom, they would not make so much as any outward mark of distinction. Are they washed from their filthiness? No, by no means.—There is a generation of *malicious persons* and *fire-brands*, living in the fire of contention and discord: *not living in love, nor following peace with all men; but living in malice and envy, hateful and hating one another*: loving to have an ill tale to tell, and an evil report to make of one another; pursuing idle clashes, and entertaining them. Surely they are not washed from their filthiness.—There is a generation of *unjust and injurious persons*, who think nothing to build up their own worldly fortune upon the ruin of their neighbour's estate; not remembering, that which is won by theft, robbery, injustice, or oppression, is win at the peril of their souls and the curse of God. Of the same nature is injustice in judging and determining of causes, at whatsoever court, whether civil or ecclesiastic, when friendship and courtesy is preferred above justice and equity; and when the decision of judges goes not by justice, but by favour, or fraud, or bribery. Surely all such are not washed

washed from their filthiness.—There is a generation of *rotten-hearted professors*, that join in intimate society and close familiarity with stated enemies to God and religion, and monstrous swearers, profane, loose, abandoned, and malignant persons: they reckon them, perhaps, to be good fellows, and honest neighbours, and have not the least reluctance at intimate fellowship with them; and, it may be, prefer their company to that of the godly and serious. They *walk in the counsel of the ungodly*, they *stand in the way of sinners*, and *sit in the way of the scornful*, and yet would be called *professors*. But it seems plain that they are not washed from their filthiness.—There is a generation of *prayerless persons*; they bow not a knee to God in their families, and perhaps as little in their closets. The prayerless man is an impure man; he is not washed from his filthiness.—There is a generation of *proud and selfish persons*; if they pray, or bring forth any fruit, they are but empty vines that bring forth fruit to themselves. Spiritual pride and self is as great an enemy as God hath: and even pride of duties, pride of prayer, pride of preaching, pride of grace, proud desires of being applauded and thought better of than others, where it is in its reign, evidences the person is not washed from his filthiness.—In a word, there is a generation of *unregenerate persons*, which include all the Christless and graceless world, that were never convinced or converted, never drawn to Christ in a day of power. Surely all they who were never *born again*, of *water* and of the *Spirit*, whose operations are like water, who were never *saved by the washing of regeneration*, and the *renewing of the Holy Ghost*, they are not washed from their filthiness.

[2.] The next thing proposed, on this use of trial and examination, was to assign some *positive evidences* of those that are washed from their filthiness and made partakers of gospel purity. It is possible some may imagine, if all be excluded that I have named, there will certainly be few behind of the generation, that is washed from their filthiness. Indeed, I own, they are but few; for all are excluded who are under the power, reign, and dominion of any of those sins that I have been

naming. But, for the help of the few, that they may know they have something of gospel purity, and that others may further know that they have it not, and so may be humbled, and cry to the Lord for it, I shall offer but these two means, or evidences, at the time, by which it may be tried. Try this purity then, 1. By the *root* of it. 2. By the *fruit* of it.

1<sup>st</sup>, Let this purity be tried by the *root* and *spring* of it. And,

1. This gospel purity is rooted in a *divorce* from the law. This may seem a paradox to some, that purity, holiness, and conformity to the law, should be rooted in a divorce from the law: Yea, but it is a truth of the eternal God. Accordingly Paul declares of his own experience, Gal. ii. 29. *I through the law am dead to the law, that I might live unto God. No living unto God, in point of purity and sanctification, until we be dead unto and divorced from the law, in point of justification. We must renounce it as a rule of acceptance, before we improve it as a rule of obedience. We do not make it a standard of holiness, so long as we make it a condition of life: for, while we do so, we are under the law, and so under the power and dominion of sin, and strangers to the grace of God, which only doth effectually teach to deny ungodliness and worldly lusts, and to live soberly, righteously, and godly. Now, have you ever been divorced from the law, by the killing stroke of conviction, and by the mortifying stroke of humiliation? Have you been convinced of the evil of sin, the guilt of sin, the power of sin; of the righteousness of God, though he should destroy you; and of the spirituality and extent of the law, so as the commandment coming, sin hath revived and you died?*

2. This gospel purity is rooted in a *marriage union* to Christ; *Ye are dead to the law by the body of Christ, that ye might be married to another, even unto Christ, that ye may bring forth fruit unto God, Rom. vi. 4. As there can be no lawful children before marriage; so, no acceptable fruit unto God, no true purity, before marriage union to the Lord Jesus Christ, without ingraftment into this blessed vine, without whom we can do nothing.*

nothing. Now, try your purity by this root of it.—Know you nothing of a marriage *manifestation* of, and *union* to the Lord Jesus Christ, having been divorced from the law, by a work of humiliation laying you low? Have you got a discovery of Christ, in a gracious manifestation of his glory? For, *beholding his glory, we are changed into the same image, from glory to glory.*—Got you ever a view of the marriage *contract*? Did he never say to you, *I will be your God, ye shall be my people?* Did he never say, *I will betrothe thee to me for ever, in loving-kindness, in tender mercies, and in-faithfulness;* declaring that his covenant is your charter, his righteousness your garment, his Spirit your guide, his fulness your treasure, and his faithfulness your security?—Know you nothing of the marriage *proclamation*? Did the Lord never say to you such a word as that, *Come unto me, and you shall find rest to your souls,* poor, weary, and heavy laden creature? Did he never court you by the gospel, saying, as Rebekah's friends concerning Abraham's servant, with relation to Isaac, *Will you go with this man?*—Know you any thing of the marriage *consent*? *I will go with this man.* Did he ever make you willing in a day of his power?—Know you nothing of marriage *embraces*, between Christ and your soul? Hath he ever embraced you by his love, and made you to embrace him by faith?—Surely gospel purity is rooted here.

3. This gospel purity is rooted in the *inhabitation* and *operation* of the Spirit of Christ; *I will put my Spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes,* Ezek. xxxvi. 27. Try then, the Spirit is for accomplishing the forementioned effects. The Spirit maketh a clear revelation of the grace of God in the gospel. The Spirit having convinced of sin and unbelief, doth beget faith, even the faith of the word of grace, the faith of the death of Christ, the faith of the mercy of God in Christ, and the faith of the promise: and by faith the believer receives the Spirit; that is, more and more of the Spirit. In the first approach of the Spirit to the heart, when he works faith, we are purely passive; but afterward the Spirit is received: *Received ye the Spirit by the works of the law, or by the hearing of faith?* And now the Spirit dwelleth in

in the heart, as the root of all purity and holiness there; and then he works, and operates, and influences: this is the sap which comes from the root Christ. The poor soul finds, that without new breathing, new influences of the Spirit, there can be no good motions, desires, affections; this is the *well of water*, put within the believer, *springing up to everlasting life*. Hypocrites may be fed with common influences, like pools from the clouds; but believers have a living spring within them, springing up like a spring well internally, even when there are no external motives many times.

4. This gospel purity is rooted in a principle of *faith*; so we read, Acts xv. 9. that *their hearts were purified by faith*: for faith doth not only *justify* the person, but also *purify* the affections and heart of the person justified. Faith is a *working* grace, 1 Thess. i. 3. In what works it? It works thus, even working out filthy corruption. As unbelief and infidelity *pollutes* a man's heart; and therefore Paul joins the *unbelieving* and the *defiled* together, Tit. i. 15.; so also, on the contrary, it is the work of faith to *sanctify* the heart: and therefore as Paul, in the former place, joins unbelief and defilement together; so, 1 Tim. i. 5. *faith unfeigned*, and a *pure heart* are coupled together. Now, faith purifies by drawing water out of the wells of salvation: having united the person to Christ, the fountain-head, it draws vital influences from all Christ's perfections and attributes; from all his offices, from all his promises, from all his providences, from all his relations; from his names, his righteousness, his fulness, his purchase, by its frequent actings through the help of the Spirit of Christ, which is given them.

And particularly, faith improves the *death* of Christ for this purpose. By his death he hath appeased the wrath, and satisfied justice, and hath obtained the communication of God's favour, and all the fruits of it, whereof this of sanctification and purification is one. Christ, by his death, hath taken out of the way the great obstacle of our sanctification, and that is our conceiving of God as an enemy, and so being under the fear of God's wrath: for now, that Christ hath died, and this is reveal-  
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ed to us, this may beget in us kindly thoughts of God, and deliver us from our fears; and so should we understand that word, *There is mercy with thee that thou mayest be feared.* One would think if it were, there is *wrath* with thee that thou mayest be feared, they would understand it better. Why, I tell you, while people fear the Lord and his wrath, that is no holiness: for devils fear him and his wrath; yea, they *believe and tremble* at his wrath, and yet have no holiness, no purity. But, while we *fear the Lord and his goodness*, as it is, Hosea iii. 3.; while we fear him in a filial way, from the faith and belief of mercy and goodness, this is purity and holiness. Now, Christ, by his death, hath removed the great obstacle, *viz.* a slavish fear, and introduced the greatest encouragement, even the declaration of God's greatest mercy, and richest grace to poor sinners: and faith's views hereof doth encourage us to love and serve the Lord.

In a word, faith improves, and embraces, and pleads the *promise* of sanctification; such as, *I will sprinkle clean water upon you, and you shall be clean; from all your filthiness will I cleanse you: I will put my Spirit within them: I will put my fear in their heart: I will subdue their iniquities: I will save you from all your uncleanness:* All which are Yea and Amen in Christ.—Now, try your purity thus by the root of it.

2dly, Try your purity by the *fruits and effects, parts and evidences* of it; such as these following.

1. Gospel purity makes a man *love God*, because he is pure. Can you say, from the bottom of your soul, that however impure and unholy you are, yet you love God because he is a pure and holy God; a holy God that hates sin? I look upon this as a sweet evidence of one that hath the stamp of God's holiness upon his soul. A hypocrite may love God because he is good, merciful, and the like: but can he love him because he is a holy God that hates sin? No. Now, is that the language of thy soul, *Give thanks at the remembrance of his holiness?*

2. Gospel purity makes a man love the *people of God*, because they are pure. A man may love the people of God because of some other reason, and yet have no purity:

urity: but to love them because of their purity; and the more pure and holy they are, the more to love them, this is an evidence of being *passed from death to life*. Many would rather choose to be in a drunken club and cabal, than in the company of those who fear God; they are kept under restraints while with them: but the man that is washed from his filthiness, *His delights are with the saints, the excellent ones of the earth*, Psal. xvi. 3.

3. Another fruit and evidence of gospel purity is, it makes the man love the *word*, because of its purity: *Thy word is very pure; therefore thy servant loves it*, Psal. cxix. 140. The word is the mean and instrument of purity; *Now are ye clean through the word that I have spoken. Sanctify them through thy truth; thy word is truth. Of his own will begat he us with the word of truth*. Now, to love ordinances, and to love the word, for this very reason, because of its purity, is evidential of a person's being purified in part.

4. Gospel purity makes a man *hate sin*, because of its impurity, and stand at a distance from it, under that consideration. He hates sin because of its impurity, and because of its opposition to holiness: and therefore he hates *every sin*; *I hate every false way*, Psal. cxix. 104. He hates *secret*, as well as open sin; *I hate vain thoughts*, Psal. cxix. 113. He hates *little sins*, as well as great, if any can be called little, seeing there is no little God to sin against, no little hell to punish sin in. Little sins have brought on great punishments; as Lot's wife looking back to Sodom; Adam's eating the forbidden fruit; fifty thousand men of Bethshemish slain for looking curiously into the ark; and Uzzah for touching it. The saints know that the least sin cost Christ's precious blood; and therefore dare not think little of, or indulge themselves in any sin.—Further, Gospel purity leads a man to stand at a *distance* from sin. It is true, the child of God may fall into sin; but his way of sinning is like the wicked man's way of serving God. A wicked man may go to duty, he may go to his prayers; but he is only a bungler at it; he has no habit of grace, no dexterity for duty before God: so, a godly man may commit sin, and try that work sometimes; but he is a bungler at it,  
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he has lost his habit and dexterity of sinning through grace; and therefore it is said he cannot sin: *He that is born of God cannot commit sin.*

5. Gospel purity inclines a man to make *advances* in religion? he *forgets the things that are behind, and presseth forward*; he can never be pure enough: he goes from strength to strength; *The path of the just is as the shining light, that shineth more and more unto the perfect day.* It is true, there are ebbings and flowings of grace; the person may be going sometimes backward, at other times forward: but his ordinary course is like the sun; it may be under a cloud, and out of view, as if there was no sun at all; but then it breaks out from under the cloud again, and always makes farther advances in his race. So, the child of God may be under a cloud; grace may be under a cloud and disappear, as if it was no grace at all: but then it breaks out again further advanced; for, the man *grows in grace, and in the knowledge of the Lord Jesus Christ*; hath more experience of the Lord's pity and favour; more insight into the mysteries of the gospel.

6. Gospel purity makes a man *see and lament* his own impurity and unholiness: he is afflicted with his want of purity, and with his own vileness and defilement, saying, with Job, *Behold, I am vile*; and with Asaph, *So foolish was I and ignorant*; and with Abraham, *I am dust and ashes*; and with Agur, *I am more brutish than any man, and have not the understanding of a man*; and with Paul, *I am the chief of sinners.* The man is humbled under a sense of his own vileness, and of the plagues of his own heart. Tears, instead of gems and pearls, were the ornaments of David's bed, when he was fallen from his purity.

7. This purity makes a man to be afflicted even for the impurity of *others*: this was the case with David; *I beheld transgressors, and was grieved. Rivers of water run down mine eyes, because the wicked keep not thy law,* Psalm cxix. 136, 158. It had the same effect upon Jeremiah; *Oh 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!* Jer. ix. 1. *And the Lord*

said unto him, *Go through the midst of the city, through the midst of Jerusalem, and set a mark upon the fore heads of the men that sigh and cry for all the abominations that be done in the midst thereof,* Ezek. ix. 4. Why, the godly man, in other mens sins, sees the badness of his own heart: and by mourning for the sins of others, he comes to be pure, even from the sins of other men; whereas people are guilty of other mens sins, while they do not mourn for them, but rather approve of them.

8. This purity is evidenced by a conscientious and diligent use of the *means* of purity. The Lord works out, and carries on this work of sanctification; makes it go on by the means which he hath appointed us to use: and when we use his appointed means, though the effect do not presently and discernably follow and appear; yet we may conclude that the work is going on. Even as when the children of Israel were compassing the walls of Jericho seven days, and seven times upon the seventh day; some of them might possibly be disposed to say, What means our compassing the walls; they do not fall by our compassing them, or using this mean? However, every compassing of the walls was a bringing down of the walls, though they fell not till after the seventh times compassing on the seventh day, Josh. vi. Even so, the diligent use of means, in the way that the Lord hath appointed, is our indispensable duty: for, though it is not always evident, that the means hath any success, for bringing down the walls and high towers of sin; yet every compassing of the walls, at God's command, is a sign the work is going on; and at last the walls shall fall flat to the ground.

S E R M O N

## S E R M O N XII.

P R O V. XXX. 12.

*There is a generation that are pure in their own eyes ; and yet is not washed from their filthiness.*

[The fifth Sermon on this text.]

**M**ANY, by a fair profession, a false conviction, and a bastard conversion, seem half way to heaven, who yet will lodge for ever in hell. He who sits down at half-way, and rests there, will never come to the end of his journey, but is still afar off. O Sirs, it is to be feared, that the most part of you, that even come so near to Christ, in approaching to his house and ordinances ; yet you are as far from him as light is from darkness, or darkness from light : and we need not go far to prove the charge ; for, if you be not washed, you are far from God and Christ ; yea, you have no part in him : *If I wash thee not, thou hast no part in me*, said our blessed Lord to Peter. If you be not washed from the *guilt* of sin in justification, and from the *filth* of sin in sanctification, you have no part in Christ, and so are far enough from him : and this is the state, not of a few, but of a multitude ; *There is a generation that are pure in their own eyes ; and yet is not washed from their filthiness.*

Having finished the doctrinal part of the subject, discussed so much of the application, we are now prosecuting an use of trial ; but in regard we have treated the *negative* part of this use more largely than the *positive*, we shall offer some things farther upon the last of these ; not with a view so much to multiply particular marks, as for offering general rules, by which you may examine this matter. As it hath already been tried by the *root* and by the *fruit* of it ; it may be further examined

by the *parts* of it, by the *perfection* of it, by the *means*, of it, and by the *end* of it.

3dly, We proceed then, in the third place, to try this gospel purity by the *parts* of it. This purity, holiness, or sanctification is twofold, either habitual or actual.

I. There is *habitual* purity, which lies in the infusion of all the habits of grace. And this habitual holiness may be tried by these two special parts of it, *viz.* the illumination of the mind, and the renovation of the will.

(I.) There is here the *illumination of the mind*: this is a special part of purity and sanctification; *Ye have put on the new man, which is renewed in knowledge, after the image of him that created him, Col. iii. 10.* The mere natural man, that lies in his natural state, he neither doth nor can *perceive the things of God, 1 Cor. ii. 14.* Here then is purity to clear the understanding. The pure and sanctified man is *renewed in the spirit of his mind.* We are a mass of darkness by nature; *We know nothing as we ought to know.* We are blind as moles, and can give no subjection of understanding to divine revelation; nor give a full assent to the truths of God, having no subjective persuasion thereof: yea, *we know nothing as we ought to know.* Though we may have a form of knowledge, yet, *in seeing we see not,* while we want the *Spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of God.* Sin, entering into the world, hath blindfolded us all: the devil, having got the victory over us, doth even throw glamor over our eyes, or beguile us with a false deception; and we are become fools: folly is bound up in the heart of every natural man. And however some may seem to be exempted from this character, such as these who are called statesmen, and great wits, and politicians; yet, while in a natural state, their wisdom is but *foolishness* in God's sight, *1 Cor. i. 20.* The profound philosopher, and high pretender to reason, is but a fool in the sight of God: *professing themselves to be wise, they became fools.*

Now, when the Lord purifies a man, he takes this  
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poor man, who is so ignorant of God, even as blind as a mole in the things of God, and as dark as a dungeon, and makes him *light in the Lord*: the light of the gospel shines in with evidence upon the man's soul, so as he is made to give full credit to the truths of God, and to the God of truth. The high reasoning that was in his mind, against the gospel of Christ, even his vain imaginations, whereby he exalted himself against the knowledge of Christ, these are brought down by the weapons of the gospel warfare, the *sword of the Spirit*, in the hand of Christ. These reasonings that he had before are silenced: the man sees a glory in God's perfections, in the face of Jesus Christ, that he saw not before: he sees a beauty in God's dispensations, which he saw not before: he sees a majesty in God's ordinances, which he did not see before, and could not perceive: he sees a loveliness in the precepts of God; nothing whereof could be perceived before: he sees a sweetness in the promises, which he thought very little of before: he sees an excellency in the saints, whom he contemned before: he sees a reality in what is divinely revealed, which was but fancies to him before: he sees also a certainty in a life to come, and in a death and a wrath to come, which he never gave full credit to before: he knows now there is a God, whom before he only thought he knew, but was really ignorant of; he sees him to be a just and holy God, a good and gracious God, a *God in Christ reconciling the world to himself*.

Now, all sanctification and purity enters in at this door of illumination; and therefore you may try by this: for the grand difference between the faint and the hypocrite lies in this, the one is *darkness*, the other is *light in the Lord*. Let the hypocrite do what he will, profess what he will, he is still but a mass of darkness, and knows nothing of God. Whereas, let the faint, the believer, be at never such a low ebb, yet he is a person whose eyes God hath opened: though sometimes, indeed, he may be asleep, and so not actually beholding the light; yet this habitual change is wrought, the eyes of his understanding is enlightened.

(2.) Another special part of this habitual purity and sanctifi-

sanctification, is the *renovation of the will and affections*. The natural man is rebellion against the will of God; his will by no means will stoop to the will of God: and here is the work of sanctification in the will, that it makes it flexible, bends and inclines it to obedience to God's will: *He that is of God, and purified by him, he heareth God's word; and ye therefore hear them not, because ye are not of God*, John viii. 47. Man's will is totally depraved, and desperately wicked: by nature it is inclined to every thing that is bad, and averse from every thing that is good: it is the greatest enemy that God hath out of hell, and as great an enemy as he hath in hell; for, every man that hath an unrenewed will, he hath a devil in his breast. The will, unrenewed, is the very picture of Satan; the man is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be: and whatever he may pretend of kindness to God, and the people of God, yet he hates God, and every thing that hath God's image upon it.——His affections are totally vitiated, his desires being toward that which is dishonourable to God, and hurtful to himself: his delights are placed upon a thing of nought. His sorrows are especially because he cannot get his will; and his will is neither for God's glory, nor his own good. His greatest grief is because he cannot get his wicked will gratified, or his carnal affections satisfied.

But now, when the Lord purifies the man, and sanctifies him, he takes away the *heart of stone*, and gives the *heart of flesh*. This wicked will is called the heart of stone, because it is inflexible, it will neither bow nor bend; you may sooner break the man than bow him: while his corrupt will remains, there is no possibility of the man's inclining to that which is spiritually good. Now, when the will is changed, the faculty remains, but the quality is changed; the cursed quality, whereby it was wholly inclined to evil; whereby it was so inclined to wickedness, that there was no drawing the man off from his own ways; yet God takes this away in sanctification, so that now, the man is inclined to good, as before he was inclined to evil.—The *will* is now subject to the will of God, and to the law of God,  
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and made to say, *Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?* Let my will be submissive to thine; let it be as a weather-cock, to turn about with every blast of the breath of thy mouth; with every signification of thy will in the word. The man is now inclined to seek the Lord, and to serve him: yea, he hath a natural and native inclination to that which is good; and a native aversion from that which is evil, though his will be but in part renewed, and when *he would do good, evil is present with him*: there is *flesh lusting against the Spirit*, yet he is really renewed, so as it is the habitual frame and disposition of his soul, to *serve the Lord in holiness and righteousness before him all the days of his life.*—His *affections* are renewed; he now is made to desire God as the chief good; to delight in him as the only portion; to love him as his best friend; to hate sin as his greatest enemy; to be sorrowful for that more than for any other thing; to be angry at sin in himself and in others; and to be well-pleased and satisfied with the revelation and device of salvation, through grace, by the righteousness of Christ, and that *Christ should be made of God to him wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, and redemption.*

And thus you see the parts of habitual purity: this is the habit of grace, though it be not always exercised and discerned, as it is in acquired habits; *e. g.* A musician hath the habit of music, or playing melodiously, though he hath not always the instrument, or harp in his hand: so it is in infused habits; a man hath the habit of grace, habitual purity, though it be not always drawn forth into actual exercise. And therefore,

2. There is *actual* purity, by which we ought to try ourselves. And this actual purity hath these two parts, *viz.* a dying daily to sin, and a living daily to God and righteousness.

(1.) In actual purity there is a *dying daily to sin*; and that is called *mortification*: he that is *in Christ hath crucified the flesh, with the lusts and affections.* Now, this dying to sin, is when one doth daily more and more fall out of conceit with sin; when he is actually fighting against it, hating it, and endeavouring the crucifixion of it;

it; when his averſion from it is more ſtrengthened, and his inclination to it is more and more weakened. But perhaps one may ſay, *How ſhall I know true mortification?* Why, it is *universal*, oppoſing all ſin; and it levels at the very root thereof in original ſin: *O wretched man that I am! who ſhall deliver me from the body of this death?* It levels even at *ſecret ſins*, as well as open; *O cleanſe thou me from ſecret faults.* It ſtrikes at *beloved ſins*; it is a *cutting off the right-hand*, and *plucking out the right eye*. It is alſo *evangelical*, flowing from a principle of love to God in Chriſt; and acted in the virtue, and by the faith of the death and crucifixion of the Son of God: and hence a man is ſaid to be *crucified with Chriſt*, Gal. ii. 20.

(2.) A *living daily to God*, and to *righteouſneſs*, is another part of actual purity, by which we ought to try our ſanctity; and it is uſually termed *vivification*. This way of living, is when a man is ſo far alive to God, as that he is actually delighting in the Lord, and in his company more and more; deſiring to have more communion with God in Chriſt; and when the Lord's ſervice becomes ſtill more the man's recreation and element; and when not only the houſe of Saul is growing weaker and weaker, but the houſe of David is growing ſtronger and ſtronger, by the man's *growing in grace*, and in the *knowledge of the Lord and Saviour Jeſus Chriſt*, and *living by the faith of the Son of God*.—Now, in true vivification, the man not only hath life, but is lively; not only ingrafted into the true vine, but drawing ſap and virtue from the ſame; not only married to Chriſt, but bringing forth fruit to him.

Now, theſe are the parts of purity and ſanctification, by which we ſhould examine ourſelves: and, I fear, the opening thereof may diſcover the total want of purity in the moſt, and the partial want of it in the beſt of folk; even the great want that believers themſelves labour under, with reſpect to theſe things. But, however, though believers themſelves may ſee their great want hereof, yet they may be in caſe to draw a comfortable, concluſion therefrom, and it may be this, namely, 'What I hear the miniſter tell me of theſe parts of ſanctification,

tification, I know I have sometime a day understood it to my blessed experience, and therefore have good ground to expect, that I shall know more of it in the Lord's time and way; for, *he that hath begun the good work, will perfect it*; and therefore I will quietly wait his return."

4thly, Let us not only thus try our purity by the parts, but also by the *perfection* of it. I do not mean a perfection of *degrees*, which will not take place till the believer be in heaven; but the *gospel* perfection, which even takes place on earth, and by which the believer, in scripture language, is sometimes said to be a *perfect and upright man*. And this perfection of purity, I think, in general, lies in this, When a man is *pure in God's sight*. This seems to be especially pointed at in the text, as the reverse of that *self-conceited purity* therein held forth: *There is a generation that are pure in their own eyes; and yet is not washed from their filthiness*. They are pure in their own sight, but not pure in the sight of God: intimating, that the gospel-perfection of purity lies in a man's being pure in God's sight. Of this purity the apostle speaks, Col. i. 22. where Christ is said to *present his people holy, and unblameable, and unproveable in his Father's sight*.

QUEST. *What is it to be pure in God's sight, so as we may examine this purity by the gospel perfection of it?*

ANSW. I. This gospel perfection is that purity in God's sight, which implies *internal heart uprightness*, evidencing itself in *faith and love*, which can act in the *sight and presence* of God, as being the *product* of his blessed Spirit.

I call it a *heart-uprightness* or *heart-purity*, because the man that is thus pure, is not only pure outwardly, in the sight of man; but pure in heart and spirit, in the sight of God, who is a Spirit. Many pretend to holiness; but, like the Pharisees, they make clean only the outside of the plater: but the truly pious and holy soul is most careful to have the heart right with God; and solicitous how to be cleansed from *all filthiness of the spirit*, as well as the *flesh*. He indeed finds much heart impurity; but the soul of him is grieved at it, and he

most ardently desires to be cleansed; *Wash me, and I shall be clean; creat in me a clean heart.* He is exercised about the heart, crying to Heaven for more and more purity, and daily flying to the fountain opened for sin and uncleanness. They are much in secret crying for purity: and even when they win not to a secret chamber; yea, perhaps, when they are in the midst of company, they will, now and then, be darting up some stolen look to Heaven, and their hearts praying, “O for holiness! O for conformity to the Lord! O to have heart enemies destroyed, and strong corruptions broken!”

Again, I said this purity in God’s sight, evidenceth itself in *faith*; it acts in a way of believing, trusting to the faithfulness of God in the promise, and the power of God to accomplish the same; looking for help no other way but in and through our Lord Jesus Christ; receiving the word of faith, and putting to the seal that God is true; casting the burden of the soul upon the Lord by faith: also, the man believes as in the sight of God. It is not enough to be called and accounted a believer, and to reckon yourself such; but to be a believer in the sight of God, is the main business: when the person, thro’ faith, sees an excellency in Christ, so as to *count all things but loss and dung for him*: and when the poor soul can say, as in the sight of God, “Lord, thou knowest I have no other refuge to run to by thyself; and *though thou shouldest kill me, yet will I trust in thee*, for all the good things in the covenant, which is *all my salvation, and all my desire*: here will I rest, and here will I stay myself.”

Again, This purity in the sight of God evidenceth itself in *love*; and this is love in the sight of God, when a man can say before God, *The desire of my soul is to thy name*, even to the name of Christ. The man loves so, as that the name of Christ is to him as ointment poured forth: he loves so, as to long for more fellowship with God in Christ: he loves so, as wherever he sees the image of God, he loves it: they love his image that shines in his precept, in his promise, in his people. They love the Lord so as to hold him, and they do not let him go; and to such a degree, as to break their

their heart when he goes away, saying, O! ten thousand worlds cannot fill his room!—Many are the pretensions of love: O! whom should we love but sweet Christ? will some say. But all is mere flattery; they care not whether he be absent or present. They pretend love to him; but they take other things in his room. They will say, *He hideth his face*; but with all they can say also, with the whore in the Proverbs, *The husband is away, come let us take our fill of loves*. They can take pleasure in idols: they can take pleasure in others things, in the want of Christ. They are not like the blessed psalmist, who said, *I remembered God, and was troubled; I refused to be comforted*. Nay, but true love, in the sight of God, will make a man take no comfort, or satisfaction, in any thing, while the beloved is gone. And again, it makes a man have common friends and foes with him; and it makes his cause their cause: yea, it makes them more troubled at any dishonour done to him, than any affront offered to themselves. If they see Christ honoured, their heart rejoices; and if otherwise, their hearts are fore afflicted.

Further, I said on this head, that this purity acts in the *sight* and *presence* of God: the man sets God before him, acknowledging him in all his ways; desiring to do nothing without his counsel, and to do every thing by the direction and conduct of his blessed Spirit.

Finally, I affirmed, upon this head, that this purity acts in the sight and presence of God, as being the *product* of his holy Spirit. This is true purity in God's sight that is the production of his holy Spirit, in his gracious saving influences. Nothing passes current in heaven, but what is coined there, and comes out of it. The thing that you do yourself, man, woman, it wants the king's stamp upon it: *Whose superscription hath it?* It is but the product of your own heart. But that only which is the fruit of the Spirit of God, is good and pure in his sight. If you bring false coin to a king, that you have coined yourself, or if it be discovered that you have done it, you put yourself in hazard of death thereby: even so, your duties that have not the right stamp, and wherein you have not been influenced

fluenced by the Spirit and grace of God, instead of saving you, they put you in hazard of death and damnation.

2. This purity in God's sight, which is its gospel perfection, implies a man's having all the *members* of the new creature. The child new-born, if it hath all its members, it is a perfect child, though it is far from being perfect in all respects; it is far from having perfect wit, perfect strength, perfect knowledge, perfect prudence, &c.: but it is perfect, in respect that it hath all the needful parts of body. So this gospel-perfection of purity, is, when a man hath all the habits of grace; and when faith, love, hope, humility, zeal, and all the fruits of the Spirit are planted in the soul: when all these members, which make up the new man, are perfect, then is a man pure in the sight of God. A man may have a great deal of fair outward shew before the world, and yet have not one of these members of the new creature at all; not one fruit of the Spirit planted in the soul; not one habit of grace: he acts from a natural conscience, and from a common conviction of sin and duty; and though it be by common grace that he is enabled to do any thing, yet the strength of nature is still more than any strength of grace received, and so it turns all to itself. As when you cast clean water into a puddle, it becomes all puddle: so here, all is turned to self; and the man acts from self as his principle, and for self as his end. The believer is perfect in this respect, as to the perfection of parts, in opposition to the unbeliever. And some believers, in this respect, are more perfect than others, even as to the perfection of parts: for, though all believers have the habit of all graces, yet it may be such, as they have not the exercise of some graces; like children that are born with their hands and legs indeed, but they are lame from the womb, have not the exercise of them; and they continue so still. This imperfection even some believers may labour under. Here is one that hath strong faith, lively hope, fervent zeal, and some good works that discovers it: but it may be they are defective in point of humility, meekness, civility, brotherly kindness, and the like. There is another, perhaps a gracious person, that hath  
much

much love, meekness, sweetness of temper, brotherly kindness; but extremely defective in zeal for the declarative glory of God, so as he doth not valiantly *contend for the faith once delivered to the saints*. But, when one hath all these habits, and together with the habit, the exercise of them all, then that person may be said to have an evangelical perfection, and to be pure in God's sight.—Let this be another rule and help to try yourselves by.

3. This gospel perfection implies a person's having all the *spiritual senses* of the new creature, and the lively exercise of them; *Strong meat belongeth to them that are of full age, even those who, by reason of use, have their senses exercised to discern both good and evil*, Heb. v. 14. You may go to some places, and you will see very lively pictures, and as comely to behold as ever man or woman, with an excellent ruddiness in their face; and, at a distance, you would think they have life: Well, but they have no senses; and far less have they any exercise of senses: *They have eyes, but see not; ears, but here not; noses, but smell not*: they have no sense, no feeling. Here is a sad blemish and defect. Thus many idol Christians there are, that are merely painted images, and exactly drawn. Look to them, and compare them with some real Christians, you would think them far superior to, and beyond them. O! there is no comparison between that poor silly creature, and this man, who is so much extolled for his wit, reading, gravity, sobriety, and the like. Yet the omniscient eye of Jehovah may see his blemishes and defects, and want of spiritual senses, which he only hath the appearance of before men; but the other hath in reality before God: yet this man, who is pure in the sight of God, may seem to be nothing in comparison of the other, that casts such a dash, and cuts such a figure. If one who hath many blemishes and defects in his body, stand beside a lively well done picture, what a base creature doth he appear beside that lively well proportioned image! yet notwithstanding he hath that perfection of life and sense, which the image wants: so, here is one that you would think he hath faith, love, knowledge, and all the members  
of

of the new creature ; but, alas ! the great matter is, the want of spiritual life and senses.

(1.) They have not their *seeing* ; they have no true faith, or spiritual discerning : *They have eyes, but see not* : they have *eyes* ; that is, they have an image of faith, a form of knowledge ; but, *in seeing, they see not* ; for they want the Spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of God.

(2.) They want their *hearing* ; they are deaf to the things of God : *They have ears, but here not* : they have *ears* ; that is, they have an uptaking of words ; but, *in hearing, they hear not*. If you say to them, Did you hear ? Yea, says the man, I am not deaf. Well, did you understand ? Yea, perhaps better than yourself, say they. Yet after all, they do not hear the voice of God in the law, so as to awaken their conscience ; nor the voice of God in the gospel, so as to quicken their souls : they hear not his voice in the rod, so as to humble them ; nor in his mercies, so as to melt them, and engage them to himself.

(3.) They want their *feeling* ; they feel not their sins that are sinking them down to the pit. Though, perhaps, they are called men of sense ; yet they have no sense this way : they feel neither the sin of their nature, nor the plagues of their heart : they have no feeling either of the guilt of sin, or the power of sin. They do not feel sin in the fact of it, the fault of it, the filth of it, the folly of it, the fountain of it, the fruits of it.

(4.) They want *smelling* ; they find no sweet-smelling favour in divine things : *They have noses, but smell not*. They are all nose as to other things ; they smell what is most for their profit, credit, and honour : but they never find the ill smell that is upon error and sin. They can stay in the places where God's name is profaned, his truths wounded, and his people mocked, and not be affected with the ill smell thereof. And, on the other hand, they can hear Christ tendered, grace proclaimed, and the gospel promulgated, and yet never be ravished with the sweet favour thereof.

(5.) They want their *tasting* : they taste not the *bitterness of sin*, on the one hand, so as to see it to be an  
evil

evil and bitter thing; nor the sweetness of the word of grace, on the other hand, so as to prize it more than their necessary food.

Now, if we try our purity by this rule, it will difference some believers from other believers, and all believers from unbelievers.

It will, in the first place, difference *some believers* from *other believers*: yea, the most of believers may find themselves defective, with respect to this piece of gospel perfection, in purity and holiness. Here is a believer, I shall suppose, that hath got his eyes open; but, alas! he hath not a good discerning; he wants a quick understanding, so as to discern either between precious and vile, or between good and evil, truth and error; yea, he is readier to choose that which is wrong than that which is right: his senses are vitiated; he hath not, so to speak, the taste of his mouth. Like a person under some disease, or indisposition, that calls every bit of meat that he makes use of bitter; and every thing he eats tasteless: even so, some that are believers may be so indisposed, and have their senses vitiated, that in the best of preaching, they find no good; in the soundest of sermons, they find no sweetness; in the most pleasant gospel truths, they find no relish, especially in a day of controversy about truth. The discerning of some believers is so small, that they know not truth from error; but halt between two opinions, and may be, suspect, every word that is said, and walk in darkness; and, perhaps, side with error rather than with the truth. But then it is, that gospel perfection takes place, when all the spiritual senses are present, and in a lively vivid exercise. Many, even believers, have their senses vitiated, by reason of spiritual indisposition, and want of spiritual health, which weakens every sense, and every member and limb of the new creature. Some believers, at some times, labour under a disease of the conscience, a disease of the understanding, a disease of the judgment, even about necessary truth; lameness in hands, and feet, and tongue, so as they are out of capacity to speak for God, work for God, and walk after God: and this lameness and indisposition is sometimes observe-

observable by men; so Paul saw Peter walking with a crooked foot, when he symbolized with the Jews and disembled, *in so much that Barnabas was carried away with their dissimulation*; whereupon he reprov'd him; and *withstood him to the face, because he saw that he walked not uprightly*, Gal. ii. 11,—14. But whether it be discernable to men or not, yet God sees and observes all the failures, in point of gospel perfection, in holiness and purity.

But, in the next place, it will, notwithstanding, difference *all believers* from *unbelievers*: for, though believers have their blemishes, by sin, yet they are not under the power of sin, as unbelievers are: and though they have their senses many times vitiated, yet they are not altogether destitute of spiritual senses, as unbelievers are. The graceless man may have his natural senses, his rational senses, and common senses; but no gracious spiritual senses.—The man *bears*, but he is a senseless hearer. It may be, indeed, when the Lord is much with the speaker, at certain times, the word may have such expressions, that the natural conscience may be roused, and the natural affections raised: but to have spiritual senses, and spiritual graces exercised, that he cannot have, being destitute of them; and so, at best, is but the senseless hearer. Spiritual sleep, and deep security prevails mightily; so that, like a man in a sound sleep, he may be joggled up a little, and so open his eyes, as it were, a little; yet he is incapable of discerning duty, for he falls over again.—The man *prays*; but his prayers are senseless prayers: he is senseless as to every spiritual exercise.—The man *sings* in the family, or with the congregation, by raising the voice; but he hath not sense to make melody with his heart to the Lord.—Try your gospel purity and perfection by these things.

4. This gospel perfection imports a *constant advancement* from the perfection of parts to the perfection of degrees; a pressing towards the mark, for the *prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus*; a longing for a state of perfection, without being satisfied till we arrive at the height of it; *Let us go on to perfection*, Heb. vi. 1.

The believer, the pure and holy man, he aims at perfect light, perfect knowledge of God, perfect delight in him; and perfect love to men; this is what his soul aspires after: and the Lord reckons this man according to what he would be at, rather than what he is. He would be at perfection; and God reckons him according to what he so ardently desires after. Legal perfection he hath not, in himself, but in his head, Christ, who is the *Lord our righteousness*: but this gospel perfection he hath from his glorious Head, according to the measure of the communication of the Spirit, making him aspire after perfect sanctification. For, as his justification is perfect already; so shall his sanctification be perfected in glory, where all impurity and imperfection shall be done away; and where the image of Christ shall be visible in every saint: for, *they shall be like him, because they shall see him as he is*. Now, towards this gospel perfection do all believers natively incline; whereas, unbelievers have no such high aim.—By these things you may try gospel purity as to the perfection of it.

5thly, This gospel purity may be tried also by the *means* of it. Besides what I said concerning the root of purity, examine your purity likewise by the means whereby the Lord brings it about, and in what method. I shall here but name these two or three things, that may be grounds for your trial and examination. The Lord brings about this gospel purity, by these and the like means.

1. By discovering the man's *impurity* to him. Whoever are made pure in the eye of God, are first made impure in their own eyes. The text supposes, that those who are pure in their own eyes, are impure in the sight of God: and it says, that when God washes them from their filthiness, they are not pure in their own eyes. A clear conviction of impurity, of sin, and uncleanness, is both a piece of purity, and also a mean thereof. It is a part of holiness to have eyes to see our own vileness and wickedness; and the sight thereof is a mean of making the creature restless and uneasy till he be washed. The Lord, when he hath a mind to purify a person, lets him see what a devil he is; and what a hell of wicked-

ness, and what a black hoord of abomination is within. And,

2. He doth it, by discovering his *grace* and *mercy* to him.—The Lord purifies and sanctifies by the revelation of his *grace* and *truth*; and, indeed, *grace and truth comes by Jesus Christ*: as a Priest, he purchases this grace; as a Prophet, he reveals it; and as a King, he applies it. And this revelation of grace brings sanctification; *The grace of God, that bringeth salvation, hath appeared to all men, teaching us, that denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly in this present world, Tit. i. 11, 12. Sanctify them thro' thy truth, thy word is truth, John xvii. 17.* In this revelation of the grace of God in Christ, the fountain opened is seen; even the *fountain opened for sin and uncleanness, Zech. xiii. 1.*—The *merciful government* of God in Christ is discovered: The soul looks on this King of Israel as a merciful King. *And Benhadad's servants said unto him, Behold, now, we have heard that the kings of Israel are merciful kings; let us, I pray thee, put sackcloth upon our loins, and ropes upon our heads, and go out to the king of Israel, peradventure he will save thy life, 1 Kings xx. 31.* The soul now counts these subjects happy that stand before such a King; *Happy are thy men, happy are these thy servants, which stand continually before thee, and that hear thy wisdom. 1 Kings x. 8.* Now the soul laments its bondage to other lords, *Isa. xxvi. 13.* and ardently desires to be the subjects of this gracious and glorious King. And so thus the Lord brings to this sanctity.

3. He purifies by *reconciling the heart* unto God, from the sense of God's being reconciled to us. The faith of God's love and goodness makes the soul submit, in a loving way, and lay down the weapons of defiance. As a traitor, having found the gracious favour of his prince, in pardoning his treason; his naughty heart, that before was full of treachery, is overcome with this undeserved favour? and his hatred is turned into love: so it is here; when the sinner, the traitor, comes to perceive the love of God, in pardoning such a traitor and rebel as he, his wicked heart is overcome with that kindness, the faith  
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of the love of God venting itself in the death of Christ ; and so the faith of the blood of atonement purifies the heart, and frees it from the natural enmity.

4. He purifies by continual *supplies of grace*, and strengthening the soul to wage war against sin, and strengthening it against corruption. There are several ways whereby he strengthens the soul. I presuppose, that, by this time, the man is in Christ, and being in Christ, strength and virtue comes from the glorious Head ; and that by these and the like means.—Sometimes he strengthens by making the soul *look again and again* to Christ, as having all fulness of grace, and a fulness to be communicated ; and as being exalted of God for this end, to communicate gifts, and graces, and the Spirit of grace, Acts v. 31.—Sometimes he strengthens the soul, by helping it to *plead the promise of sanctification*. The believer sees, that as he is ready to distribute of his fulness, so he is faithful to accomplish his promise ; and the promises of sanctification are manifold. At these breasts the man sucks by faith : and as the child is strengthened and nourished by sucking the breast ; so the believer, by the prayer of faith, sucks from the promise of grace, *e. g.* the promise of the Lord *pardonning iniquity, transgression, and sin* ; and so derives strength.—Sometimes he strengthens by giving the soul some *joy and comfort*, and so encouraging it for giving battle to the enemies : *Believing, we rejoice* ; and rejoicing, we are strong : for, *the joy of the Lord is our strength*. The more heaviness, the more weakness ; but the more joy, the more strength, so the more purity.—Sometimes he strengthens by giving the *Spirit of prayer*, and helping to wrestle with him for the blessing ; *I will not let thee go till thou bless me*, said the patriarch Jacob. Thus the *Spirit helps our infirmities, and maketh intercession for us, with groanings which cannot be uttered*. The psalmist experienced both the energy of the Spirit, and the effect thereof : *In the day that I cried, thou answeredst me ; and strengthenedst me with strength in my soul*, Psal. cxxxviii.

3.—Sometimes he strengthens, by shewing his *name and office* : by shewing that his name is JESUS, because *he saves his people from their sins* ; and that it is his office, his work, his business, to save by his grace, and sancti-

fy by his Spirit, and purify by his blood.—In a word, Sometimes he strengthens, and so carries on the begun work of purity and sanctification, by *restoring the soul*, and granting manifold recoveries after falls; by bringing the man out of this and the other horrible pit, into which he hath fallen by his iniquity: for, this work of purity is carried on through many vicissitudes and changes; through many cross winds, and many a severe battle, and sad victory obtained by enemies; through many fears and faintings. Sometimes the man falls down, and then he gets up again; sometimes he is plunged, as it were, into the bottom of hell, in respect of the power of sin, and the blackness of the pollution, in which he sees himself so mired as that he cannot get out; and at other times he is lifted up to the mountain top, and his feet set upon the *high places of Jacob*. Sometimes he is ready to give clean over; at length hope doth revive again: for the Lord encourages the man to hope, by speaking into the heart, or rounding into the soul such a word as that; *There is hope in Israel for all this*: or such a word as that, *Fear not; for the Lord will not forsake his people, for his great name's sake, because it hath pleased the Lord to make them his people*, 1 Sam. xii. 20, 22.—By these, and the like means, the Lord encourages the soul to return, after his lowest falls; and raises him up, as Peter was raised from his shameful downfall. The Lord looks towards the man with a tender, merciful, and compassionate eye; and then he is strengthened to lament his sin, to weep bitterly, to look up to the Lord for grace and forgiveness.

Now, by these, and the like means, doth the Lord purify the soul, and carry on the work: and so here is another large field, wherein you may roam, to try and examine, whether you know these things to your experience, or not; whether the Lord be working them, in a saving manner, in your soul; if he hath purified, and is purifying you, by discovering your impurity, *viz.* by the revelation of his grace, by killing your enmity with his love, and by strengthening your soul, in the manner I have shown.

*Gtly,* Let us now examine this gospel purity by the  
*end*

*end* of it. As we have already tried this point by the root, the fruit, the parts, the perfection, and the means of it; we may now examine this gospel purity by the gospel end of it. I shall not enlarge upon this here, but rather refer it to be more fully spoken to in a *motive* upon the use of *exhortation*. Only, in so many words, the true end of gospel purity and sanctification, is not to pacify conscience, nor to satisfy justice, nor to purchase heaven, nor to work out a righteousness for our justification: all these ends are legal; and the proposing of them is no end of purity, or mark of holiness: But the true end of gospel purity and sanctification is, to glorify God, to edify our neighbour, to testify our gratitude to God, and to evidence our justification.—Let me touch a little at this point.

The great end, I say, of purity and sanctification is not to be a *ground* or *cause* of justification; but to be a *fruit* and *evidence* thereof. The gross ignorance of this point of doctrine, in the present generation, makes it necessary to inculcate and establish it.

1. The great end of gospel purity, or sanctification, is not to be a *ground* and *cause* of justification. They who think to be justified, pardoned, accepted, or admitted to God's favour, by any purity, goodness, righteousness, or holiness, whether done by them, by the strength of nature, or wrought in them, by the strength of grace, they overturn the gospel, and discover themselves to be strangers to the nature of true purity, which doth not work a righteousness for justification; but flows from justification, as streams from a fountain. If men could fly to heaven, by the wings of their own works; or get up there, by the ladder of their own righteousness, what need was there that God should set up another ladder to heaven for us? If we consult Gen. xxviii. 12. we will find that Jacob gets a discovery of a ladder, the foot whereof did stand on the earth, and the top of it did reach heaven. Which pointed out both the *person* of Christ, being God-man, who was both to stand on earth and reach to heaven, in his human and divine natures united; and also the *office* of Christ, that, as Mediator, was to reconcile-God and man, by the sacrifice of himself; and so  
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join heaven and earth together, the most distant extremes, by the blood of his cross. Heaven is accessible only by ascending up this ladder, *viz.* CHRIST, the *Lord our righteousness*. O Sirs, it is a great word, *JEHOVAH our righteousness!* and it may give us honourable thoughts of the alone ground of justification. The merit and righteousness of Christ, which is the alone ground of justification, is infinite merit; because of the eminency of the person, being God-man, Jehovah in our nature, fulfilling the law by his obedience to the death. The law violated, was but a creature; but he that was made subject to it, is the Creator. The holiness of the obeyer, in this case, exceeds the holiness of the law. What a noble ground of justification is here? The transgressor of the law is but a man; but the satisfier is God-man, whose obedience brings in more honour to the law, than if men and angels had obeyed for ever. Hence the justification of believers is perfect; as perfect in time as ever it shall be in glory; because the righteousness of Christ, which is the matter of our justification, is the same for ever: and perfect in every true believer, whether his faith be weak or strong; even as a thousand pound received by a palsified hand, is a thousand pound, as well as a thousand pound received by a healthful hand. O the security, unchangeableness, and perfection of justification! Indeed, the *sense* of justification is according to the degree and exercise of faith; but the *truth* of it is according to the truth of faith.

Now, this righteousness of Christ, and no purity, no obedience, no grace, no holiness of ours, is the *ground* and *cause* of justification. And if you have gospel purity indeed, you will never, if you be in your right senses, propose this as the end of it, namely, that you may be justified; for that belongs only to the righteousness of Christ: *In him shall all the seed of Israel be justified*, Isa. xlv. 25. But,

2. This purity is the *fruit* and *evidence* of a justification: and as we know a tree by its fruit; so may we know justification by sanctification; *Shew me thy faith by thy works*, James ii. 18. We are to shew our faith of this righteousness of Christ, for our justification, by  
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our works of purity and sanctification: *There is no condemnation to them that are in Christ*, Rom. viii. 1. What is the fruit and evidence of this? Why, *they walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit*. The man that is a good tree, a justified man, will bring forth good fruit. The good fruit doth not make a good tree; but the good tree maketh the good fruit: so, the fruit of sanctification doth not make a man to be justified; but justification maketh a man produce the good fruit of sanctification. Herein lies the difference between works in the new covenant of grace, and works in the old covenant of works; or herein differs legal and evangelical purity. In the *legal* way, work is first; and then justification thereupon: but in the *gospel* way, justification is first; and the works follow thereupon. So, in the old and new Sabbath: The Sabbath instituted in Paradise was the seventh day in order, after the six working days; and was suited to man's state of innocency, and did most properly belong to the covenant of works, which promised life and rest, after perfect works of righteousness wrought by us; *The man that doth these things, shall live by them*, Rom. x. 5.: But the Christian Sabbath is the first day of the week, before our six working days; and so is fitted to the new covenant, which promised rest to the conscience, in a way of believing, and that before they do works of righteousness: but these works, and this righteousness, do necessarily attend and follow upon justification. As the same day that the waters went off from the earth, and were gathered into the sea, the earth was adorned with grass, herbs, flowers, and trees, and was fruitful, Gen. i. 9, 11.; so when the deluge of wrath goes off from the soul, in justification, it is presently adorned with the graces of the Spirit, and called a *tree of righteousness*, the *planting of the Lord*, that he might be glorified. Wherever a man is justified, there also he is sanctified and purified. If you be justified, you will shew it so, as it may be evident to yourself and others, by your study of purity. And if you be purified, you will endeavour, through grace, to make this one of the ends thereof; and this will be your design, that you may shew to others, and be convinced

vinced yourself, by having certain evidence of your being justified: for, where there is no purity at all, there is no evidence at all of justification and pardon; even as the body without breath is a body without life, Jam. ii. 20. Where there is little purity, there is little evidence of justification; where there is much purity, there will be the clearer evidence of justification. Though the Lord can, and doth sometimes, make the believer's justification evident to him, in other ways than by the evidence of it in sanctification; and though justification is not up and down, according to the changes in sanctification: nay, justification is always equal, constantly the same, always perfect in the believer; like the sun in the firmament, always full, whatever waxings and weanings there may be in the moon of sanctification, and whatever changes take place in it: and he ought to be assured of this, even when his purity and sanctification is at the lowest; yea, like the moon, disappearing for a while out of view. Surely, he is not to doubt; he ought not to doubt of his justification, by Christ's righteousness imputed, because of the weaning of his sanctification by a righteousness imparted: but where there is no imparted grace at all for sanctification, that a man can either see in himself, or reflect upon, as what he hath seen sometimes, or lamented the want of; where there is nothing of all this, I say, there can be no comfortable evidence of sanctification.—Try yourselves then by these things, and look to the Lord to assist you in the trial.

I sum up all this use of examination with these questions. If you be washed from your filthiness, I ask you, Was you ever shaken out of your refuges of lies, your old rotten natural faith and good works? Have you ever been brought in to Christ, and made to close with him for wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, and redemption? Have you ever been begotten again to a new and lively hope, through faith of him? Have you ever known what it is to have Christ dwelling in your heart, and reigning in your soul, by his word and Spirit? Have you ever known what it is to have faith working by love? And this love discovering itself by a  
love

love and respect to all the commandments of God, and by a hatred to every false way? If you can, in the sight of God, answer YEA to these questions, then I can say you have been washed from your filthiness, and made partakers of gospel purity: but if you be in a doubt about it, and at a loss what to say, O live not contentedly in a doubtful state, but seek that the Lord would resolve your doubt, and that you may find the matter resolved to you by the Lord himself. If you never found any of these things, and are not an absolute stranger thereto, O man, woman, who are in that case, however pure you are in your own eyes, yet you are not washed from your filthiness: and while the filth of sin remains, the guilt remains also; and while the guilt remains, the wrath of God abideth upon you: and therefore, as you regard the glory of God, and your eternal salvation, fly for your life out of that state; take no rest there, but go immediately to God, and cry earnestly to him, ‘That he may pity you, and purge you, and wash you, for his name’s sake.’ Tell him, ‘Lord, what will all things avail me, if I live and die in my sins, and perish forever?’—May the Lord himself direct you.



S E R M O N XIII.

P R O V. xxx. 12.

*There is a generation that are pure in their own eyes; and yet is not washed from their filthiness.*

[The sixth Sermon on this text.]

**T**HE judgment of God is according to truth; and it is by the judgment of God we stand or fall. It is not what this or that man judgeth us to be, or what we ourselves imagine we are, that will contribute to our safety,

safety, or bear us out; for we cannot judge right, unless we judge of ourselves according to the word of God; and to judge of ourselves thus, is to judge according as God judgeth. What God takes us to be, that we are; but we are not always what we takes ourselves to be. Some take themselves to be Christians, who yet are but anti-christians. Some take themselves to be friends to God, who yet are enemies: *There is a generation that are pure in their own eyes; and yet is not washed from their filthiness.*

A generation of finners, that live in sin impenitently, do make room for a deluge of wrath. One Achan troubles the whole camp of Israel: and what wrath then may multitudes of finners bring upon a church and people! The text speaks of a *multitude*; and, perhaps, multitudes of impure and un sanctified finners were never greater than at this day wherein we live; and hence it is a day of wrath: for, it could never be more truly said in any period, than of our day, *There is a generation that are pure in their own eyes, and yet is not washed from their filthiness.*

We have already improven this doctrine in an use of information, lamentation, reproof, and examination; we now proceed to another use of the point.

The *fifth use* that we make of the doctrine shall be for *terror* to all that are *not washed from their filthiness*; but are filthy still, impure still; were never renewed, never purified, never sanctified: but remain under the power of sin and corruption; and are utter strangers to all that purity that hitherto I have been speaking of. There is ground of terror to all the *wicked* of the world, that are *altogether* filthy, and to *believers*, who are *partly* so, and do not watch, but indulge themselves much in impurity.

1<sup>st</sup>, This doctrine affords ground of terror to the *wicked*, that never were washed from their filthiness, but are going on in a course of sin, drunkenness, whoredom, revelling, and all manner of immoralities. Alas, Sirs! consider how miserable you are, and are like to be. Look to your sad and dismal case in life, in death,  
and

and at the day of judgment. And, O if the Lord would awaken your conscience, seriously to ponder your dangerous situation.

[I.] Look to and be persuaded of it, that you are truly miserable in *life*. And,

1. While in that impure state, you are an utter *stranger* to God; *At that time ye were without Christ, being aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers from the covenant of promise, having no hope, and without God in the world.* Eph. ii. 12. You are without God, the author of hope; without Christ, the foundation of hope; without the covenant of promise, the ground of hope; without the grace of hope: you are in a hopeless case, while you refuse to fly for refuge to the hope set before you; to Christ, for wisdom, righteousness, and sanctification.

2. You are *contrary* to God, and God is contrary to you: your nature is contrary to God, and God's nature is opposite to you. Your principles, your practice, your nature, your aims, your mind, your affections, are all opposite to God, while you are altogether filthy.

3. You are out of case for *communion* and *fellowship* with God. What! communion between light and darkness! Nay; you have communion and familiarity with the devil: *The strong man armed keeps the house.* The whole world lieth in wickedness, in time, in the arms of the wicked one. You are, as it were, fast lulled asleep in the arms of the devil.

4. You are a *slave* and a *drudge* to every lust. And, alas! what base degeneracy, that now, your immortal soul is a drudge to the devil, a slave to lust, a servant of sin, and an associate with the wicked!

5. You are under the *curse* while in that situation. See what a number of dreadful curses you are under, mentioned Deut. xxviii. 15,—20. *Cursed shalt thou be in the city, and cursed shalt thou be in the field. Cursed shall be thy basket and thy store. Cursed shall be the fruit of thy body, and the fruit of thy land, the increase of thy kine, and the flocks of thy sheep. Cursed shalt thou be when thou comest in, and cursed shalt thou be when thou goest*

out, &c. Cursed in your *name*, it shall root; cursed in your *house*, it is the habitation of the wicked; cursed in all your *religious performances*, for your *prayer is an abomination to the Lord*; and cursed in all your *civil actions*, for the very *plowing of the wicked is sin*.

6. You are under all the dismal *evils* that attend this impurity; such as, to be abhorred of God, a torment to yourself, useless in the world, an apostate from God, an object of wrath, and at last excluded from heaven.

(1.) One evil attending this impure state, is, that the man is *abhorred*; he is an object of God's abhorrence, if he be filthy still: for, *God is of purer eyes than to behold iniquity*; and he cannot behold it so as to take pleasure in the sinner. Do you think that God can take pleasure in a man who is wallowing in his sin? No; there must be a covering from the eyes of God's holiness: and I know no covering and mantle but one of two, either the red scarlet covering of the Redeemer's blood; or the dark and black mantle of avenging wrath to eternity, to veil it from the eyes of the omniscient and omnipotent God.

(2.) Another evil, beside what hath been mentioned, is, that this impurity is a *torment to the man*. So much defilement, so much vexation; and the more purity, the more peace and inward serenity: *Great peace have they that love thy law, and nothing shall offend them*; but *no peace, saith my God, to the wicked*.

(3.) There is this evil in it also; this impurity makes a man *useless in the world*. A man that is wallowing in wickedness, he is the most useless creature in the world; that which the psalmist calls *altogether filthy*, the apostle quoting it, Rom. iii. 12. calls it *altogether unprofitable*; to let us see, that the man that is altogether filthy or defiled, he is as useless as a vessel, the nastiness of which is so incorporated with it, that it can never be used again.

(4.) This defilement makes way for *apostacy*. The man that is destitute of gospel purity, is in a state wherein he is capable of *total apostacy*. The true gold will abide the fire; but the furnace carries off the dross. The good wheat will abide the wind; but the wind carries

carries away the chaff. *They altogether filthy are ; They all aside are gone.* What makes so much defection and apostacy in our day? Why, men abandon their profession, abandon their principles, grow remiss in their practices, relinquish their first zeal, and leave their first love: why, they are defiled; they are *not washed from their filthiness.*

(5.) This defilement makes way for *wrath* and *judgment* to be poured forth: *For these things cometh the wrath of God upon the children of disobedience,* Col. iii. 6. Trouble and anguish to every soul of man that doth evil; for, *the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of man,* Rom. i. 18. A day of wrath, a day of calamity is threatened, because of the impurity of the generation, that are *not washed from their filthiness.*

(6.) This defilement *excludes from heaven.* No pollution can dwell in the higher house; when it began to enter, the authors of it were cast down to hell: *There shall in nowise enter into it any thing that defileth, or that worketh abomination, or maketh a lye,* Rev. xxi. 27. Is not all this most terrible!

[2.] As you are miserable in life, so you will be miserable at *death*: then conscience begins to rore; for its black book is opened, and the long roll, the black roll of sins appear; and then the devil, who lulled you asleep in sin, and tempted you to sin, will present the heinousness thereof, and tempt you to despair. Then your friends, relations, comforts, and enjoyments of the world, will bid you an eternal adieu: and then no more offers of Christ, or grace, or salvation. Sin, the sting of death, not being taken away, death will be most terrible and dreadful. When the awful messenger approaches, with his dismal appearance armed with his mortal dart, ready in an instant to strike through the miserable creature, with what amazement will the poor soul be filled! How unwelcome will the near approach of this mighty conqueror be to the poor sinner!

[3.] The polluted soul will not only be miserable at death, but also at the *day of judgment*: for, *Christ will be*

be revealed from heaven, taking vengeance on them who know not God, and obeyed not the gospel. Then the awful and final sentence will be pronounced, *Depart from me, ye cursed!* Ah! terrible sentence! *Depart from me!* Depart from the chief good and happiness, to be miserable to eternity! In this sentence is wrapt up all misery; and what will frustrate all the vain expectations of the wicked at that day. If you should say, O! let us not go far away: Nay; depart from me, out my *sight* and *presence*; and that is far enough to them: for ever banished from the presence of God, the presence of bliss. O! if we must depart, let us depart with a  *blessing*: No; depart from me, ye  *cursed*: depart with the curse of God, the wrath and vengeance of God! O! if we must thus depart, let us go to a  *good place*: No; depart from me, ye  *cursed*, unto  *fire*: the place of torment, the place of perdition, the place of burning. O! if it must be to fire, let it be but for a  *short time*: No, no; depart to  *everlasting* fire, to dwell there through an endless eternity; depart to everlasting fire, fire that cannot be quenched;  *Where the worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched*. O! if it must be so, let us depart with  *good company*; let us have some heartsome company with us: No, by no means; depart with the  *devil* and  *his angels*. Oh! the miserable case of those who live and die in their sin! They must be sent to the devouring Tophet! to swim for ever in the river of fire and brimstone! Ah! dreadful state! You will appear before the judgment-seat in the devil's livery; and must share of his misery to eternity. Inconceivable and permanent misery!

2dly, This doctrine affords ground of terror also to  *believers*, who, though they are washed  *habitually* from their filthiness, yet ly under much  *actual* pollution, without due application to the fountain; there is ground of terror from this doctrine to such. Though we cannot preach the same terror to them, as to the wicked; and cannot say they shall be condemned, or go to hell, or yet become liable to the curse of the law; yet the Lord hath a rod for the back of his children:  *If they break his law*, though he pardon their sin, yet he may take  
*vengeance*

*vengeance on their inventions.* And we are not to think light of the rod of correction and chastisement, which the Lord may use with his children, who are unwatchful; for there is something very terrible therein, whatever way we view it, either with respect to temporal, spiritual, or eternal matters.

[1.] There is something very terrible in the chastisements of God, with respect to *temporal* concerns. And,

1. The rod may be upon your *body*, in sore sickness, fevers, gouts, gravels, tormenting pains; such as these we read of, Deut. xxviii. 58, 59. and ver. 22, 27. The Lord may put you upon the rack day and night, with excruciating pains, and agonizing torments. Is not this a dreadful rod?

2. The rod may be heavy in respect of your *families*; heavy sickness and afflictions upon your husband, wife, and children. The Lord may make your children a cross to you, your relations a burden to you, and your most intimate friends and concerns a trouble to you. He may take away the desire of your eyes with a stroke, and leave you desolate and destitute. This is a sore trial.

3. The rod may be grievous in respect of your *name*. You may be trysted with great reproaches, and be made a by-word among your neighbours: to the psalmist it was as a *sword within his bones*, when he was reproached. This sword may pierce you: you may be left to fall under infamy and disgrace. Yea, the Lord may so far leave you, as to let you fall into scandalous evils, and become a reproach to the Christian name. And is not this a heavy chastisement?

4. The rod of correction may be sore with respect to *public calamities*; such as these we read of Ezek. xiv. 21. *For thus saith the Lord God, How much more when I send my four sore judgments upon Jerusalem, the sword, and the famine, and the noisome beast, and the pestilence, to cut off from it man and beast?* Sword, famine, pestilence, and captivity are heavy judgments.—What a terrible thing is the *sword*? It may be bathed in the blood, and sheathed in the bowels of your dearest friends; and, perhaps, in your own bowels.—What a sad rod is the *famine*?

Hereby

Hereby tender mothers have been made to eat their own children; and men obliged to eat their own fingers, and the flesh of their own arm; one part of the body to maintain another.--What a dreadful rod is the *pestilence*? See it described, Psal. xci. 3, 6, 10. See also Deut. xxviii. 59, 60, 61.--What a fore chastisement is it to be led away into *captivity*? Thou mayest be carried away to a strange land; from father, mother, friends, and acquaintances; where thou knowest not a face, Deut. xxviii. 48. and to fears of still greater judgments, ver. 65,—67.

[2.] The rod of correction has something very terrible in it, when we view it with respect to *spiritual* matters.

1. The Lord may give loose reins to your *lusts*, and let you be overpowered with corruption, so as iniquity shall prevail. He may give you up to the *lusts of your heart*; a most mischievous and pernicious enemy.

2. The Lord may let the *devil* loose upon you; that roaring lion to buffet you, and to do what he can to devour you. This was a correction which Job, Paul, Peter, and many others, were trysted with.

3. You may be tossed with *doubts* and *fears* about sin and duty; and neither know what way to go, nor which course to steer. You may be quite wrapt up in darkness and perplexity.

4. You may be *deserted* of God, and left to go *mourning without the sun*: and though you would give all the world for a sight of his face, yet not be favoured with it. This was the case with Job; *I go forward, but he is not there; backward, but I cannot perceive him, &c. O that I knew where I might find him!* Job. xxiii. 3, 8.

5. You may be brought under *terrors*, as Job was; *The arrows of the Almighty are within me; the poison whereof drinketh up my very spirit,* Job vi. 4. *Thine arrows stick fast in me,* Psal. xxxviii. 2.

6. You may be left to *despair* and to *distracted*, thro' the terrors of God; *The terrors of God do set themselves in array against me,* Job vi. 4. *While I suffer thy terrors I am distracted,* said Heman, Psal. lxxxviii. 15.

[3.] Chastisements are terrible with respect to the fears concerning your *eternal* state. You may be brought to the very brink of despair, as was just now observed concerning

concerning Heman: to be in doubts and fears about your everlasting welfare; your *hope* may be *perished*, in a manner, *from the Lord*, Lam. iii. 18. The Lord may carry towards you like an enemy and a stranger: your spirit may be sunk, and your heart faint; yea, any thing but *hell*, and the *breaking of the covenant*. Yea, the Lord may even take a child by the neck, as it were, and shake him over hell, as if he was designing to throw him into the flaming lake. He may drop in hot wrath into the conscience, and kindle a little hell within him. And though all be but fatherly chastisement, and in love, yet no views of love may the person have; but apprehend God as an enemy, being left to this unbelieving fear of his vindictive wrath. God may break him with breach upon breach; and run upon him like an enemy. Yea, the road may be heavy in its *nature*: the sickness, *e. g.* may be a sore sickness; it may be extraordinary in its *kind*, so that you may be ready to say, No sorrow like your sorrow. It may be manifold in its *number*; one messenger of evil tidings after another; breach upon breach. It may be growing in its *degrees*; still worse and worse. And it may be long in its *continuance*, perhaps; so long as that you may lie under it all your days.---O what ground of holy fear then hath even the child of God, if he be not watchful and circumspect!

The *sixth Use* that we make of this doctrine shall be for *consolation* to the *godly*, who are exercising themselves to godliness, and students, actual students of purity; growing and advancing in purity. Here I would lay before you, 1. Some *marks* and *evidences* of those that are growing in holiness and purity. 2. Point out some *grounds* of consolation for such.

1<sup>st</sup>, We propose to lay before you some *marks* and *evidences* of advances in holiness, and a man growing in purity.

1. *Spirituality* in the *intervals* of duty, as well as in the *performance* of duty, is a true mark of growth in holiness: spirituality between duty, as well as in duty. If a man should seem never so religious in duty, if he

gives latitude to himself in the intervals; he looks not like one that is growing and advancing in purity. Moses's face shined as much when he came off from the mount, as when he was on the mount.

2. *Conflict with spiritual sins, and spiritual evils*, is an evidence hereof. When a man is helped to conflict against heart-sins, which lie most hid and remote from the eyes of the world; and obtains some spiritual victory and conquest over them it is an evidence of purity. When the heart rises, with all its strength, against spiritual pride and self, and self-ends, it evidences some advances in holiness.

3. When a man is *exercised in spiritual duties*, and in *internal duties* of religion: not only busied about external duties, but especially is exercised about those and the like internal ones, *viz.* Meditation, mortification, self-examination, self-resignation, self-loathing, self-judging, self-condemnation; praying in the Spirit, watching over the heart, applying the blood of Christ, the death Christ; applying the promise and the word to his own soul: when it is thus with a person, it is an evidence of his making some progress in purity and holiness.

4. When a man is carried on to religious duties by *spiritual principles* and *internal motives*: when a person is acting, from a sense of divine love, from a sense and desire after Christ's spiritual presence, and from the sweetness and excellency of communion and fellowship with a God in Christ.—These are some evidences of a person's growing in purity and holiness.

2dly, We proceed next to point out some *grounds* of consolation for such persons.

1. The more purity you have, the more *like God*. And, O what comfort accrues from this, to be like to God; to be conformed to the Son of God! The more likeness, the more love. The Lord cannot but delight in his own image: He himself is holy; and cannot but delight in the holiness and purity of his people.

2. The more purity, the more *ripe for heaven*: you are thus made meet for the inheritance of the saints in light;

light; for no unclean thing can enter into the heavenly Jerusalem. And, O what comfort arises from this, that, you are a candidate for the glory of the new Jerusalem!

3. The more purity the more *communion and fellowship* with God; *He that hath my commandments, and keepeth them, he it is that loveth me; and he that loveth me, shall be loved of my Father; and I will love him and will manifest myself to him. If any man love me, he will keep my words; and my Father will love him, and we will come unto him, and make our abode with him,* John xiv. 21, 23. The godly person, by his impurity, may greatly mar his fellowship with God; but by advancing in holiness, his communion is promoted.

4. The more purity, the more *communication of good things* from God; the more holiness you are possessed of, the more will God give you: *He will give grace and glory and no good thing will he withhold from them that walk uprightly,* Psalm lxxxiv. 11. When he gives this grace to walk uprightly, he will be still adding more: And every new addition of grace, and communication of love, will make the babe of grace leap cheerfully in the soul; for they that walk in the *fear of the Lord*, will walk in the *comfort of the Holy Ghost*, Acts ix. 31.

5. The more purity, the more will the *truth and reality* of all your *other graces* be notified to you; particularly these three cardinal graces, *Faith, love, and hope*, 1 Cor. xiii. 13.—*Faith*, in its sincerity is hereby notified; for, if it be true faith, it will *purify the heart*. The man that says he believes, and yet walks on in a course of sin, it shows his faith to be but a fancy.—*Love* is, in its sincerity, notified hereby; for, true love proceeds from a pure heart: *The end of the commandment, is love out of a pure heart.*—*Hope* also is notified and made known; for, *he that hath this hope, purifieth himself, even as he is pure.*

6. The more purity, the more *sense of pardon and justification*.—There is comfort, that your sanctification doth not affect your justification; and that failures in purity, dothnot diminish your justification. And as it is the property of sovereign grace, that it is neither mov-

ed by any good in the creature; nor hindered by any evil in the creature: so, it is the property of justification, that neither the believer's sins makes him less justified; nor his holiness makes him more justified. This is indeed the privilege of all justified believers: but the more pure that the believer is, the more comfortable sense has he thereof.

Believers, by justification, stand in the favour of God, upon the same ground on which Christ, as Mediator, stands in his favour; for *you are accepted in the Beloved*. Christ, as Mediator, is beloved for his righteousness' sake; *The Lord is well-pleased for his righteousness' sake*. He is highly exalted of God, and honoured of him, because *he gave himself to be obedient unto death, even the death of the cross*. Christ is beloved and accepted of God upon this ground; and you are accepted in him upon the same ground. Why then, if Christ and you stand upon the same bottom, upon the same ground, consider how sure that ground is: surely, *there is no condemnation to them that are in Christ Jesus*; no liability to condemnation. If any will assert, that the believer, after all, may become liable to condemnation, while he remains in mystical union with the Son of God, which is for ever, and remains favoured of God, or accepted upon the same ground that Christ is, let them answer for the dishonourable thought that this imports concerning the Son of God himself. Can the ground upon which Christ stands, in the favour of God, ever fail? Nay; it were blasphemy so to imagine: Neither can the ground upon which the believer stands, in the favour of God, ever fail; for they stand upon the same ground, namely, the mediatory righteousness, which is as much imputed to the believer, as if he himself had, in his own person, fulfilled it: It is reckoned to the believer, as if he himself had, in his own person, satisfied divine justice, and fulfilled the divine law: And hence, whatever can be said of the happiness of the saints now in heaven, in point of security from vindictive wrath; I say not his *holiness*, but his *happiness*; in this respect, the same may be asserted of the believer on earth, in point of justification.

“ Why

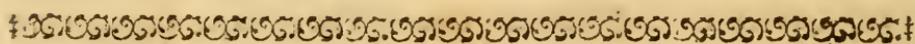
“ Why then, say you, the believer may do as he  
 “ pleaseth, and sin as he listeth; for there is no fear of  
 “ him.” The world, truly, mistakes matters, with  
 respect to the true believer. A carnal heart, never re-  
 newed by grace, may indeed deliberately argue thus;  
 “ If I was secure as to that event, viz. that I would  
 “ never go to hell, but shall infallibly be brought to  
 “ heaven; then I would drink, and debauch, and sin  
 “ as I please.” Such a disposition, and way of talking,  
 is very agreeable to a man that is in a carnal natural  
 state; but it is cross to the very nature of a believer.  
 And, if any say they are believers, and yet would use  
 that doctrine of grace at this rate; why, their very  
 speech bewrays them, and says they are not believers:  
 because no believer, as a believer, can say so.

But it may possibly be urged, May not the *corrupt*  
*part* of the believer say so? Yea; and if it do, it shall  
 be destroyed for so saying: for that which *defilleth the*  
*temple of God, that will God destroy*. If the old man of  
 corruption thus defile God’s temple, God will destroy  
 that old man: he will destroy it with the fire of his vin-  
 dictive wrath and vengeance: for the old man of sin in  
 the believer, may indeed be said to be under the law,  
 and shall be condemned. Though the believer, as he is  
 a believer, is ever freed from condemnation; yet his sin  
 and corruption is, and shall be condemned; and God  
 takes many ways to do that: yet so as vindictive wrath  
 shall never touch the person of the believer in Christ.

But let us take the believer at *himself*, and see if this  
 be consistent with the grain of the child of God. Your  
 sin is pardoned; therefore, go and take your fill of sin.  
 God hath delivered you from hell; therefore, go and  
 walk in the way of hell. God hath loved you with an  
 everlasting love; therefore, vent your enmity against  
 God to the uttermost. He acts like a God of love to you;  
 therefore, act you like a devil against him. God will  
 honour you with the enjoyment of himself for ever in  
 heaven; therefore, go your way and dishonour him as  
 you can. Oh! no, no. Such expressions would *offend the*  
*generation of the righteous*, and of *true believers*: it would  
 make the hairs of their head to stand, if we may be al-  
 lowed

lowed the expression, and their bowels to tremble; for the quite contrary is ingrained in their new nature: *Shall we thus requite the Lord?* Shall we render hatred for love\*.

The more sense of justification, the more purity; and the more purity, the more sense of justification: and yet neither your purity or sanctification, nor failing therein, doth influence your justification, or affect it; for it remains still perfect, and invariably the same.—So much for an use of consolation to the godly.



## S E R M O N XIV.

PROV. XXX. 12.

*There is a generation that are pure in their own eyes; and yet is not washed from their filthiness.*

[The seventh Sermon on this text.]

**I**F we knew what a pure and holy God we have to do with, our own impurity would be hateful to us. *God is of purer eyes than that he can behold iniquity:* we are of such impure eyes, that we cannot behold his purity. Yea, though our eyes were purer than they are; yet God is so perfect, that we cannot see his perfection: even as the sun is so bright, that we cannot see the brightness of it. But as the stronger the eye, the better sight will it get of the sun; so, the purer the soul is, the more clearly will it see the holiness and purity of God: *Blessed are the pure, for they shall see God.* O! what is the reason, that God is so little seen, and is so far out of sight, with the generation? Why, the generation is *impure and defiled*; and what aggravates the matter prodigiously, is, they do not know so much;

\* The reader may see this point of doctrine copiously handled, by consulting Vol. II. Sermon. XXIII, &c. intitled, *Law-death, Gospel-life.*

*There is a generation that are pure in their own eyes ; and yet is not washed from their filthiness*

We have already made a very copious improvement of this subject, *the excellency of gospel purity* ; it only remains now, that we conclude the subject, with a particular address to the conscience.

The *seventh Use*, therefore, that we make of the doctrine, is for *exhortation* and *direction*. Is it so, as has been said, *That gospel purity is so excellent a thing?* Then let me exhort you, in the words of the prophet, *Wash you, make you clean*, Isa. i. 16. O seek to be washed and purified from your filthiness. Seek to be partakers of this gospel purity and holiness. I have already preached several sermons upon this one doctrine ; and they may not only be so many witnesses, that the doctrine we inculcate, is a doctrine *according to godliness*, tending to advance holiness, and not to encourage licentiousness, let reproachers say what they will ; but they may be so many witnesses against a *polluted generation*, that neither are washed from their filthiness, nor have any desire to be washed, but are filthy still.

Let me now exhort both the wicked to seek after purity, and the godly to seek after more of it. As we have already insisted so long upon the applicatory part, I shall put both these together for gaining of time. And to enforce the exhortation, we shall, 1. Adduce some *motives*. 2. Offer some *directions*.

*1st*, By way of *motive* to the study of purity, consider, that this gospel purity eminently tends to the following things. 1. The glory of God. 2. The honour of Christ. 3. The credit of the gospel. 4. The good of both ourselves and others.

[1.] This gospel purity and holiness eminently tends to the *glory of God*. And it cannot fail to do so, in regard God himself is holy : holiness is an essential quality of his nature ; impurity is the very reverse thereof : sin is that *abominable thing which his soul hates*. The more impurity that there is in the world, the more is God dishonoured ; but the more purity and holiness, the more is he glorified. As impurity is an open dishonour

done

done to God; so external purity is a glorifying of God before the world: therefore says our Lord, *Hereby is my Father glorified, that you bear much fruit* And he positively enjoins, that we should make *our light so to shine before men, that they seeing our good works may glorify our heavenly Father.*

Further, This gospel purity tends to the glory of God, in as much as it is the end of our *election*; for, he hath *chosen us in him that we should be holy and without blame.* He hath *called us hereunto*; for, he hath *not called us unto uncleanness, but holiness.* It is agreeable to his *will*; for, *this is the will of God, even your sanctification.* It is the *livery* in which his servants serve him; for, they serve him in the *beauty of holiness.* It is *obedience* to his commands, because it is written, *Be ye holy, for I am holy:* and again, *Be ye perfect as your Father which is in heaven is perfect.* It is the *bage and spot* of his children; for, *holiness becometh his house for ever.*

In these, and many other respects, gospel purity tends to the promotion of God's glory. Why, in one word, the *great and ultimate end* of gospel purity is just this, that *whatsoever you do, do all to the glory of God.* And this is one of the great marks and characteristics, whereby it is distinguished from the finest painted hypocrisy.

But, perhaps, some may be ready to say, *How shall I know, if the glory of God be my great end in my purity and holiness, and all that I do?*

I confess, this is the great question that determines the controversy between two great competitors, the one a pretender, the other a lawful sovereign, *viz.* whether *Self,* or the great *Jehovah,* be the God to whom the devotion of our purity is paid; whether God or Self be our ultimate end. I shall offer a few thoughts in answer to the question.

1. The man that intirely acts for the glory of God, in the study of purity, he can trample upon his *own happiness,* when it comes in competition with the glory of God: he sees this to be of more worth than a thousand heavens; and therefore, the self-denied believer, before the glory of God should suffer, would, in a  
manner,

manner, venture his all, though the venture would never be to his loss. *Blot me out of thy book*, says Moses. *Let me be accursed*, saith Paul. Why, the thing that prompted them to this, was zeal for the glory of God.

2. If the glory of God be your great end, in the study of holiness, and all you do, all your duties, then your desire will be to *wait on the Lord* in times of absence, as well as in times of presence. Out of the depths will you cry to God; and out of the belly of hell will you look again to his holy temple. *I will wait upon the Lord, that hideth himself from the house of Jacob, and will look for him*, Isa. viii. 17. When self hath no encouragement in its hand, even then to glorify God, by waiting on him obedientially, evidences that the glory of God is the end aimed at; even when the soul is content to live by faith, when sense is gone.

3. When one hath God's glory for his end, in the study of holiness, then the more *assurance* he hath of the love of God in Christ, the more earnest is he in the pursuit of purity and holiness. As he grows in God's favour, so will he grow in likeness to God. Assurance will not make him *slothful in business*, but *fervent in spirit, serving the Lord*. It is otherwise with the selfish hypocrite; his false assurance weakens his hand, and slackens his diligence in duty: because he thinks his state secure, he takes his nap. Why, so far the glory of God is not his end, but self-love. Something of this may take place indeed in the believer: but I speak of the natural fruit of his assurance; and especially the more clear it is, the more earnest will he be in the pursuit of holiness, and the more diligent in the Lord's work, knowing that *his labour shall not be in vain in the Lord*.

4. If the glory of God be your great end, in seeking after gospel purity, then you will have a constant *conflict with self*: you will find self creeping in, and intruding itself into all duties; into your prayers, hearing, reading, praising, communicating, &c. It will be a burden to you: *O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from this body of sin and death? The flesh lusteth against the spirit, and the spirit against the flesh;*

and these two are contrary the one to the other.—O therefore study holiness, seek after gospel purity, because it so much tends to the glory of God.

[2.] Consider, for motive to seek after this gospel purity, that it greatly tends to the *honour of Christ*. Christ's errand into the world was to save sinners from their impurity and sin; *He came to seek and save that which was lost*; and to *finish transgression, and make an end of sin*. He shed his precious blood to be a laver for washing away all filthiness of the flesh and spirit; for, *his blood cleanseth from all sin*: and he suffered without the gate that he might sanctify the people. The more purity and holiness that abounds in the world, the more doth Christ see of the travel of his soul, and is satisfied. The more impurity that prevails, the more is his blood trampled upon; but the more purity that takes place, the more is the virtue and efficacy of his blood manifested; and consequently he is the more honoured. The impure person is a dishonour to Christ; but the holy man bears a resemblance to him, and so puts honour upon him.

Further, That gospel purity, wherever it takes place, tends mightily to the honour of Christ, will appear if we consider the following particulars.

1. This gospel purity is just an *imitation* of Christ as an example; for, *he gave us an example, that we should follow his steps*. It is an answering of the design of that copy, pattern, and example which he set before us: it is a following of the Lamb whithersoever he goeth; a cleaving to him in tribulation and adversity, as well as in prosperity.

2. Because it flows from *love* to Christ, and an high estimation of him: I say, this purity flows from love to him. And those who love this purity, however unholy they see themselves to be, they love him the better, on account of the holy pattern he has given them; the better, that he was *holy, harmless, undefiled, and separated from sinners*. It is a good sign of some gospel holiness, when the soul can say, he loves God, because he is a holy God; and loves Christ, because he is a holy Christ. This purity flows from an high estimation of Christ, whatever those who have it may lose for his sake,

fake, and for cleaving to his truth, cause, and way, in pursuit thereof. It is a good sign of gospel purity when a man is loosing his honour, credit, riches, wealth, and outward advantages for Christ, and yet retains an high esteem of him: such a man is selling all for Christ, the *pearl of great price*; and esteeming the *reproach of Christ greater riches than all the treasures of Egypt*. He hath the glory and honour of Christ in view, and wants to promote it.

3. This gospel purity tends to the honour of Christ, because in the study and pursuit of it, the soul desires nothing more than perfect *conformity* to him, and full enjoyment of him. The breathings of the soul, under the influences of this gospel purity, are, “O to have that which is in part done away! O to be like unto him in humility, patience, zeal, and unblamableness! O to be like him in holiness, and to see him as he is!”

4. This purity tends to the honour of Christ, because all the believer's efforts, in prosecution of it, are in a dependance on Christ's strength: *We are not sufficient of ourselves, to think any thing as of ourselves; but our sufficiency is of God. When I am weak, then am I strong. I can do all things through Christ strengthening me.* And so the believer subscribes, with heart and hand, to the truth of these blessed words, that proceeded out of his mouth, John xv. 5. *For without me ye can do nothing.* And to that precious promise, 2 Cor. xii. 9. *My grace is sufficient for thee; for my strength is made perfect in thy weakness.*

5. This purity tends to Christ's honour, because that, in prosecution thereof, and the duties that advance it, nothing short of *Christ himself* will satisfy the believer. The man can distinguish between Christ in a duty, and liberty or a frame in duty; between Christ in prayer, and a frame in prayer. The hypocrite, if he gets the frame, there he rests content, without any other Christ: but the believer, though he loves a good frame, and desires liberty in duty, as the chariot in which Christ is conveyed to his soul; yet he will not satisfy himself with

the chariot, if Christ be not therein. “O, says he, it  
 “is not a frame only, but Christ that I am seeking;  
 “and Christ that I must have! Give me Christ, or  
 “else I die!” To be content with any enjoyment, tem-  
 poral, or spiritual, without Christ is selfish, and dero-  
 gating from the glory of Christ, which is the ultimate  
 end.

6. This gospel purity tends to the honour of Christ,  
 in as much as the students of holiness wrap up all their  
*holy duties* in the robe of his *perfect righteousness*. They  
 see and are persuaded, that their most holy duties can-  
 not justify them before a holy God; and therefore they  
 cast all their tears, prayers, and duties, into the ocean  
 of Christ’s infinite merit; and there they dye them red  
 in the precious blood of the Lamb, that they may fly  
 up to heaven with acceptance, in pillars of smoke, per-  
 fumed with the sweet odour of his sacrifice unto the  
 death.

Many other things might here be added to inforce this  
 motive; such as, the predestinated conformity of the  
 subjects of this sanctity to Christ, Rom. viii. 29.; the  
 sameness of mind in them that was in Christ, Phil. ii. 5.;  
 with other particulars: but we insist not.—Let this mo-  
 tive have weight with you to study purity, that it tends  
 so much to the honour of Christ.

[3.] Consider, by way of motive, that as purity  
 greatly tends to the glory of God, and the honour of  
 Christ; so also to the *credit of the gospel*. Impurity brings  
 a reproach on religion: and an unholy professor is a dis-  
 credit to the Christian name. Nothing can bring a  
 greater reproach upon the gospel of Christ, than the  
 immoral lives of its professors. The very end and design  
 of the gospel is to promote holiness and sanctification;  
 and when purity and holiness does not take place, it is  
 an evidence the gospel is doing little good; and these  
 who profess it are a discredit unto it. The gospel reve-  
 lation of the grace of God was designed to *teach men to*  
*deny ungodliness and worldly lusts, and to live soberly,*  
*righteously, and godly.* And it ought to be the study of  
 all who hear it, to evidence, by their holy deportment,  
 that it hath come to them, *not in word only, but in de-*  
*monstration*

*monstration of the Spirit, and with power.* Hereby the professors of the gospel will be a credit thereto.

Further, That purity will tend to the credit of the gospel, will be evident, if it is considered, that this evangelical purity is, 1. The purity of such as are in a gospel state. 2. Purity that flows from gospel principles. 3. Purity that is influenced by gospel motives. 4. Purity that is directed to a gospel end.

1. This holiness and purity is for the credit of the gospel, in as much as it is the purity of such only as are in a *gospel state*. For, as it is only a good tree that brings forth good fruit; so, none but the true believer, that is in a good state, can bring forth the fruits of true holiness. By a gospel state, I understand a spiritual state, a state of union to Christ, a justified state, an adopted state, a renewed state: without this no right sanctity, no evangelical purity.

2. It is purity that flows from *gospel principles*. The proud legalist's sanctity flows from legal principles, the principles of his own inherent strength, self-sufficiency, and the like: but gospel purity flows from gospel principles. The believers holy duties are performed in the strength of gospel grace, promised grace; the strength of Christ laid hold on by faith: *Having these promises, dearly beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit,* 2 Cor. vii. 1.

3. This purity is influenced by *gospel motives*. The greatest gospel motive of the believer's holiness, is the will of God in Christ, and the love of God in Christ.—The *will* of God in Christ, through whom the will of God is conveyed, he being the channel of divine authority: whereas, the legalist's motive to holiness is the will of an absolute God, God considered as Creator, out of Christ as Redeemer.—The *love* of God in Christ, and the believer's love to a God in Christ, is also the great gospel motive to holiness; and not slavish fear of the threatenings, and of hell, nor the mercenary hopes of heaven and happiness, which are the motives that legalists are acted by.

4. This gospel purity is directed to a *gospel end*. The believer's end in this purity is not to obtain life, to procure

cure pardon, and merit the enjoyment of God ; but to evidence his gratitude to that God who hath provided all these valuable blessings freely to him. The end of this purity is not to satisfy conscience, appease wrath, or the like ; but to glorify a God in Christ, and express our thankfulness to him for Christ, his unspeakable gift, and all spiritual blessings in and with him.

From these, and the like considerations, it is evident, that this purity is for the credit of the gospel. Let them, therefore, have their proper weight with you, to excite you to press after holiness, and to be actual students of gospel purity.

[4.] In order to excite to the study of holiness and purity, let it be considered, that it greatly tends both to our *own good*, and that of *others*.

1. Consider how much this purity and holiness tends to your *own good* and *advantage*, in order to influence you to be students of it. A variety of particulars might here be taken notice of ; but we shall study brevity.— Consider, that the more of this evangelical purity you have, the more will *God give* to you ; for, *the Lord will give grace and glory, and no good thing will he withhold from them that walk uprightly*, Psal. lxxxiv. 11.—The more of this purity, the more *joy* and *comfort* will you have. It will make you walk to heaven comfortably. In the path of holiness you will still see more and more of the love of God ; which will make your souls to rejoice, and you to walk in the ways of the Lord with cheerfulness : *For, they that walk in the fear of the Lord, walk in the comfort of the Holy Ghost*, Acts ix. 31.—The more gospel purity, the more *intimate acquaintance* with God's secrets ; for, *the secret of the Lord is with them that fear him, and he will shew them his covenant*, Psal. xxv. 14.—The more evangelical purity, the more *pleasure* and *delight* will you take in the duties of religion, and the more acceptable will your services be to God : *He will purify the sons of Levi ; then shall the offering of Judah and Jerusalem be pleasant to the Lord*, Mal. iii. 3, 4.—The more of purity, the more *boldness* and *courage* will you have in the work and cause of God ; for, *the righteous is bold as a lion*. It will inflame your zeal against sin, and  
for

for God. It will make you trample on temptations to sin; saying, with Joseph, *How shall I do this great wickedness, and sin against God?* It will condemn and despise all dangers, rather than stain your purity by sinful compliances; as Ezra, Nehemiah, Daniel, the three children, and many others did.—In a word, the more of this gospel purity you have, the more *fellowship* with God here, and the meeter for the *enjoyment* of him hereafter; for, *blest are the pure in heart*, and life; *for they shall see God*, Mat. v. 8.—Let these particulars have their proper influence upon you, to press you on to further and higher degrees of this evangelical purity and holiness.

2. In order to excite you to the study of purity, consider likewise the tendency it hath to the good and advantage of *others*.—Why, the more gospel purity, the greater *stock* you have; and the richer of this grace you are, the more will it tend to the *benefit* of your friends and acquaintances, and to your neighbours around you; as your holy work may induce them to the practice of it.—The more holy you are, and the richer of gospel purity, the greater influence will your holiness have in making the *wicked* stand in awe to sin, and keeping them back from dishonouring God; nay, exciting them to a profession of religion, and something of the practice of duty. You see what influence this way the sanctity of holiness of godly Joshua, and his co-temporary elders, had upon the children of Israel, Judges ii. 7. And what influence Jehoiadah's sanctity had upon Joash, king of Judah, 2 Chron. xxiv. 2.—Nay, further, consider that eminency of purity is sometimes a blessed mean to *recommend* the ways of God and religion to such as are strangers thereto; *For, what knowest thou, O wife, whether thou shalt save thy husband? Or, how knowest thou, O man, whether thou shalt save thy wife?* 1 Cor. vii. 16. See 1 Pet. iii. 1, 2.—Besides, eminency in gospel purity tends to *ward off judgments*, or *protract* them from falling on persons and places where the godly live: accordingly the Lord declares to Abraham, that if there was found in Sodom but *ten righteous persons*, he would not destroy it for their sake, Gen. xxxviii. 32. Nay, the amazing

ing conflagration was not kindled upon Sodom so long as righteous Lot lingered in it: *Haste thee*, saith the angel to Lot; *haste thee thither*, [namely, to Zoar;] *for I cannot do any thing till thou be come thither*, Gen. xix. 22. And presently, upon Lot's departure out of it, the flames of hell from heaven began to burn upon the cities of the plain; as you see in the following verses.—Sometimes this gospel purity tends to draw down  *blessings* on persons and places where the godly live: accordingly we find, that *the Lord blessed the Egyptian's house*, [viz. Potipher,] *and all that he had, both in the house and in the field, for Joseph's sake*, Gen. xxxix. 5. Nay, Pharaoh's family, court, and all the land of Egypt, were blessed for Joseph's sake: for, while wasting famine spread devastation among the surrounding nations, there was plenty in the land of Egypt. Were not temporal strokes averted, and blessings, for a time, bestowed on Babylon, while the captives of Zion were in it? And therefore the prophet exhorts them, *To seek the peace of the city, and to pray to the Lord for it*, Jer. xxix. 7. A candle, you know, enlightens a room; but the sun enlightens a world: so, the more eminent you are in purity and holiness, the brighter doth your  *lamp* burn, and the more extensive do the  *light* therefore shine. John the Baptist was eminent in holiness; and hence we have that testimony of our Lord concerning him, namely, that *he was a burning and shining light*, John v. 35. And that concerning the disciples, *Ye are the lights of the world*, Mat. v. 14. That is, would our Lord say, not only by your  *doctrine*, as ministers; but by your  *purity* and  *holiness*, as Christians and saints. Nor is it to disciples only, but to all, that our divine Teacher, come from God, and addresses himself in that interesting admonition, ver. 16. *Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven*. Nay, what if I should say, that by your purity and holiness you may  *increase the joy* of men and angels in heaven; and if so, the greater degree of this purity you attain, the greater tendency it will have this way. Why, the holiness and purity tends to, and, thro' the blessing of God, is a mean of the  *conversion of sinners*

ners from the error and evil of their way, James v. 19, 20. And the *conversion*, or *repentance*, of one sinner, or one lost sheep, affords joy in heaven to the inhabitants of the celestial mansions, Luke xv. 7, 10.

From all which it is evident, what tendency this evangelical purity hath to the good of others; and that the higher measures thereof you have, the greater tendency it will have this way. Let this motive, therefore, serve to excite you to press after further and higher degrees thereof.

2dly, We proposed to conclude this use of exhortation by giving some *directions*. We might here, 1. Offer you some *general* directions how to attain this gospel purity. 2. Some more *particular* directions how to maintain it.

[1.] The *general directions* we offer for attaining this gospel purity, are these follow.

1. If you would attain this gospel purity, O labour to be sensible of your absolute *impotency*, *weakness*, and *inability* for the duties of religion: be convinced of your natural impotency, and moral impotency; be persuaded that you are all together without strength; and that if God would give you a heaven, a paradise, a Christ for one thought, you could not command it; no: *Of ourselves, as ourselves*, saith the apostle, even though converted, *we cannot think any thing*, 2 Cor. iii. 5. I warrant you, Paul was a better philosopher than many now-a-days, pretending to great things: no doubt he knew that the soul was *ever thinking*; and yet, saith he, *one thought I cannot command*; I cannot bring it forth, till the almighty grace of God do it. Let people talk of man's power as they will; and lay aside the Bible, which is full of argument to the contrary; I am sure, if they have any experience under heaven, they will find they want power to perform many thousand duties which God hath called them to practise. The Arminians are so far convinced of this, that they are driven to several shifts; and talk of a *remote* power, and not an *immediate* power to some things. It is plain, that man, by nature, is *without strength*; and it is express scripture, *Without me ye can do nothing*, John xv. 5. It is said to the disci-

ples, already in a state of grace, that *without him ye can do nothing*; much more may it be said of all the unconverted. Be sensible of this then, that you cannot believe, you cannot repent, you cannot pray, you cannot mortify sin of yourselves. And this impotency is not only a mere want of power, but a want of will: it is a cursed moral impotency, a wilful impotency.

2. Seek *regeneration*. If you be not good trees you cannot bring forth good fruit: if you be not converted; if you be not united to Christ, if you be not born again, if you have not the habit of grace, you cannot bring forth good fruit: you must be united to the Son of God, and derive strength from him. The foundation of gospel purity must be laid in union to Christ, and a new nature; for, *they that are in the flesh cannot please God*. It is true, that one that knows himself to be in a state of nature, is not to neglect duty and means; such as, reading, praying, hearing the word preached, and the like, which God calls all unto: but let none content themselves with these performances, without a new nature; for, as sure as God lives, this way of doing will never bring you to heaven: *Except a man be born again, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God*, John iii. 3. Therefore cry, *Lord, create in me a clean heart, and renew a right spirit within me*, Psalm li. 10.

3. Make and keep friendship with the *Holy Ghost*, if you would attain this gospel purity: he is not only called *holy*, because of his *essential* holiness; for thus the Father is the holy Spirit, and the Son is the holy Spirit: but he is called holy also for his *office*; because it is his special work to make people holy. Be at friendship with the Holy Ghost: do not *quench* him; do not *grieve* him; do not *resist* him; do not *rebel* against him; do not *withstand* him in his motions, &c. Beware, lest by these, or any such means, the Holy Ghost and you be set at odds. O Sirs, should you not live near him who can make you holy?

[2.] The *particular directions* I would offer, especially with respect to the *maintaining* of this gospel purity, I shall sum up in these two generals, 1. Rightly to use the

rule of gospel purity. 2. Diligently to ply the *means* thereof.

*Direct.* 1. In order to the maintaining of gospel purity, rightly use the *rule* of it. The rule of it is the LAW. If it is asked, *How are we to use this rule?* We might reply, You are to use it *fairly* and *evangelically*.

(1.) You are to use this rule *fairly*. If the law do its proper work upon you, Sirs, it will drive you to the gospel as a remedy; and if the gospel deal savingly with you, it will lead you to the law as a rule: but many misplace this rule, and do not use it fairly.

1. Some judge of themselves by the *half* of the law, and not by the *whole*: they love one part of the law, but not another; and they are sure to look to that part of the law, that they think makes for them, and overlook that part that makes against them: but this is not fair dealing; for people are to judge themselves by the whole of it. It was the false mother that was for dividing the child: so, the false Christian is for dividing one part of the law from another.

2. Some again judge themselves by the *outside* of the law, and not the *inside* thereof; by the letter, and not by the spirit of it. This was the error of the man who said, *All these things have I done from my youth up.* He did not consider the inside and spirituality of the law, otherwise he would have cried out, with David, *I have seen an end of all perfection; but thy commandment is exceeding broad*: it reaches the thoughts of the heart, as well as the actions of the life. And therefore, ye do not use it fairly, unless you make use of the inside as well as the outside; both sides of the law.

3. Some again they bring down this rule to their *practice*, but will not bring up their practice to the *rule*; and these do not use the rule fairly: thus many make God's law to justify their corrupt practices and sins. They, if we may be allowed the expression, make a nose-wax of the law, and mould it to their own corrupt fancy.

4. Others again, they *justify* themselves before they *apply the rule*, but do not apply the rule before they justify themselves. They have a good opinion of themselves; they are determined already about their state,

before they come to the rule: they are settled on their lees, and so cannot believe a word that the law says against them, because they justify themselves before they apply the rule. This is not a fair using of the law: let us use it fairly, and look on it; not as many do, as a *fountain of justification*, but as the *rule of action*. And this leads me,

(2.) To the other particular, *viz.* to use the rule of gospel purity *evangelically*. It may possibly be asked, *How shall we use the rule evangelically?* To this we reply, in the following particulars.

1. If you would use the law in a gospel manner, attempt not *obedience* to it in your own strength. Under the covenant of works, indeed, we were to obey by the strength of inherent grace: But now we are called to lay hold on Christ, as our strength; and to obey by the strength of derived grace assisting us.

2. If you would use the law in a gospel manner, seek not *peace* by your obedience and sanctity: when you have done all you can, even through grace, you must go out of your own obedience to the obedience of another for peace. Believers themselves are often-times tickled with their own performances, even though they profess to abhor justification by works.

3. If you would use the law in a gospel manner, let not the *duty* the law requires, or the *discovery* the law makes, hinder you to embrace the offer that the gospel makes. The gospel offers Christ as a husband; the law saith, Thou art a black sinner, an unfit match for such a husband. The gospel offer is, that you buy the *eye-salve*, *white raiment*, and *tried gold*. The law tells thee, thou hast nothing to buy with. Now, you use the law evangelically, when you say, Black as I am, I embrace the offer of such a husband; he can make me beautiful through his comeliness. Poor as I am, I embrace the offer of his eye-salve. There is riches enough in Christ for me; and I see he invites me to *buy without money, and without price*; and to *take the water of life freely*.

4. If you would use the law evangelically, then look not on the law as the *fountain of justification*, nor yet as the *fountain of strength*; but only as the *standard of duty*:  
and

and therefore you will use it in a gospel manner, if you make a constant journey between Christ and the law; looking to him for *righteousness and strength*, who is the fountain of both; righteousness, for your acceptance; and strength, for your assistance, in every piece of obedience to the law. Here is the short road to glory: the law forces the man to Christ to be sheltered by him; and Christ sends him back again to the law to be ruled by it: and the man, in using this rule, looks to Christ in the gospel, for righteousness and strength. In a word, let the main stress be laid upon the gospel, especially when you are brought to an extremity; when there seems to be a contrariety between the law and the gospel. When the law says, *Thy hope is perished from the Lord*; and the gospel saith, *There is hope in Israel concerning thee*; and shews the ground of hope to be in Christ, as the *Lord our righteousness and strength*: it is safest, in this case, to hearken most to the voice of the gospel; for there is a possibility of salvation this way, but not the other. Though you should have no more, but a *may-be ye shall be hid*; venture upon the *may-be*, upon the *peradventure* which the gospel affords: for, hope is a duty, but despair is a sin; the one honours God, the other dishonours him.

*Direct. 2.* Our next direction is, diligently to ply the *means* of this gospel purity. We shall offer a few of many that might be mentioned, and so close.

1. One mean is, to *live by faith on the Son of God*, by deriving continual supplies of grace and strength from him, saying, with David, *I will go in the strength of the Lord, making mention of thy righteousness, even of thine only*, Psalm lxxi. 16. Plead, by faith, the promise of sanctification; that *having these promises, you may cleanse yourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit*.

2. Another mean is, to *set the Lord always before you, and set a watch over yourself*. This was David's resolution; *I said I will take heed to my ways*. Security will betray you into the hands of enemies; but, *blessed is the servant whom his Lord, when he cometh, shall find watching*.

3. Another mean is, to *take care of discharging the*  
*sacre*

*sacred duties that he calls you to.* The scripture gives great encouragement to this; *They that wait on the Lord shall renew their strength.* The more that a man minds divine ordinances, in secret, private, and public, in obedience to God's command, and dependance on God's promise, the more strength shall he receive to conquer his spiritual enemies, and discharge his spiritual work. God could preserve your bodies without food; but he will not, when he affords ordinary means: so, God could preserve your souls, without ordinances; but he will not, when he gives opportunity to enjoy them. Let me say to you, as Jacob to the patriarchs, *Behold, I have heard, that there is corn in Egypt; get you down thither and buy, that you may live and not die:* So, behold you have heard, that there is spiritual food in the gospel; our Joseph has his granary full of corn, go you thither daily, by sacred duties, that you may live and not die: for, *in him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily.* And particularly,

4. Another mean is, *give yourselves unto prayer:* the praying Christian is readily the holy Christian. Pray, with David, *O that my ways were directed to keep thy statutes: Thy Spirit is good, lead me to the land of uprightness.* By daily prayer in secret, and in your families, you may get daily incomes for helping you to this gospel purity.

5. Another mean is, *O set about subduing your predominant sins, through grace;* for sin doth greatly mar your sanctity. Cast the Jonah over board; throw the Jezebel over the window; and stone the Achan to death; and, for this end, call in the aid and assistance of the Spirit of God; for, *if ye through the Spirit mortify the deeds of the body, ye shall live.*

6. In a word, *Labour to live under a constant sense of your own spiritual wants, and of the defects of grace and holiness; and a sense of Christ's fulness:* the persuasion hereof will induce you to come and *receive out of his fulness, grace for grace.*—If these means of gospel purity are diligently used, it is more than probable you shall be successful therein.

Now,

Now, go home; and this evening cry to the Lord, that he would help you to reduce the preaching into practice. Mind the good man's saying, who, coming from sermon, was asked, *If all was done*. He fetched a deep sigh, and said, *All was said, but all was not done*. Our preaching is not practice; your hearing is not practice: these are only certain means, unto gospel practice. What is your coming to the church, on the Lord's day? It is like servants coming to their master in the first morning of the week, and saying, "Now, tell us what shall be our week's work; what shall we do this day, and the next day, till the next week come?" You should come thus to Christ to get your orders; for, if you rest merely in the hearing, you confound the means with the end, and overturn the nature of things.

What do you mean, Sirs? Why stand you here all the day idle? Some of you have done nothing for God, nothing for your souls, for the generation, since you came into the world. Perhaps you have treasured up a cursed conquest for your children, or for your wife; and God may blast it when you are in the grave, and may punish your children for your sin; your children on earth, and you in hell, at the same time, and for the same sin. What have you done for God? what have you done for the church of God? what have you done for advancing holiness in your place? and the interest of Christ in your station? Many of you have done nothing: some of you have done something; but it is little: and some of you will neither do nor let do; you hinder others in the way of religion and holiness.

O see to it, man, woman! You are no friends to Christ; nay, you are enemies to him, if you have nothing of this gospel purity that I have been speaking of. O pray, pray that the Lord may bless to you what hath been said on this subject, for directing you to, and promoting you in, true gospel holiness: and may the Lord hear your requests, and fulfil your desires; and to his great name be all the praise.

## S E R M O N XV.

P R O V. XXX. 12.

*There is a generation that are pure in their own eyes ; and yet is not washed from their filthiness.*

[The eighth Sermon on this text.]

**T**HE greatest step towards Heaven, is to step out of our own door, and over our own threshold ; to go wholly out of ourselves, and wholly in to Christ. Instead of going abroad, and out of ourselves, by self-denial, we naturally stay at home, by self-conceit and proud imagination of our own excellency : *There is a generation that are pure in their own eyes ; and yet is not washed from their filthiness.*

It is idolatry to worship an holy angel, as well as a cursed devil. To make our *virtues* our God, is idolatry, as well as to make our *belly* our God : nay, it rather adds to the idolatry ; because that is used to rob him of his glory, which should have brought him in the greatest renew of glory. If a man boasts of his vices and sins, he pulls down the throne of God, and worships a devil : if a man boasts of his virtues and graces, he pulls down the throne of God with that wherewith he should build it up ; and worships a golden image, a golden calf : yea, worships himself, while he trusts in his own beauty and purity. *There is a generation that are pure in their own eyes : and yet is not washed from their filthiness.*

Having prosecuted the two first observations we took notice of from these words, we now proceed to the third proposition which we observed from them, namely,

DOCT. 3. *That self-conceit is incident to a multitude of professors.*

Many, who are most impure, look upon themselves

as pure; and labour under a sad a woful delusion, a gross and damnable mistake, about the state and case of their immortal souls.

The method we lay down, for prosecuting this observation, through divine assistance, shall be the following.

- I. To prove and clear the *truth* of the doctrine.
- II. Touch a little at the *nature* of self-conceit.
- III. Enquire into the *grounds, causes, and springs* of it.
- IV. Point out the *evil* of it, both in respect of the sinfulness and danger of it.
- V. Deduce some *inferences* from the whole.

I. The first thing then to be essayed, is, To prove and clear the *truth* of the doctrine, *viz.* *That self-conceit is incident to a multitude of professors.* This point is evident both from scripture and experience.

1. It is clear from a multitude of *scriptures*. Not only the words of the text, but many other scripture passages confirm it; such as, Isa. lxxv. 5. *Which say, Stand by thyself, come not near, for I am holier than thou.* Chap. lxxviii. 2, 3. *They seek me daily, and delight to know my ways, as a nation that did righteousness, and forsook not the ordinances of their God: they ask of me the ordinance of justice; they take delight in approaching to God. Wherefore have we fasted, and thou seest not? wherefore have we afflicted our soul, and thou takest no knowledge?* They were much in duty; much more than the generality of professors in our day: but they had an high conceit of themselves and their duties. Self-conceit is self-deceit; *For, if a man think himself to be something, when he is nothing, he deceiveth himself,* Gal. vi. 3.: or, he that conceiveth of himself highly, deceiveth himself greatly. *How canst thou say, I am not polluted, I have not gone after Baalim? See thy way in the valley; know what thou hast done, &c.* Jer. ii. 23. *Thy said they were not polluted; and yet they are called to see their way in the valley.* It is observed by the prophet Hosea, chap. viii. 2, 3. concerning Israel, that they cry, *My God, we know thee;* and yet they *cast off the thing that is good.* Why are you saying, *My God, we know thee?* You are all mis-

taken, saith God; you have neither part nor portion in me. If you consult the parable of the ten virgins, Matth. xxv. you will there see, that the foolish virgins had an high profession, and very high pretensions to religion: they entertained an high opinion of themselves and their lamps; though yet they had no oil in their vessels. Yea, it is told of many, Mat. vii. 22. that they shall say, *Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name, and in thy name cast out devils, and in thy name done many wonderful works?* To whom Christ will say, *I never knew you; depart from me.* And here it is plainly implied, that they will expect to be rewarded with eternal bliss for the same. We are cautioned to this purpose; *Let no man deceive himself: if any man among you seemeth to be wise in this world, let him become a fool, that he may be wise*, 1 Cor. iii. 18. *If any man think that he knoweth any thing, he knoweth nothing yet as he ought to know*, chap. viii. 2. *If any man think himself to be something, when he is nothing, he deceiveth himself*, Gal. vi. 3. All which supposes that many think something of themselves, who yet are nothing, and are but cheating their own souls; and of all deceit this is the most terrible.—In a word, we find a whole church labouring under this soul-ruining disease and distemper, namely, the church of Laodicea; *Thou sayst, I am rich, and increased with goods, and have need of nothing; and knowest not that thou art wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked*, Rev. iii. 17.—Is it not plain from these scriptures, that many look upon themselves to be pure, who yet were never washed from their filthiness? But,

2. Let us next compare these scriptures with *experience*. We may see this doctrine abundantly clear from experience. Are we not exceeding ready to judge ourselves better than indeed we are? And to magnify ourselves, our states, our virtues, above what they are? We act very differently in respect of our good things, from what we act with respect to our evil. As to our sins and evils, we have a trick of extenuation, that though our sins be exceeding many, yet we can, like the unjust steward, write down fifty instead of an hundred. Though our sins be great, we can lessen them.

But,

But, on the contrary, in our good things or graces, whether real or supposed, we have a trick of aggravation, to make them greater and more than they are; here we write an hundred for fifty. And here we have the art of multiplication. It is with many, as it was with Simon Magus; they deceive themselves, as he deceived the people of Samaria, Acts viii. 9, 10. He made them believe that he was some *great man*; yea, that he was *the great power of God*: whereas, indeed, he was but a base forcerer; and one that wrought lying miracles by the power of Satan. So, many conceit themselves to be great men, to be the dear children of God, and that the power of Christ dwelleth in them; when, indeed, they are nothing but Satan's vassals.

Is it not evident from experience, that many are dreaming that matters are well enough with them? They have a good heart, they think; and they trust in God, they say; and hope to be saved as well as others, that seem to be more strict.—Is it not evident from experience, that there are more proud professors than poor converts? And hence, in a day of trial, multitudes of professors apostatise: they are offended at Christ and his cross; they fall off from the faith, like leaves from the trees, in the time of harvest. They had only an high pretence to devotion, and an high conceit of themselves; but were never truly washed from their filthiness.

II. The second thing proposed was, To touch a little at the *nature* of this self-conceit. Why, in general, “It is a false apprehension, whereby a man hath an over-weaning and over-valuing of himself, and his actions; judging of himself more highly than he ought to do.” This self-conceit may be considered, either as it takes place in the *godly*, who may apprehend themselves to be in a better condition than they are; or as it takes place in the *wicked*, who may judge themselves to be in a good condition, when yet they are in a bad one.

I. It may be considered, I say, with respect to the *godly*; they may imagine themselves better than indeed they are, when they think their smoking flax is a blazing

ing flame; when they look at their graces through a magnifying glass, and think them great, when indeed they are but small. They may look upon their own graces, as parents upon their own children, and think them the fairest of all others: James and John seem to be thus affected, when Christ tells them, *Are ye able to drink of my cup, and to be baptized with my baptism?* Matth. xx. 22. Yea, say they; *We are able*: While yet, alas! they were scarce able to see Christ drink that cup; and therefore fled away when it was coming near. Thus Peter also seems to be too high minded, about his grace and strength, when he said, *Why cannot I follow thee now?* Yea, *Though all men forsake thee, yet will not I*.

2. It may be considered with respect to the *unregenerate*, and all the wicked and ungodly, who judge themselves to be in a good state, when indeed they are in a bad one. And here this self-conceit hath especially these two parts, or two things in it. 1. When men apprehend that they want that *evil*, which indeed they have. 2. When they imagine they have that good which indeed they want.

[1.] When men suppose that they *want that evil*, which indeed they have; or think they are not so bad as indeed they are. Thus the Pharisee talks how free he is of common vices, Luke xviii. 11.; that he is not *unjust*, nor an *extortioner*: and yet our Lord Jesus, who could not be deceived, charges that whole tribe with manifold enormities, Matth. xiii. 4,—39. Luke xi. 29,—44. and elsewhere; how they devoured widows houses, through colour of long prayers; by teaching their children to starve their own parents, to offer to the altar; which, in effect, was just to fill their purse. Here was injustice and extortion: and yet, because it was more covertly carried on, and not so evident as that of the publicans and common thieves; therefore they bless themselves, as if they had been no extortioners, no unjust persons. Thus many will free themselves of pride; Why? Because they do not exceed in their apparel: and yet they may be swelled with pride and self-conceit; and discover it in many other respects. Thus many

many natural men think themselves free of many sins and gross immoralities, which take place in the generation; and so, who more religious than they? They think they have not such and such corruptions, because they feel not the powerful operation of them; and it is only God's restraining hand, but no renewing grace, that makes it so: but a lion is no less a lion, when in fetters, than when he is loose.

This self-conceit, whereby men judge that they are not so bad as they are, it looks not only thus to present circumstances, but it looks sometimes *backward*, to former times, saying, with the Pharisees, *If we had lived in the days of our fathers, we would not have murdered the prophets*, Matth. xxiii. 30. when yet their bloody persecution of Christ, discovered the same spirit to be in them: Even so, many will say, "Fy upon the persecuting high priests, that crucified Christ! Fy upon Judas that betrayed him! if we had been living, we would have taken Christ's part against the Jews; we would have taken the Martyrs part against their persecutors." And yet their spiteful and malicious mind against the people of God, whom they mistake, reproach, and misrepresent, shews that they would have been as ready, as the forwardest, to execute all these villanies and boucheries. If one had asked Herod, concerning the conduct of Ahab and Jezebel towards Elias, and what he would have done, in the like case; no doubt he would have condemned them; and declared, he would never have been guilty of the like: and yet he did the same thing to the new Elias, [*viz.* John the Baptist,] that came in the *spirit and power of Elias*; and so discovered that he would have done the same thing to the old Elias.

Again, Sometimes it looks *forward* to future times, saying, with Hazael, when the prophet told him he would cruelly rip up the women with child, and dash their children against the stones, 2 Kings viii. 13. *What! am I a dog?* He thought better of himself than that ever he should break out into such wickedness. All the sons of Adam are, in their vitious qualities, worse than dogs, bears, and tygers; and their is no sin so odious, to  
which

which we are not inclinable; for, original sin hath in it the seed of all other sins: hence it is, that Christ adresses that admonition, even to disciples, that they *take heed of surfeiting and drunkenness*, Luke xxi. 24. For they had in them the common poison of nature; and so were obnoxious, even to the most shameful and reproachful evils; and yet many think themselves far enough from these and such like enormous sins. What! am I a dog, to do so and so! Men persuade themselves, through self-conceit, that their nature is not so far venom'd, that it should break forth into such wickedness. Indeed, there may be some sins that we are not so much tempted to as others: so Luther said of himself, 'That he never was tempted to covetousness.' Yet there is no sin but we may both be tempted to, and, through temptation, even fall into, if the everlasting arms do not under-drop: this is supposed in that motive adduced, Gal. vi. 1. *Brethren, if any man be overtaken in a fault, ye which are spiritual, restore such an one in the spirit of meekness; considering thyself, lest thou also be tempted.* We need to suspect our own hearts, if we knew our nature; however, they may be tamed by education, civility, good example, and the like. As you would readily suspect a bear, or wolf, or lion, or any such like beast, and be loth to trust himself to it, though never so well tamed, knowing its natural voracious disposition: even so, *He that trusteth in his own heart, is a fool; and he that leaneth to his own understanding, is not wise.* Fear even those sins which ye least suspect, and to which you find not yourselves so prone-ly carried.

[2.] Another part of self-conceit is, when they suppose they *have that good*, which indeed they want; and when they imagine themselves in a *good state*, when they are in a very bad, miserable one. This is a very sad deceit; *He that thinketh himself to be something, when he is nothing, deceiveth himself*, Gal. vi. 3. And, as was formerly observed, self-conceit is self-deceit. And here we might condescend on a variety of persons who thus deceive themselves.

(1.) The *rich worldling* deceiveth himself, because of his

his outward prosperity : but, though riches be the gift of God, yet we must consider with what God reaches them : whether with the right-hand, in his love ; or with the left-hand in his anger. I have read of a king that heaped up riches upon those whom he most hated ; that, together with their riches, he might crush them with a heavy burden of cares. God puts some into fat pastures, that he may feed them for a day of slaughter.

(2.) *Civilians* deceive themselves, and think their state good, because they live honestly without scandal, saying, *Whose ox or ass have I stolen? Whom have I wronged?* But, what sort of a religion is that, which consists only in honesty towards men, while there is not also devotion towards God? A negative and external religion, without something positive and internal, will never bear a person out in the sight of God : *Except your righteousness exceed the righteousness of the Scribes and Pharisees, ye cannot enter into the kingdom of heaven.*

(3.) *Libertines* deceive themselves ; even these who turn the grace of God into wantonness, and apprehend their case to be good. Why, they have been born in the church, and enjoy the privileges thereof ; they have been washed with holy water, and fed with the spiritual manna of the word and sacraments ; they cry, *The temple of the Lord* : we have gone to church and heard sermons ; yea, we believe, say they ; though yet the means of faith, the word, and powerful ministry thereof, are what they despise.

(4.) The *temporary believer* deceives himself with a false faith, repentance, and obedience ; apprehending it to be true faith, true repentance, true religion ; nay, hence concludes he shall be saved : and this is more dangerous than the former, because he thinks his argument is certain, and agreeable to the word. And, indeed, his graces may be so like the true believers, that the most discerning Christian cannot distinguish between them : although in fact his faith fails both in the knowledge and application of it. It fails in the *knowledge* of it, in that it is not grounded and rooted in the testimony of the word and Spirit : and in experience, in that it is  
not

not a heating and warming knowledge, working love in the heart to the truth known : and in that it is not humble and abasing, making him to loath and abhor himself. Yea, his faith fails in the *application* of it ; in that the application of it is not mutual : the believer takes hold of Christ, because Christ takes hold of him. True faith conflicts with unbelief : the believer finds much ado to believe, and to live by faith. The hypocrite finds it very easy : Satan doth not try his faith ; for he begat that presumptuous faith in him. The true believer believes against sense ; and, like the woman of Canaan, can pick comfort out of the reproachful name of a *dog* : and, with Jonah, even in the whale's belly, *look towards God's holy temple* : can see heaven in the very extremity of misery. But, in such a case, the temporary believer's jolly confidence fails him. And so I might instance how his repentance and obedience fail him. But however, herein the man apprehends his state good, while yet he is in *the gall of bitterness, and bond of iniquity*.

There are two extremes of judging of ourselves. Some judge their state *worse* than it is : as when the children of God judge themselves to be Satan's ; and their faith to be no faith, their repentance to be no repentance. Some, again, are in the other extreme, and judge *better* of themselves than they are, even to be the children of God, when they are Satan's ; to have faith, when it is but presumption ; to have religion, when it is but hypocrisy. So men may be puffed up with a conceit of knowledge ; as of faith, repentance, love, and other graces : and surely, of these two, the last is most dangerous, as well as the most common deceit and error. It is better for a good man to think he hath no faith, no religion ; than, on the contrary, for an ill man to judge that he hath them : for, to judge the worst of ourselves, is a mean to awaken us out of security, and to stir us up to make *our calling and election sure* ; but to judge we have grace, when we have none, this lulls us asleep, and sends us securely to hell.

III. The third thing proposed was, To speak of the *grounds, causes, and springs* of this self-conceit. The grounds

grounds of this great and epidemical distemper are many; such as,

1. The deceitful and desperately wicked *temper of the heart*; for, *The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked*, Jer. xvii. 9. As Jacob cheated Esau out of his earthly inheritance; so doth the hearts of the children of men cheat them out of their eternal inheritance. There are many deceitful things in the world; riches are deceitful, favour is deceitful, beauty is deceitful, enemies are deceitful; but the heart is deceitful *above all things*; yea, above the devil himself: and this doth in nothing more palpably appear, than in making people believe that they are going to heaven, when they are going the streight road to hell. O Sirs, do not trust your own hearts.

2. *Ignorance* is another cause of self-conceit. Many, through ignorance, cannot distinguish between good and evil; but take common grace for saving grace, as Saul took the devil for Samuel. Many do not know or consider what it is that brings a soul to heaven; that they must be born again, and go through the pangs of the new birth, and the hardships of mortification. We must not think to lie in Delilah's lap all our days; and then betake ourselves to Abraham's bosom when we die. Ignorance is so far from being the *mother of devotion*, as the papists affirm, that it is the mother of pride and presumption. *Thou thoughtest that thou wast rich, and increased in goods; Why? Thou knewest not that thou art poor, wretched, miserable, blind, and naked*, Rev. iii. 17. Men are proud, because they know not their misery: it is impossible that a man, who truly knoweth his misery, should be proud. True, the apostle saith, *knowledge puffeth up*; that is, unsanctified knowledge, notional knowledge; but true knowledge humbleth: and none more proud and arrogant than the brutishly ignorant man. I will get you an ignorant man, that will truly imagine he can keep the whole law: *All these things have I done from my youth up; what lake I yet?*

3. *Negligence and sloth* is another cause of pride and self-conceit. Men are at no pains to consider where their landing shall be, when the shadows of the everlast-

ing evening will be stretched over them. Truly, the whole world are either atheists, or down-right mad: either they believe not that there is a heaven and hell, and that the scriptures are the word of God, whereby they may know how it is between him and them: or, if they believe that there is a God, an heaven, and an hell, they are mad and distracted, if they consider not where they are going.—Spiritual sleep and security is the great cause of self-conceit. As natural sleep, so spiritual sleep is full of dreams; *It shall even be as when a hungry man dreameth, and behold he eateth; but he awaketh, and his soul is empty: or as when a thirsty man dreameth, and behold he drinketh; but he awaketh, and behold he is faint, and his soul hath appetite,* Isa. xxix. 8. A man may dream of riches, and treasures, and crowns, and kingdoms conferred of him, but he awaketh, and no such matter, though he truly thought in his dream, that he was possessed of all. So, in spiritual sleep, people may have strange dreams; they may dream of heaven, and that they have faith, and repentance, and Christ, and salvation, and a crown of glory; when, alas! all is but a dream; and the man awakes, either in time or at the day of judgment, and finds himself deceived: and the sweeter the dream, the sadder the disappointment. For, as in natural dreams, it is better, when they are false, to dream of fearful things than of joyful: as for instance, it is better for a king to dream that he is a beggar, than for a beggar to dream that he is a king; for the king, when he awakens, his grief is gone, and his joy is redoubled, seeing the vanity of his dream; but the beggar, when he awakes, his joy is gone, and his grief redoubled, in regard of the false joy of his dream. So it is in spiritual matters: it is safer to be in some fears about our state, than to be filled with presumptuous hopes. Christ tells us, that *few shall be saved*: but if all were saved, that dream they shall be so, surely there would be few that should be damned: but, *narrow is the way that leads to life, and few there be that find it.*

4. Another cause of self-conceit is *Satan*, who hath a great hand herein. This is one of the great wiles of this

this cunning sophister. He takes all methods to deceive people: he persuades them that there state is better than it is; and makes them look upon themselves as really good enough, and safe enough: *The god of this world hath blinded the eyes of them that believe not. While the strong man armed keeps the house, the goods are at ease, And we are not ignorant of his devices;* he hath great skill in deceiving souls. He deceived our first parents when sinless; how easily must he deceive us who are sinful and ignorant? He deceived them, by making them think they *should be as gods*, to know good and evil; and he deceives us by making us think, that we *are gods*, knowing all that we need to know: and so, lifting them up in pride, they are pure in their own eyes, though remaining in their impurity.

5. Another cause of self-conceit is judging the goodness or badness of our state by *false rules*. Many form very erroneous opinions and mistakes of a good condition; and they frequently mistake a bad state for a good one, by reason of the false rules by which they judge themselves.—Sometimes they judge themselves by the opinion that *others* have of them: they are held in reputation by others in the world, who know them, for persons of wisdom, knowledge, prudence, discretion, &c.; and accordingly form such sentiments of themselves.—Sometimes they judge themselves by their *affections*, whether of hatred or love: it may be they hate some of the evils of the day, and some of the sins of the times; and shew some zeal against these: but Judas may preach against the Pharisees, and preach up Christ, and yet be a traitor. It may be they have a love to the godly; but not because they are godly, and for the holiness and purity they perceive about them.—Sometimes they judge by the false rule of an *erring conscience*: and many apprehend that matters are right with them, because of storms and calms in the conscience: but people may have storms in the conscience, like Judas; and calms in the conscience, like the peace of justification; and yet it is but carnal security, saying, *We shall have peace, though we walk after the imagination of our own evil hearts.*—Sometimes they judge by the false rule

of the *audience* of their prayers. God may hear the prayer of people, with respect to some blessings that they need; and yet give leanness to their soul.—Sometimes persons judge by the false rules of the *law*, misunderstood: as when they judge either by a part of the law, or judge by the outside of the law, and not the inside and spirituality of it. Indeed, the application of the law, is one great cause of self-conceit: so it was with Paul; *I was alive without the law once; but when the commandment came, sin revived, and I died*, Rom. vii. 9.—Sometimes persons judge themselves by the false rules of the *gospel*, mistaken; such as that word, *If there be a willing mind, it is accepted*; which belongs only to believers, that are *accepted in the Beloved*.

6. Another cause of self-conceit is *self-righteousness*; Rom. x. 3. *Being ignorant of God's righteousness, and going about to establish their own righteousness, they have not submitted* their over-proud conceit of their own righteousness: it flows from their being possessed with a legal righteousness of their own; and this makes them so proud and selfish, that they will have nothing ado with the righteousness of the God-man.—Some have a righteousness of *disposition*; a good natural temper that they lean to, and deceive themselves with.—Some have a righteousness of *education*: they have been brought up at the feet of Gamaliel, and have had a good example; and this hath had much influence upon them, to restrain them from many evils; and this deceives them.—Some have a righteousness of *profession*, as Paul; one of the strictest Pharisees, of the strictest side; one that sides himself with those who make the most splendid profession.—Some have a righteousness of *intention*: they have good resolutions; *All that the Lord hath commanded we will do*.—Some have a righteousness of *reputation*: they are of good repute among others, and held in high esteem amongst those of distinguished abilities.—Some have the righteousness of *reformation*: they do many things, and reform in many particulars, and keep themselves from many of the grosser and more open violations of God's holy law.—Some have the righteousness of common *spiritual operations*; common *enlightenings*

tenings and tastings of the heavenly gift, Heb. vi. 5, 6.; a common work of the Spirit upon the understanding, will, affections, conscience, and conversation.—In a word, some have a *natural* righteousness, a cradle faith; they never did any thing amiss.—Some have a *negative* righteousness; *they are not as other men*. They are not guilty of this and the other gross violation of God's holy law.—Some have a *positive* righteousness; they read, and pray, and fast, and give alms, and attend upon ordinances.—Some have a *comparative* righteousness; they imagine they are better than others: *I am holier than thou*.—Yea, some have a *superlative* righteousness; they say and do their best. And I know not how many kinds of righteousness might be mentioned.—Some have an *active* righteousness; they do what they can: nay, *they do many things*.—Some have a *passive* righteousness; they have suffered losses and crosses for a good cause, and the sake of religion.—Upon these, and the like, many professors build: and hence they conceive highly of themselves, and are *pure in their own eyes*; and yet, after all, *are not washed from their filthiness*.

IV. The fourth general head of the method, was, to speak of the *evil* of this sin of self-conceit. We may view this, 1. More generally. 2. More particularly.

1<sup>st</sup>, We may view the evil of self-conceit more generally. Where self-conceit is, in its power, it is an evidence and plain indication of being a *stranger to religion*, and of being a *gross hypocrite*: for, *he that lifteth up his heart, is not upright*, Hab. ii. 4. His soul that is lifted up in him, is not upright. He that hath a conceit of his own purity and attainments, is but a dissembler, is not what he pretends to be.

2<sup>dly</sup>, Let us take a more *particular* view of the evil of self-conceit. The evil of it will appear in these six respects. 1. In respect of ourselves. 2. In respect of others. 3. In respect of Christ. 4. In respect of graces. 5. In respect of duty. 6. In respect of danger.

1. The evil of self-conceit will appear in respect of *ourselves*. Where self-conceit is in a person, there is *pride*;

pride ; and, you know, *God resisteth the proud, but he giveth grace to the humble*. Where self-conceit is, there is *carnal security* ; and, *drowsiness shall clothe a man with rags*. Where it is, there is *contempt of means* : Self-conceit produces either a despising of the means, or a not using of the means that God hath appointed. The man being self-sufficient, he is, in some manner, above means : the means of grace, the means of knowledge are undervalued.

2. The evil of self-conceit will appear, if we take a view of it with respect to *others*. The evil of it is such, that it produceth either a *contempt* of others ; *Blessed be God, I am not like this man* ; he undervalues them, and looks down upon them, as below him : or, it produceth *uncharitableness*, if not contempt. None so uncharitable as the man that hath a conceit of himself. I think the apostle Paul seems to hint at this, Gal. vi. 3. compared with the first verse : *q. d.* I know none will stand in opposition to this duty of *charitable carriage towards their neighbour*, but those that are puffed up with an *high conceit of themselves*.

3. The evil of this self-conceit will appear in respect of *Christ*. Such people *contemn* him ; and they despise his *fulness*, *righteousness*, and *blood*.—They despise his *fulness* for their supply : why, they are full of themselves ; *They are rich and increased with goods, and stand in need of nothing*. They come rich, and go empty away.—They despise his *righteousness* for their justification : while they are *puer in their own eyes*, they content themselves with a righteousness spun out of their own bowels, out of their own duties.—They despise his *blood*, his *Spirit*, his *grace*, for their sanctification : why, a person that thinks himself already pure, will not make application to the fountain where unclean souls are made clean.

4. The evil of self-conceit will appear, if we view it in respect of *graces*. The evil of it is such, that it stands in opposition to every grace ; particularly to that mother grace, *humility*. *God giveth grace to the humble ; but he resisteth the proud*. Humility is such a grace that, without it, a man cannot be a Christian. Now, this pride is  
 opposed

opposed to humility and self-denial; which Christ enjoins on all his disciples: it is opposed to that self-loathing that he requires. The selfish man will not be covered with the vail of blushing: No; he seldom takes a look of his failings. He looks more on his beauty than his defilement. He will not cry out with Agur, in the context, *I am more brutish than any man; I have not the understanding of a man.* The motto of the humble man is, *I abhorre myself, and repent in dust and ashes.* The motto of the self-conceited man is, *God, I thank thee I am not like other men.* He looks on any thing of attainment through a magnifying glass; but upon his sins in a diminishing one.

5. The evil of self-conceit is great in respect of *duties*. The evil of it will appear very great if we consider the following particulars, among several others.—For it produceth *rashness* in adventuring upon duty; even the most solemn duty: because, being *pure in their own eyes*, they stand upon no duty; while the poor humble and self-abased creature is afraid lest he mismanage his work.—It produceth a *superficial* performance of duty: tho' they think very much of their duties, yet they perform them but overly; for they imagine any sort of service from them is enough. And yet it produceth a kind of *meritorious* opinion of their duties; *Wherefore have we fasted, and thou seeest not? wherefore have we afflicted our soul, and thou takest no knowledge,* Isa. lviii. 3, 4. As if God had been faulty, in not taking notice of their performances.—We might mention a variety of other things to the same purpose.

6. The evil of self-conceit will appear in respect of *danger*. The evil of it is exceeding great. Why so? Here is great *deceit*; for, *he that thinketh himself to be something, when he is nothing, deceiveth himself,* Gal. vi. 3. And this is the worst of all deceit. To deceive another, is certainly a great fault: but to deceive ourselves; what a terrible evil is it! For a man to kill and destroy another, is a sad thing; but to kill and destroy himself, is yet more dreadful!—The self-conceited person imagines he can *perform* any duty; that he can read, pray, communicate, believe, repent: but he deceives himself

himself.—To be deceived about earthly things is ill; but to be deceived and cheated out of our *immortal souls*, alas! that is worst of all.—When a self-conceited person hears the threatening, or the promise, he *misapplies* all: that threatening, is not to him, he thinks; and yet that is his portion: that promise is to him, he imagines; and yet he hath no part in that matter.—Again, as such people are never likely to get *good* of ordinances; so, they are not easily convinced of their *mistake*: and no wonder; for we are told, Jer. vii. 5. *They hold fast deceit*, when we say all we possibly can say to them. They will still declare, that they have a good heart towards God, and that they have a great love to Christ; though yet they never saw their ill heart, nor their strong enmity: *They hold fast deceit*. Self-conceited persons will come under a sad *disappointment* in the issue; for, *fearfulness shall surprise the hypocrite in Zion. Who among us shall dwell with devouring fire? who can abide with everlasting burning?* Why will they be surpris'd with fear and terror? What is the matter? Why, they had a good hope of heaven; and so, the higher their hope, the more dismal their fall and disappointment. Oh! how many ride triumphantly to hell in a chariot of soul-destroying delusion! They imagine they are right enough, and that all is well; while it is quite otherwise with them.



## S E R M O N XVI.

P R O V. xxx. 12.

*There is a generation that are pure in their own eyes; and yet is not washed from their filthiness.*

[The ninth Sermon on this text.]

**T**HIS text assigns two or three differences between the *godly* and the *wicked*. 1. They differ from each other in their *number*; there is a *generation* of wicked men

men and hypocrites, a *multitude* of them : whereas the godly are but a *little flock*, an *handful*, a *remnant*, a *few*. 2. They differ from each other in their *judgment* ; particularly in their judgment about themselves. Wicked men and hypocrites are *proud*, and *pure in their own eyes* : whereas the godly are *humble*, and *vile in their own eyes*. 3. They differ from each other in their *real qualities*. The wicked and hypocritical generation are really *vile* and *polluted*, never *washen from their filthiness* : whereas the godly are *purified* in part, and *cleansed from their filthiness* ; at least, it is their exercise to get their defilement daily washed away with the blood of Christ.

It is remarkable, that as *self-abasement* and *purity* go together ; (for, they that are impure and vile in their own eyes, are a people washed from their filthiness :) so, on the other hand, *self-conceit* and *impurity* go together ; for, *the generation that are pure in their own eyes, are not washed from their filthiness*. The former look upon themselves as impure, and yet are pure ; the latter judge themselves pure, but are impure.

The doctrinal part of the subject having been finished in the preceding discourse, it remains now that we make some practical improvement of the point.

V. The fifth thing we proposed in the method, was the *application* of the doctrine ; which we shall essay in several uses.

The *first use* that we make shall be of *information*. If it be so, as has been affirmed, *That self-conceit is incident to a multitude of professors*, then we may infer the following things.

1. Hence see the *degeneracy of our nature*, by reason of the fall. Alas ! how corrupt is our nature now ! The devil made our first parents fancy, that they *should be as gods* ; and now he makes men dream that they *are as gods* : for, this self-conceit is a deifying of ourselves. Self is the god that we adore naturally. Instead of lawful self-love, unlawful self-conceit takes place. There is a lawful self-love enjoined ; *Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself* : where, you see, it is our duty to love our-

selves; and then our neighbour as ourselves. And if the generation had a right and lawful love to themselves, either soul or body; they would not destroy their bodies by intemperance and insobriety, and ruin their souls by wilful sin and impenitency: but, instead of lawful self-love, sinful self-love takes the throne. Self-conceit and self-admiration, self-will and self-satisfaction prevail.

2. See what is the great tendency of true *gospel preaching*; namely, to discover and diminish all *self-purity* and *self-righteousness*, that *Christ* alone may be exalted: yea, the design of it is to level and dash down all that *self-conceited purity*, whereby people are *pure in their own eyes*, that it may advance *gospel-purity*, by which we may be *pure in God's sight*. Some make a vast noise about preaching up good works, and of their being friends to holiness and the law; while yet the tendency of their doctrine may be only to make people pure and holy in their own eyes, and in the eyes of men: but that which a gospel minister especially aims at, is, to get people pure in the sight of God. He cannot satisfy himself merely in preaching up good works, and charity, piety, devotion, mercy, tenderness, honesty, civility, morality, &c. which is very commendable, and would to God there were more of these; but he goes farther, and labours principally to get the foundation of true holiness laid in the heart, self-purity mortified, the principles rectified, and Christ formed in the heart: otherwise, they build without laying a foundation. It may be observed, with regret, that never were there less morality amongst persons of all ranks, than since so many ministers laid aside evangelical preaching, and made the inculcating moral duties their principal theme. And many who extol moral virtues, are themselves the most immoral persons. The Pharisees set up for great friends to the law, when Christ appeared on the stage; and they flouted at him, as if he had been an enemy to good works, when he was telling them that they were but hypocrites: *Think they, saith he, that I am come to destroy the law?* Nay; *Except your righteousness exceed the righteousness of the Scribes and Pharisees, ye cannot enter into the kingdom of God.* Why, they were pure in their  
own

own eyes ; they verily imagined they were friends to holiness : yet they made clean but the *outside*, and were not *internally washed from their filthiness*. The doctrine of the Pharisees was much about washings, and legal purifications : Yea, saith Christ ; but I tell you, you must be *pure in heart*, otherwise you *cannot see God*. Why, say the Pharisees, you must do good works, and bring forth good fruits : Yea, saith Christ ; but make the tree good, otherwise the fruit cannot be good. The principles must be changed, the nature renewed, and the soul implanted into Christ ; then, and not till then, can any do what is spiritually good. Till there be both a spiritual habit of grace, wrought by the efficacious power of the Spirit of God ; and a spiritual communication of heavenly influences, to excite that habit into exercise, there can be no pure act, no holy work acceptable to God : and whatever doctrine doth not aim at this, it comes so far short of pressing holiness, that it may indeed make hypocrites ; but can never direct people how to go one step beyond hypocrisy and self-conceit : for, without this radical change, a man may well be pure in his own eyes, and in the eyes of others ; but is not pure in God's eyes, nor washen from his filthiness.

3. Hence see the difference that there is between *believers* and *hypocrites*. The hypocrite doth the same action externally that the sound believer doth ; he may pray and praise, and read and hear, and what not. What doth the best believer that I do not ? saith the hypocrite. What can they do but I will do ? Yea, he may exceed the believer in the multitude of duties. But, behold ! all the while he is a mass of impurity and pollution ; and only pure in his own eyes. He may indeed affect holiness, and seem to be one that is freed of self-conceit ; but yet self is still his principle, and self still his end. Whereas the true believer, as such, hath no self-conceit, but what is his burden ; no self-motive, but what is his grief ; no self-ends or aims, but what are his exercise either sooner or later. And, in a word, there is as great a difference between the most refined hypocrite, and the poorest believer, as there is between a painted image, and a living man ; yea, as there is be-

tween an angel of light, and a devil transforming himself thereunto.

4. Hence see ground to *lament* this common distemper and epidemic plague of *self-conceit*; that hath seized the generality of professors, whereby they are *pure in their own eyes*. There are few or none that we come to close converse with, but they would fain make us believe, that they are as clean and pure as can possibly be. Say they, ‘ We are all sinners; and who can say otherwise but they have sin about them? But God be thanked, I am not guilty of such and such a gross wickedness; you must not have such ill thoughts of me: I was never a liar, nor a cheat, or a murderer: I have always had a liking to the best way; I have a good heart, and do good duties; and wherein I fail, I hope I will be better.’ Alas! Sirs, profanity kills its thousands; but delusion kills its ten thousands: and this delusion kills its twenty thousands, while they fancy themselves to be right, and in a good condition, and yet are in *the gall of bitterness and bond of iniquity*.—What is the ban and disposition of the generation? Even a settled contentedness in their sinful state; a presumptuous confidence that natural men have of their good condition. Every man is so full of self-love, that he is loth to pass a sentence against his own soul; loth to become a judge and self-condemner, and so an executioner of all his vain hope and false confidences, that he hath been building upon.—If people were once come to see their sinful state, so as to cry out, *Oh! I am unclean, unclean!* and to see their miserable state, so as to cry out, *Alas! I am undone, undone!* there would be more *hope in Israel concerning them*: but while they are content with their present condition, there is no hope of their seeking out for another.—Or, if any happen to see something of their sinfulness and misery; yet, how doth their self-conceit lead them instantly to expect help and supply from their own sufficiency: for this Arminianism is natural to us all. We hope, that either by our natural ability, common graces, or beautiful performances, we may help ourselves out of the horrible pit; not knowing that we have *destroyed ourselves*, and that in *Christ only doth our help lie*: and therefore we  
will

will scramble for our comfort, and try the utmost of our strength, rather than be obliged to him to help us; and consequently when the body or conscience is brought to trouble, men are so ready to resolve, and apt to promise and profess amendment, saying, ‘O, I will be a renewed man; you will see that I will take up myself, and reform all that has been amiss.’ But, behold! when their fear and horror is over, all comes to nothing: they either fall back into the same, or greater abominations; or else waste away into a wearisome formality and hypocrisy.

5. Hence we may see matter of *comfort* to all whom the Lord hath humbled and separated thus from a generation of self-conceited sinners, who are *pure in their own eyes*. It is ground of comfort, if the Lord has killed your pride, and made you vile in your own eyes: for, *Thus saith the Lord, the high and lofty One, that inhabiteth eternity, whose name is holy; I dwell in the high and holy place, with him also that is of a humble and contrite spirit, to revive the spirit of the humble, and to revive the spirit of the contrite ones*, Isa. lvii. 15. Yea, *To this man will I look, saith the Lord; even to him that is poor, and of a contrite spirit, and trembleth at my word*, chap. lxvi. 2. Hath the Lord brought you to the valley of humiliation? It is ground of comfort; because he has given this *valley of Achor for a door of hope*.

6. Hence we may see matter of *terror* to those that are still filled with self-conceit, and are pure in their own eyes; so stuffed with pride, and puffed up with the wind of self-confidence, supposing themselves to be good, and honest, and upright, that the word of conviction makes no impression, but falls upon their hard hearts, as water upon a rock, that cannot enter, nor prevail, nor profit at all. May not this doctrine dash the hopes, and sink the hearts, of all haughty and hard-hearted sinners? If your hearts were never humbled, God never dwelt there: dwell you where you will, God doth not dwell with you; for, though he has *respect to the lowly*, yet he *knoweth the proud afar off*; yea, *resists the proud*. You may be pure in your own eyes, and draw the eyes of others after you; but God will not  
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come near you, nor cast his eye towards you, but with abhorrence. Hear and fear, then, you that are *stout-hearted, and far from righteousness*; whose consciences can attest, that the day never yet dawned, where you found not your sins a pleasure to you. You are so far from being humbled or troubled for your sins, that it is your only trouble that you cannot commit them with content, and without controul: and you are only troubled with admonitions, counsels, commands, threatenings, scriptures, and sermons that cross you.—Know for certain, if you be never humbled, and broken for your abominations, you must burn for them one day. Your proud hearts were never abased and laid in the dust; and if they remain so, the Lord will ruin both you and them.—There are a few in the world, whose hearts fail them, under the weight of their abominations; and and who lie low in the dust for their sins: but you, being *pure in your own eyes*, and never humbled for your heart and life-abominations, deride and scorn these humbled and broken ones, and look down upon them, with a supercilious eye, as silly and despicable men: But yet a little while, and you shall see them exalted to glory, and saved for ever; when such self-conceited, proud, and presumptuous wretches, as you are, shall be turned into hell! O Sirs, *Be not high-minded, but fear.*

The *second use* that we make of the doctrine, is for *dehortation and caution*. 1. To the wicked. 2. To the godly. 3. To all in general.

1. To the *wicked and ungodly*. Is this self-conceit so incident to a *multitude of professors*? O Sirs, do not draw this inference from it, as if there were no *real Christians* in the world, because many pretend to be so, who yet are not so. Nay, God hath his own remnant in the world; his *Nathaniels*, who are *Israelites indeed, in whom there is no guile*, no allowed or unlawful guile. In the church visible there is a heap of chaff; but there is some wheat among the chaff. In Zion there is a heap of stones; but there are some diamonds among the stones. Though many satisfy themselves with a *form of godliness*, without having *the power thereof*: yet there

there are some to whom the gospel hath come, not in word only, but in power; and that understand the power of godliness.

2. To the *godly* there is this caution. Do not think that you ought not to *profess religion*, because so many professors do deceive themselves, and profess very solemnly, who yet are impure indeed. The possession of Christ in the heart is the principal thing; but the confession of Christ with the mouth is also duty: *With the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation*, Rom. x. 10. Give not over your profession of the name of Christ; although many have but a *name to live, and are dead*: but endeavour, through grace, to prove our profession before the world, by your practice-conformed thereunto; and to prove your practice before God and conscience, by the principle of faith, in love to and zeal for a God in Christ, moving you thereunto.

3. To *all* in general. The caution and dehortation we tender is, Seeing this abominable evil doth so much prevail and abound, and that many pretend to call themselves by the God of Israel, and take great titles to themselves in the church of Christ, and are pure in their own eyes, who yet are nought in reality; O then, Sirs, *be not high-minded, but fear*. What reason have we to fear, lest we be amongst the number of self-conceited persons, and self-deceivers? For, if we survey our hearts, we will find what a high conceit of ourselves we have entertained. Beware of this sin; for it is a dangerous evil, as I have already shewn on the doctrinal part, and might here resume, were it not for gaining of time.

The *third use* of the subject, is for *reproof*. This doctrine reaches a reproof to all that are *pure in their own eyes, and filled with self-conceit*.

1. Some have an high conceit of their own *person*. They are proud, perhaps, of a white skin, amiable features, and a handsome shape; little remembering what a few days sickness will produce, and that all will moulder into dust in the issue. They that are proud of their  
bodily

bodily excellencies, or yet of their soul accomplishments, do not duly ponder, that their body is but a piece of clay, and their soul a piece of hell, by nature.

2. Some have an high conceit of their *possessions* and *attainments*; puffed up because they have an opulency of worldly things, and some natural and acquired abilities; not knowing that they are without life, without light, without holiness; yea, *without God*, and *without hope in the world*; really *poor, miserable, wretched, blind, and naked*, Eph. ii. 12. Rev. iii. 17. Surely the best of us want more than we have.

3. Some have a high conceit of their *performances*; while yet they do little or nothing for God, or for the generation; nothing for their own souls; nothing for their families; nothing for the spiritual good of the neighbourhood that are about them. They have the leaves of a profession, the flowrish of resolutions, and the appearance of fruit; but it never ripens to a spiritually good work.

4. Some have an high conceit of their own *power* and *ability*: they think they can repent, they can believe, they can pray, they can meditate, they can mortify sin when they please: they think they can communicate as well as the best; they can love God and their neighbour; while yet they are wholly *without strength*, and *can do nothing*; yea, *are not sufficient of themselves, to think any thing as of themselves*.

5. Some have a high conceit of their own *sufferings*, as well as doings. Some will speak very boastingly of their sufferings that they have undergone, and what persecutions they have endured for religion, and a good cause; and, perhaps, think more of these than they do of Christ's sufferings for them: but they are not of Paul's disposition; *God forbid*, saith he, *that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ*, Gal. vi. 14.

Many are *pure in their own eyes*; and, why? Because they judge amiss concerning themselves.

(1.) Some judge themselves pure, because of their *profession*, their eminent profession; who yet may be cursed with the barren fig-tree. Such a sandy foundation many build upon, that they take a profession of religion

gion for true Christianity. What! say they; ministers talk of conversion, regeneration, the new birth, and we know not what unintelligible things: but, God be thanked, we are not Papists, neither are we Atheists, nor Infidels, without the church; we are within the very bosom of the church, and even enjoy the privileges of the church. Alas! Sirs; mistake not your own shadow for a bridge, and so, venturing thereupon, drown yourselves for ever.

(2.) Some judge themselves pure, because of their *gifts*. One may have the gift of *prattling*, and be able to speak well of religion, and recommend religious things; and think, who but he. Another may have the gift of *prayer*, while he is a stranger to the grace of it; yet he may suppose the gift to be sufficient; and being thus eminent above many others, he may think he is well enough. But gifts and graces are not the same: many have gone down to the pit of hell with their great gifts, and with all their wisdom and learning, that they valued themselves so much upon.

(3.) Some judge themselves pure, because of their *common graces*, which they mistake for *saving graces*. There is many times such a resemblance between common and saving grace, that they take counterfeit coin for true, because of its likeness to it. As Saul took the devil for Samuel, because of his mantle; so many take a common work of the Spirit, for the true saving work, because of its good appearance.—In the *understanding* there may be a common *illumination*, as well as a saving one, Heb. vi. 4.; though there is a vast difference between the two. For the common illumination doth only adorn and beautify the soul; but the saving doth irradiate, inlighten, and warm the soul. The one is informing, the other is transforming: the one is barren, the other fruitful.—In the *conscience*, there may be common *convictions* and *qualms*, as well as those that issue in saving conversion. Some may have had such a work upon their hearts, as that the relating of it may procure them ample testimony among ministers and Christians: and no doubt but the disciples would have given a good testimony of Judas, before he was discovered; tho' Christ gave him none.

But what though we had a testimonial written, with an ample recommendation from men or angels; if Christ's hand be not at it, God will reject it; and the blessed Redeemer of sinners will say, *I never signed it*.— In the *affections*, there may be common *desires* and *delights*, as well as special: there may be false joys and sorrows, like the joy of the stony-ground hearers; and like the sorrows of Esau for losing the birth-right.— Yea, in the *will*, there may be a common *change*, as well as a saving one: Men may take on good resolutions, and starts of devotion, as if they would take heaven by violence; and yet the will never renewed, or made willing in the day of God's power.— O then, Sirs, let us take heed that we be not deceived in this matter.

(4.) Some judge themselves pure, because they have escaped the *pollutions* of the world. They have, it may be, forsaken some sins, that only time, and circumstances changing, have tired them out of. They may imagine, that their abstaining from the gross evils of the generation is true sanctity. But there is a two-fold sanctification; one of the *flesh*, and another of the *spirit*: I take the former to be an abstaining from gross and scandalous sins, like those spoken of, 2 Pet. ii. 20. They may come this length, and yet be strangers to purity, or true sanctity of heart or life. But there is a sanctification of *spirit*, when God gives the promised *new heart* and *new spirit*. Now, many take the former for the latter: they take restraining grace for renewing grace. God restrains Pagans, yea, devils also, from doing a thousand ill turns, that they would otherwise do. What is the motive that makes them abstain from these sins? Is it the love of God? or the fear of God? Nay, take away public shame and reproach, they would go forward to all manner of wickedness: and yet because they are outwardly pure, they are ready to conclude themselves innocent. But, man; what though you had not a tongue? yet you can curse God in your heart. What though you had not eyes? yet you can commit adultery in your heart.

(5.) Some judge themselves pure, because they side with the *strictest party*, like Paul; *an Hebrew of the Hebrews*:

brews : But it is not *siding with the truth*, though that be commendable ; but being *sanctified by the truth*, that will do the business. Judas was a son of perdition, though he joined with the truth for a while.

(6.) In a word, many judge themselves pure, because they have no *disquiet* or *disturbance* in their *consciences* ; whereas it may be but the devil that is keeping all his goods in peace : *While the strong man armed keepeth the house, his goods are in peace*, Luke xi. 21. When the conscience once becomes seared, or sopited, it ceases to be God's faithful deputy ; and then there is nothing but an intire calm.

The *fourth use* that we make of the doctrine, is for *trial* and *examination*. Well, Sirs, O put yourselves to the trial, lest you go down to the grave with a lie in your right-hand. When God is saying, *There is a generation pure in their own eyes, yet not washed from their filthiness* ; a generation of self-conceited people, that are but deceiving themselves ; it should put us to say, *Master, is it I?* And if we should suspect ourselves, were it said, *One of you shall betray me* ; one of you shall deceive yourself : how much more when it is said, a *whole generation* is thus set to deceive themselves about eternal salvation. Try if ever you have been humbled for, and delivered from this self-conceit. You may examine it by these things following.

1. Try it by the *end* you propose in doing any *good action*, or going about any *good duty*. The proud self-conceited man is always vain-glorious : *How can you believe that seek glory one of another?* saith Christ, John v. 44. The man seeks his own praise and applause : thus Jehu, as you may see, 2 Kings x. 15, 16. *Is thy heart right as mine?* saith he to Jehonadab. Whereas the humble man hath always a better conceit of another person's heart than of his own, being always suspicious of himself ; and so would rather say, when he meets with one like Jehonadab, O ! is my heart right and upright as his is. Again, says Jehu to Jehonadab, *Come see my zeal for the Lord* : yea, but true zeal desires not to be seen of any, but him who *seeth in secret*. If our lamp will not burn without

the oil of mens praise, it is a sign that self-conceit hath the predominant. I read of one, who, when in a monastery, fasted whole days together with ease; but in the desert he could not hold out till noon, but his belly would crave presently: when he demanded the reason of this, he had the following answer given, That in the monastery, the praise of man was instead of meat to him; he fed there upon it: which sustenance failing him, in the desert, his fasting strength failed also.

2. Try it, not only by the end you propose, in doing good actions; viz. the glory of God, not daring to seek yourself, if truly humbled; but examine it also by the manner of doing the duty; no daring to trust yourself, but affected with a sense of your own infirmity, resting wholly upon the power of God, to be perfected in your weakness. Self-conceit will venture upon any duty without fear, saying, with Peter, *Though all men forsake thee, yet will not I*. But humility will venture upon nothing, without looking for the promised supply, saying, with Paul, *Not that we are sufficient of ourselves, to think any thing as of ourselves; but our sufficiency is of God*, 2 Cor. iii. 5.

3. Examine it by the issue of your religious duties; or your *deportment* after the doing thereof. Self-conceit will take the praise of the duty done, saying, with Nebuchadnezzar, Dan. iv. 30. *Is not this great Babylon that I have built?* But humility sends it back to the Lord, saying, with David, *Not unto us, not unto us; but to thy name be the glory*, Psal. cv. 1.

But, perhaps, it may be asked, *Where will you find a man upon earth that is not tainted with this pride and self?*

To this it might be replied; thoughts of pride and vain-glory may *rush* into the heart of an humbled saint; yea, but they *rest* in the heart of a hypocrite. Again, if the saint sees himself, in the doing of any thing, proud; then he is twice as humble afterward, because he was not humble. There may be some kind of humility in an hypocrite, and some remains of pride in a saint: but here is the difference; the hypocrite's humility makes him proud; whereas the saint's pride makes him humble. The hypocrite's humility is followed with pride,  
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and the faint's pride is followed with humiliation. The hypocrite is proud, because he is humble; but the faint is humble, on account of his pride. Thus *Hezekiah's heart was lifted up*; but it is said of him, 2. Chron. xxxii. 26. that *he humbled himself for the pride of his heart*. In a true believer, there is either the fore-humility, helping him to do the duty right; or the after-humility, exercising him for doing the duty wrong, which is the most severe of the two. "He hath either, as one saith, the directing humility, for the right manner; or the correcting humility, for the erroneous manner of doing." If we can follow the sway of our own pride and vain-glorious affections, without all respect to God's glory, and yet never be truly humbled afterwards, this is evident hypocrisy, and an uncontestable proof that we have not the least grain of sincerity. And, indeed, gospel-sincerity is many times more humbled for such mixtures of defilement in duty than for some actions simply evil in themselves.

4. Try this point by your *severity against sin in yourselves*. An hypocrite cannot endure sin in others; no, not so much as a *mote* in his brother's eye; though yet he can endure a *beam* in his own. A true believer is ready to throw the first stone at himself; he will be ready to say more against himself, than any other can say against him: he cannot wink at sins in himself, nor in his nearest and dearest relation. As he loves good in his greatest enemy; so he hates sin in his nearest friend.

5. Examine it by your *rejoicing at the graces*, and *grieving at the sins of others*, as well as your own. The man that is pure in his own eyes, and selfish, if he can grieve for his *own sins*, he is not careful to grieve for the *sin of others*: this is suspicious, as if he grieved not for God's cause, or for the dishonours his own sins hath done to him; for, were he truly affected for the offence he himself hath done to God, then would he grieve also, that the sins of others dishonour God and stain his glory: but he is grieved for his own sake, for fear of some evil procured to himself by his sin; which argues self-love, rather than love to God.—Again, the man that is  
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pure in his own eyes, and selfish, if he *rejoices in his own graces*, yet not in the *graces of others*; or when he sees the glory of God set forth by others, when he hath no hand in it himself: he is like the men of Ephraim, saying to Jephthah, *Wherefore passedst thou ever to fight against the children of Ammon, and didst not call us?* Judges xii. i. But the humble soul, in whom self is broken, can rejoice, and give praise and thanks to hear or see that God is glorified, though he himself was not the instrument thereof. This appears to be the frame of Paul, Phil. i. 8. Though *some preached Christ out of envy and vain-glory*; yet for the matter sound, though for the manner unsuitable; what was that to Paul, that Christ was truly preached? *Therein*, says he, *I do rejoice; yea, and will rejoice.*

Examine yourselves by these things: judge and try yourselves, that you may not live in the dark, and still remain uncertain whether you are in a state of nature or grace.

The *fifth use* that we make of the doctrine, shall be for *exhortation*. O Sirs, seek that the Lord would deliver you from *self-conceit*, and *proud thoughts of yourselves*. Here we might address three different kinds of persons.—We might exhort the *proud*, to receive a word of *terror*: but having dropt a word of this nature, on the *sixth* inference on the use of *information*, we shall not here insist farther upon it.—We might also speak a word to the *humble*, and advise them to receive a word of *comfort*: but having likewise insisted a little on this, on the *fifth* inference, on the above use of *information*, we shall refer to what was there offered.—We might address ourselves to *all* in general: but as we offered something of this nature on the *third* particular on the second use, *viz.* of *caution*, we shall pass this by at the time also.

It is the easiest thing in the world for a man to flatter himself, and dream that he is *rich*, and *increased in goods*, and *stands in need of nothing*; and to think the best of himself: but yet nothing is more dangerous. It is dangerous to be flattered by another; *A man that flattereth his neighbour, spreadeth a net for his feet*, Prov. xxix. 5.: but yet it is more dangerous to flatter ourselves;  
for

for self-flattery spreads a net for our souls: and many souls are caught at last in this net. It is a great evil for a man to deceive another; but much more for a man to deceive himself: even so, it is a terrible thing for a man to kill another; yet it is still more dreadful for one to kill and destroy himself. But the evil and danger of it I opened before.

Let us take heed then, and be jealous and suspicious of ourselves, especially when we find good conceits of ourselves arise in our hearts. And that we may not be self-conceited, and pure in our own eyes, let us take these following *directions*, by way of *antitode*, with which I conclude the subject.

QUEST. *How may a man avoid this self-conceit, of judging of himself better than indeed he is?*

ANSW. The *first* antidote against self-conceit, is, "To look well to *ourselves*, and our foul faces in the glass of the holy *law*." Many may vainly imagine their faces fair and clean, till they come to look in a glass; and they no sooner look therein, but they see many spots and defilements which before they thought not of. So let us do here: let us examine ourselves by the *law*; examine what, and how much the law requires; and how far short we come of that purity, grace, and holiness that is there required; and then you will find little cause of falling in love with your Ethiopian face, or dote upon yourselves, when you see that you are so ugly and deformed: a sight of your deformity would keep you from self-conceit. When, in the glass of the law, you see your own defiled and deformed visage and monstrous shape, you will find little cause to be enamoured with your own beauty. Men are pure in their own eyes, because they do not make use of this looking-glass. *When the commandment came*, and Paul saw himself in this glass, *then sin revived, and he died* to all conceit of his own purity. When you view yourself in this glass, it will make you say the quite contrary to the young man in the gospel, *None of all these things have I kept from my youth*.

The *second* antidote against self-conceit, is, "To take a look of *Christ's* fair face in the glass of the gospel."

This

This would be a mighty preservative: *Beholding as in a glass the glory of God, we are changed*, 2 Cor. iii. 18. When Job saw this sight, then he cries out, *Behold, I am vile; now, I abhor myself, and repent in dust and ashes.* A sight of Christ's matchless beauty would make us loath our deformity. A sight of his perfect righteousness, in its glory, would make us see and be humbled for our own guiltiness and sin.—If a foul fac'd person, who thinks himself handsome enough, set himself with a very beautiful person to look into a glass together, the beautiful face, which he sees beside his own, will make him think very little of himself, when compared with the other. O! how infinitely more, if, with one eye, we look at our own deformed picture, and with the other at the infinite perfection of beauty that is in Christ! we cannot but abhor ourselves. Never any man saw Christ's beauty, but he looked upon himself as a monster, and sank into nothing in his own conceit. O then, Sirs, seek a sight of the glory of Christ.

The *third* antitode against self-conceit, is, "To compare ourselves with those that are *before* us, and not *behind* us." A blockhead is but a blockhead still, though he hath more learning still than a plowman: though, perhaps, comparing himself with a clown, he thinks himself to be a learned man; but compare him with a learned man, and then, notwithstanding his high opinion of himself, he will appear but half an idiot. So it is here; the civil honest man, when he compares himself with the swinish drunkard, the foul adulterer, the prodigious swearer, he begins, in a manner, poor man, to Saint himself, as if he was the only man that should be saved. And thus the proud-conceited Pharisee raises himself on his tip-toes, by comparing himself with the publican; *God, I thank thee, that I am not as other men, nor as this publican*: so saith the civil man; I am not such a drunkard, such a swearer, as such a man is: and so, because they are not so bad as others that are worse, hence they conceive themselves to be wonderfully good. But now, the way to measure yourselves, is, not to look *backward*, but to look *forward*: not to consider how much you are behind drunkards and swearers;

ers; but to look forward, and see how far short you are of them who are truly zealous and religious, truly godly and gracious. Compare yourselves with them; have you that measure of knowledge, faith, experience, mortification, zeal, and obedience, which they have? Are you as conscientious in secret devotion, and other parts of religion? Alas! how far short do you come of them! And yet the best of them are far short of what they should be: and if you be short of them, who are but short-comers themselves; how far short do you come! What grounds have you to think well of yourselves, who are beyond a drunkard, when, in the mean time, you are far short of a good Christian? Therefore, to keep down this spiritual pride, look not at publicans, but gracious persons. And if you find yourselves like to swell with this conceit, *I am not as this publican*; then, on the other hand, humble yourselves with this meditation, *I am not as this gracious person*.

But some will think, that even gracious persons have their blemishes; and so they compare themselves, and their sins, with the gross sins of Lot, Noah, David, Peter, and other godly men; and so still they conceive a good opinion of themselves, and think all is well. But you would consider, that the falls of the godly did serve for their own humility, and for our warning. God knoweth how to chastise his own who offend, giving repentance unto life and salvation: but he will justly condemn those who wittingly stumble at their falls, and wilfully ly in their sins, being fallen. We are not to follow the best of men in all their actions. As the cloud that guided the Israelites had two sides, the one bright and shining, the other black and dark; such is the cloud of the examples of godly men: those that will be directed by the light side thereof; shall, with the children of Israel, pass safely toward the heavenly Canaan: but those that will follow the dark side of it, shall perish, with the Egyptians, in the Red-sea of destruction.

The *fourth* antidote against self-conceit, is, “To think upon that exact and strict *judgment* and *estimate*, that must be taken of you at the great day of judgment.”

Then must you be judged, not by what you judge yourselves to be, but by what you are indeed. Meditate with yourselves; "Now, I am pure in mine own eyes; " I think I may be content with the purity I have: " but am I now, and will I then be pure in God's sight, " whose eyes are as a flame of fire, to penetrate through " and try all the most retired wickedness, and hidden " dross and corruption which lies in my heart and nature, " thoughts and affections, as well as in my life and ac- " tions?" Will you be able to stand that exquisite trial of the impartial Judge? No, by no means. The faith and meditation of this would mortify the elevated conceit you have of yourselves. Remember you must come to judgment.

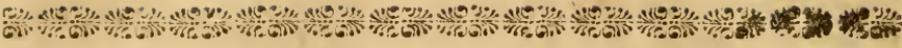
In a word, if you would not die of this disease, then *trust not your own judgment in your own case*. He that would be wise, in the scripture sense, must *become a fool, that he may be wise*, 1 Cor. iii. 18. He must *deny himself*, and not *lean to his own understanding*, Prov. iii. 5. There is *pride of understanding* that takes place, both in *humbled* sinners, who dare not come to Christ; and in *hardened* sinners, who will not come to Christ.

There is a *pride of understanding*, I say, and a *pride of wisdom*, that takes place in *humbled* sinners, who *dare* not come to Christ? Why do they not come to Christ? Truly they judge themselves so vile, that they think they should not come: what pride is here? *O! if I was pure, then I would come!* What is the language of this? *If I were pure and holy, then, you think, Christ would love me.* Indeed, it were well, poor humbled soul, if there be any such here; it were well if you were pure and holy: but to imagine that he will not save you, because you have no goodness, or worth in you, to induce him to love you, is an evidence of the greatest pride: is it not pride that you would be at something in yourself, for which Christ should cast his love upon you? But know, that Christ will save you, not because you are good; but that he may make you good: not because you are pure; but that he may make you pure. And therefore, if the sense of your impurity keep you back from coming to him, it is but stinking pride. Though, perhaps,

perhaps, you did not think it was pride; yet it is so: for though you be vile in your own eyes; yet, the thing you would be at, in this matter, is, you would be pure in your eyes; and then you think you would be pure in his eyes too. Come to Christ, though you have nothing of your own to bring with you to him; for, you must come to him empty, and stript of all your own proper good; that you may get all in him, and from him.

Again, There is a *pride of understanding and opinion*, that takes place in *hardened* sinners, who *will* not come to Christ. They trust their own judgment in their own case: they are both judge and party; and their *judgment is not according to truth*: for they judge themselves not to be so bad as they are. Yea, they are *pure in their own eyes*: and therefore they will not come to Christ to be purified, justified, or sanctified; and so, no wonder that *they are not washed from their filthiness*.

Therefore, I say, do not trust your own judgment, in your own case. Let the word of God judge you: and judge yourselves, not by your own understanding, but by that word of God that will judge you at the last day.—Examine yourselves by the word: self-examination would bring down your self-conceit. And pray that God would search and try you, saying, with the psalmist, Psalm cxxxix. 23, 24. *Search me, O God, and know my heart; try me, and know my reins: and see if there be any wicked way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting.*



## S E R M O N XVII.

NON-CONFORMITY to the *World* in-joined; or, the *Evil and Danger* of SYMBOLIZING *with the Wicked*, opened.\*

ROM. xii. 2.

*Be not conformed to this world.—*

**I**T is the character of the children of God, that they have *received not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit which is of God*, 1 Cor. ii. 12. They are not of the world, even as Christ is not of the world. But it is the character of the wicked, that they are the *men of the world*, who have *their portion in this life*, Psal. xvii. 14. Conformity to Christ is the great mark and character of saints; *Whom he did foreknow, them he did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son*, Rom. viii. 20. But conformity to the world is the great characteristic of Atheists and wicked persons: and therefore the apostle here dissuades all the children of God from such conformity; *Be not conformed to this world.*

The apostle having at large treated the fundamental doctrines of the Christianity, in the preceding chapters, he comes now in this to press home, upon the conscience, the principal duties thereof. True religion is not only designed to inform the judgment; but also to

\* This Sermon was preached by our Author in his own church at Dunfermline, in the year 1723. And from the beginning of the Sermon itself, as well as from the place it has in the note-book, we learn, that it was delivered immediately after these on Prov. xxx. 12. printed above, p. 319.—This is the second impression.

transform the heart, and reform the life. But the foundation of Christian practice must be laid in Christian knowledge : and hence the apostle, having discoursed, at large, of *justification by faith, through the imputed righteousness of Christ*, and of the *riches of free grace*, carnal wisdom might be apt to infer, *Therefore we may live as we list, and walk in the way of our own heart* : No ; that doth not follow : the faith that justifies is a faith that *worketh by love* ; having understanding how to receive Christ Jesus the Lord, we come to understand how to walk in him. Hence this chapter is joined to the foregoing discourse by the word *therefore* ; *I beseech you, THEREFORE, brethren* : intimating, that the practical application of doctrinal truths is the life of preaching.

The first verse of the chapter is a *general* direction ; and that urged with the strongest motives and arguments, and in the most affectionate and pathetic manner : *I beseech you, brethren, by the mercies of God, that you present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, which is your reasonable service*. It might be useful to offer some explication hereof ; but it is not what I propose at the time ; and therefore I go forward.

The apostle proceeds to give more *particular* directions : and that which the text bears is set down both negatively and positively. The *positive* direction is last set down, though first in the order of nature and operation, before the former ; *Be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove, [OR UNDERSTAND] what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect will of God*. Concerning this *renovation of mind*, I propose not at present to treat ; especially as it is much the same, in other words, with that *holiness and purity*, or being *washed from our filthiness*, which I insisted so much upon from the last text of scripture we prosecuted in your hearing \*. —Now, the *negative* direction is, *Be not conformed to this world*. By *WORLD* here, we are to understand the *men* of the world, the *wicked* of the world, the *lusts* of the world, the *way and course* of the world, &c. And by *not CONFORMING* thereto, we are to understand, our

\* Alluding to the preceding Sermons, from Prov. xxx. 12.

not *fashioning* ourselves according to the world. All the disciples and followers of Christ must be *Non-conformists* to this world, or unlike the wicked therein. And for the further explication of this text, I shall prosecute this doctrinal proposition.

OBSERV. *That the people of God must not be like the world, or the wicked therein: They must not be conformed to the wicked world.*

The method we propose to observe, for illustrating this observation, through supernatural aid, shall be the following.

- I. Prove and clear the *truth* of the doctrine.
- II. Enquire what it is *in* the world we are not to be conformed to.
- III. Point out what this *disconformity* to the world imports.
- IV. Give the *reasons* why we are not to be conformed to the world.
- V. Make *application* of the whole subject.

Now, as I suppose, this subject is not unseasonable; so, I think, it is not unsuitable to the last we insisted upon from Prov. xxx. 12.

Having of late, 1. Spoken of the FATHER'S *exhibition* of Christ, saying, *I will give thee for a covenant of the people.* 2. Of the SPIRIT'S *operation*, in order to his being known; *He shall testify of me.* 3. Of the SON'S *declaration* of his own excellency, saying, *I and my Father are one.* 4. Of the WORLD'S *disapprobation* of this glorious person, and the harsh treatment he got among them; *Behold, I and the children which the Lord has given me, are for signs and wonders in Israel.* 5. Of the REASON why so many, even in *Israel*, pour contempt thus upon Christ and his followers; why, *There is a generation that are pure in their own eyes; and yet is not washed from their filthiness* \*. Here is the sett of the world. We now

\* The Reader will find the *first* of these subjects printed above p. 168.; the *fourth*, p. 249.; and the *fifth*, p. 319. The *second* and *third* have not as yet made their appearance.

come, 6. To enquire what is our DUTY in a *suitableness* to this, even *not to be conformed to this world*.

I. The first thing proposed, on the general method, was, To prove and clear the *truth* of the doctrine, *viz. That the people of God must not be like the wicked world, or conformed thereto*. We shall prove this both by scripture precepts and precedents.

1<sup>st</sup>, There are scripture *precepts*, both in the Old and New Testament, to evince the truth hereof: and I would have you to consult them carefully in your Bible, and there see what is the mind of God to you in this matter.

1. There are *Old-Testament* precepts that injoin this duty; such as these, and the like: *Thou shalt not follow a multitude to do evil*. -Exod. xxiii. 2. *Enter not into the path of the wicked; and go not in the way of evil men; avoid them, pass not by them, turn from them, and pass away*, Prov. iv. 14, 15. See also, Lev. xviii. 24, 27. Deut. xii. 30, 31, 32. Psal. i. 1. Prov. i. 10, 11, 14, 15, 16.

2. There are likewise *New-Testament* precepts enforcing the duty; such as these following: *And with many other words did he testify and exhort, saying, Save yourselves from this untoward generation*, Acts ii. 40. *This I say therefore, and testify in the Lord, that ye henceforth walk not as other Gentiles walk, in the vanity of their mind;—Be not partakers with them*, Eph. iv. 17. v. 7. *Keep yourselves unspotted from the world*, Jam. i. 27. See also, Mat. v. 46. vi. 31, 32. Luke xii. 29, 30. 2 Cor. vi. 15, 16. 1 Theff. v. 5,—8. 2 Pet. iii. 17.

2<sup>dly</sup>, There are scripture *precedents* to influence us not to be conformed to the wicked world. I shall instance in the following persons. (1.) In *Noah*; Gen. vii. 1. *And the Lord said unto Noah, Come thou and all thy house into the ark; for<sup>r</sup> thee have I seen righteous before me in this generation*. (2.) In *Lot*; 2 Pet. ii. 7,—8. *And delivered righteous Lot, vexed with the filthy conversation of the wicked: for that righteous man dwelling among them, in seeing and hearing, vexed his righteous soul, from day to day, with their sinful deeds*. (3.) In *Joshua*; ch. xxiv. 14. *And if it seem evil unto you to serve the Lord,*  
choose

*choose you this day whom you will serve, whether the gods which your fathers served, that were on the other side of the flood, or the gods of the Amorites, in whose land ye dwell; but as for me, and my house, we will serve the Lord.*

(4.) In *Nehemiah*; chap. v. 15. *But the former governors that had been before me, were chargeable unto the people, and had taken of them bread and wine, beside forty shekels of silver; yea, even their servants bare rule over the people: but so did not I, because of the fear of God.* (5.)

In *David*; *Psal.* xxvi. 4, 5. *I have not sat with vain persons; neither will I go in with dissemblers; I have hated the congregation of evil doers; and will not sit with the wicked.*

The Lord would have his children to act flat contrary to the world, and not be like other men. That part of the Pharisee's prayer, *Luke* xviii. 11. wherein he thanks God, that he was *not like other men*, was not amiss for the substance of it, if it had not come from a vain-glorious, proud, and lying spirit; for he thought that he was *better* than others, whereas he was *worse* than all others to whom he preferred himself; but yet every one should labour to be that truly, for which he gave thanks falsely; even *not to be like others*. Others neglect prayer, whether secret, family, or social: others neglect Christ, and despise his word and institutions: yea, many others, they drink, and swear, and whore, and cheat, and defraud, and oppress, and lye, and break the Sabbath, and give way to all manner of impieties and immoralities. Either they are not subject to his *law*, and so walk in all manner of wickedness; or they are not subject to his *gospel*, and so will not submit themselves to his righteousness, to be saved by grace through Jesus Christ. Therefore we must not be like others. Others are *without*; and *without are dogs*. And, indeed, we find *others*, and *without*, are equivalent terms in scripture, *Mark* iv. 11. *To you it is given to know the mysteries of the kingdom; but to them that are WITHOUT, all is in parables.* And compared with *Luke* viii. 10. *To you it is given to know the mysteries of the kingdom; but to OTHERS in parables.* *Mark* hath it, τοῖς ἔξω, to those that are *without*; and *Luke* hath it, τοῖς λοιποῖς, to *others*. OTHERS then

I say,

I say, are *without*, and belong not to God. It is dangerous, therefore, being with others; for they are without, and shall be without: it is better to be within alone, than without with others.—So much for clearing and confirming the *truth* of the doctrine. We must not be like the world.

II. The second general head was, To enquire what it is *in* the world that we are not to be conformed to. In short then, we must not be conformed to the things of the world, the fashions, worship, principles, nor trade of the world.

1. We must not be conformed to the *things* of the world; for they are mutable, and the *fashion of them passeth away*. What are the things of the world that we must not be conformed to? The apostle gives us a sum of these things; *All that is in the world, the lusts of the flesh, the lusts of the eye, and the pride of life, is not of the Father; but is of the world: and the world passeth away, and the lusts thereof*, 1 John ii. 16, 17. We are so far to avoid being *conformed* to the sinful things of the world, that, in our several places and stations, we ought to *witness* against them: nay, even in the indifferent things of the world, which are not in themselves sinful, we must so far not conform ourselves to the manner of the world therein, as not to act by the world's dictates, as our rule; not to aim at the world's favour, as our end. True Christianity consists much in a sober singularity.—Here we might shew a variety of things in the world that we ought not to be conformed unto, or thirst after; such as the profits, the honours, preferments, pleasures, and applause of the world: but we insist not.

2. We must not be conformed to the *fashions* and *customs* of the world; *Not fashioning ourselves according to the former lusts*, as the apostle Peter speaks, 1 Pet. i. 14. There is a novelty of disposition prevails, that makes multitudes fall in with every new, vain fashion. There are vain fashions of *gesture*, ways of carrying, that discover nothing but levity, and expressly condemned in scripture, Isa. iii. 16. There are vain fashions of *apparel*, inconsistent with and unsuitable to the rules of  
 VOL. I. P p p modesty,

modesty, that many affect; contrary to the word of God, Isa. iii. 18,—23. 1 Tim. ii. 9. 1 Pet. iii. 3. This is the epidemical disease of both sexes: and even too much affected by those who ought to be exemplary to others of modesty and sobriety. There are vain and foolish customs, even in matters of *religion*; and many are fond of what is fashionable, though it be never such an ill fashion. Hence,

3. We must not be conformed to the *worship* of the world; for the world worship they know not what; they worship an *unknown God*: they worship God in a carnal, hypocritical, and superstitious way. But we are to worship him *in spirit, and in truth*; and in the way and manner that he hath appointed in his word, that we may not be puzzled with that question, *Who hath required these things at your hand?* but may have it to say, “He by whose authority I do these things, is neither pope, nor prelate, nor civil potentate; but there is my warrant in the word of God.” Hence,

4. We must not be conformed to the *traditions and rudiments* of the world; *Beware lest any man spoil you through philosophy, and vain deceit, after the invention of men, after the rudiments of the world, and not after Christ*, Col. ii. 8. See also, ver. 20, 21, 22. where God teacheth us our freedom from all abolished ceremonies, and ritual observances; and that subjection to ordinances of human invention and appointment, in the worship of God, is highly blameable, and contrary to the freedom and liberty of the gospel; and an invading the authority of Christ, the Head of the church: on which account we are exhorted to *stand fast in the liberty wherewith Christ hath made us free; and not to be entangled again into the yoke of bondage*. But I must here pass many things, which would natively fall in, for want of time.

5. We must not be conformed to the *principles* of the world. There are many *doctrinal principles* that we are not to be conformed to, which would lead to a large field to speak of\*: but to confine myself to this point,

\* The Reader, if he pleases, may see some of these *doctrinal principles*, by consulting Vol. III. Sermon XXXVIII. under the use of Reproof; and Vol. II. p. 212, 213.

namely, *What are the principles of the unregenerate world?* Why, they are even naturally of *devilish* and *hellish* principles. By nature we are all Arminians, Pelagians, Socinians, yea, and Atheists, *without God in the world*; and therefore suspect the principle that is most natural, and that is most easy for you to fall in with. Every principle that favours corrupt and depraved reason, is suspicious; for the gospel is a mystery that viciated nature cannot fathom.—There are *political* principles that the world is filled with. Many, for example, are of that principle, *That it is better to sin than to suffer*; better to make such and such compliances, that expose ourselves to the fury of men, or the loss of some worldly substance: better an uneasy conscience, than an empty purse. Many are of that principle, better a bird in hand than two in the bush, as we use to speak: better a palace in Paris, a portion in this world, which we see and have among our hands, than a palace in Paradise: and hence many say, *Who will shew us any good?* and few, *Lord, lift upon us the light of thy countenance*, Psal. iv. 6. We must not be conformed to the world herein.

6. We must not be conformed to the *practice, course, and way* of the world; *Wherein in time past ye walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that worketh in the children of disobedience*, Eph. ii. 2. God would have his people *cross* the world in their life and conversation. This was pointed out by his forbidding Israel to eat and touch some things, which other nations did eat and touch; and his allowing them to eat what other nations did not. For example; the Egyptians did eat, for the most part, *fish* and some few kinds of *birds*: but of the flesh of *beasts* they ate no other but only *swines* flesh; and this one kind of flesh is directly forbidden the *Jews*, Lev. xi. 7, 8. By this was pointed out, that God would have a kind of contrariety between the world, and such as make a profession of his name; and that his children must be as far from the manners of the world as may be. The way of the world is downward; he will have his people to walk upward: the course of this world is hellward; he will have his people's course to be heaven-

ward: the world walk in the broad way; he will have his people walk in the narrow way.

In a word, we are not to be conformed to the world in their thoughts, words, actions, desires, delights, love, joys, affections, or passions. But on all these we cannot insist at the time; and must therefore proceed,

III. To the third thing proposed, which was, To shew what this *disconformity* to the world imports. Not to multiply particulars, it fairly imports the four following things.

1. It imports more than a *contrariety* to the world. What is said of the flesh may be said of the world, with respect to the believer. *As the flesh lusteth against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh; and these two are contrary one to another:* so, the world fights against the believer, and the believer fights against the world; and these two are contrary one to the other: and *this is the victory whereby he overcometh the world, even his faith.*

2. This disconformity to the world imports a *despising* of the world. They that are not conformed to the world, are not in love with the world; they are not taken up with the gaudy vanities thereof. They that are saints indeed, have got a sight that makes the world appear nothing. The natural sun shines upon this world, and enlightens it: but the sun of righteousness, when he shines upon the soul, darkens this earth, and all the excellencies thereof, and makes them all appear but *loss and dung for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ.* Hence the believer doth not admire the world: it is not silver and gold that he calls true riches; it is not worldly advancement that he calls honour; it is not carnal delight that he reckons pleasure and happiness; it is not human learning that he esteems solid wisdom: he can be rich, honourable, happy, and all without them; and all in Christ. He values worldly and earthly things no more than a picture drawn in sand, which the least wave will wash away.

3. This disconformity to the world imports a *forsaking* of the world; *Forget also thine own people, and thy father's*

father's house ; so shall the King greatly desire thy beauty, Psalm xlv. 10, 11. The child of God is made to forsake the world, and to come up from this world leaning on the Beloved : this seems to be the import of that call to the church, Song iv. 8. *Come with me from Lebanon, with me from Lebanon : look from the top of Amana, from the top of Shenir and Hermon : from the lions dens, and the mountains of leopards.* We profess to renounce the devil, the world, and the flesh ; to forsake the world, and follow Christ. Now, this forsaking of the world, viewed negatively, it is not to go out of the world by a *hasty death*, that were double iniquity ; nor is it to vow a *voluntary poverty*, as the Papists do ; nor is it to be *idle and improvident* about the things of the world : but, affirmatively, to *forsake the world*, is to do it in point of *use* : to *use this world as if we used it not* ; that is, moderately : to forsake it in point of *service* ; we are not to be slaves to it ; for, *we cannot serve God and Mammon* : to forsake it in point of *confidence* ; we are not to trust in, or depend upon outward enjoyments : and we are to forsake it in point of *adherence*, so as not to be glewed to it ; it should not be like the hair upon the head, or skin of the hand, which cannot be pulled off without pain ; but like a hat on the head, or a glove on the hand, that we can take off when we please : we must keep a loose grip of it. And,

4. This disconformity to the world imports, an actual *crucifying* of the world : *God forbid, that I should glory, saith the apostle, save in the cross of the Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world is crucified unto me, and I unto the world.* The world cares not for me, and I care not for the world ; the world is dead to me, and I am dead to the world. But I insist not, and therefore proceed,

IV. To the fourth thing, which was, To enquire why, or for what *reasons*, the people of God must not be conformed to the world. Why, in general, because they are of *another world* : they are subjects of another kingdom ; they are people of another state ; they are persons of another principle ; they are recipients of another spirit ; they are directed by another rule ; and they  
are

are aiming at another end, than the rest of the world: but concerning these, and other things of this nature, we will have occasion to speak upon more fully afterwards. We shall only, in the mean time, observe, that there are two great contending parties, that powerfully draw all men after them; namely, **GOD** and the *world*; and there is an irreconcilable enmity between them: those who are on God's side, are against the world; and those that are on the world's side, are against God: and therefore, it is the duty of all the followers of Christ, not to take the world's part against him; and consequently, not to be conformed to the world. When the three children, Dan. iii. 12. refused to fall down and worship Nebuchadnezzar's image, *He was full of fury, and the form of his visage was changed against them,* ver. 19. It is so with the men of this world; if the friends of Christ will not bow down and worship this golden image, and join in with the vanities and follies thereof, why then the worldlings run mad at them. It is true, the world would agree with the godly, if they would bow down to them: but that they cannot do, they dare not do; because the Lord forbids it: *Be not conformed to the world.*

Now the *reasons* of the doctrine may be classed under these four heads. The children of **GOD** must not be conformed to this world. 1. In respect of God. 2. In respect of the world. 3. In respect of their brethren. And, 4. In respect of themselves.

*1st*, In respect of *God*; there are many reasons might be given, why the people of **GOD** are not to be conformed to the world. For,

1. By being conformed to the world, you *tempt* God, and lead yourselves into *temptation*: if any of God's people entertain unnecessary communion with the wicked of the world, like Peter in the high-priest's hall, they tempt God, to let them fall into mischief, contrary to his express command, *Thou shalt not tempt the Lord thy God.* They run upon a dangerous precipice, where, if God take away his hand, they may fall and break all their bones.

2. By being conformed to the world, they so far *for-*  
*sake*

sake God, and so forsake their own mercies, and run into idolatry: hence *covetousness* is called *idolatry*; for it is making the world our God. Whatever we love most, and serve most, and depend upon most, that we make our God; and so do we when we love, serve, and depend upon the world so as to juggle God out of doors. But, why do we dote upon the creature, or upon the world? For, whatever the world hath of good, it hath it from God. Your food, raiment, comforts, and conveniencies in the world, as they are any way good to you, it is from God: and therefore, if you forsake God, and follow the world, from a desire after these things, you forsake the full fountain, and follow the fading streams; you depart even from the true good, that is in the world itself, while you go to the world for it. *My people have committed two great evils; they have forsaken me, the fountain of living waters, and hewed them out cisterns, broken cisterns, that can hold no water,* Jer. ii. 13.

3. God and the world are at odds; there is a disagreement between God and the world, between Christ and the world: all the time that Christ was in the world, it mocked, reviled, opposed, and persecuted him, and at last killed him; and Christ, by his life and death, did fight against the world, and overcome it: and he hath put enmity between his people and the world. All the prophets, and apostles, and saints, in all ages, have been at hot war with the world, and contended with all the wicked in it; *They that forsake the law, praise the wicked; but such as keep the law, contend with them,* Prov. xxviii. 4. They have been *men of contention* in the world; why? the world is in arms against their God; therefore the Lord hath sworn that he will have war with it, as with Amalek, unto all generations; and with all who shall join it; yea, or stand neutral: they are *curst*, because they *rise not up to the help of the Lord against the mighty,* Judges v. 23. Christ hath given encouragement to his people, that they shall be *more than conquerors, through him who hath overcome the world.*

4. The love of God, and the love of the world are contrary; *He that loveth the world, the love of the Father is not in him.* God's work is, to draw our affecti-

ons from the world; the world's work is, to draw our affections from God: and both God and the world seek the whole man. If a man desire to be religious, God must have his whole heart: and he through grace must give it, and make a continual trade of religion: if a man desire to be rich, the world will oblige him to rise early, and sit up late, and eat the bread of carefulness; yea, and employ his head and heart, and all about the world. And therefore God and the world cannot be served by one and the same man. Yea, the love of the world leads to the *hatred* of God: because there is a contrary nature between God and the world; the Lord is pure, the world is polluted; the Lord is good, the world is evil: the Lord hates the world, though not as his creature, but as it is our Lord's rival, usurping his room in our hearts.

2dly, In respect of the *world* itself, many reasons may be given, why the people of God are not to be conformed to it. And here if we view the men of this world, the god of this world, and the whole complex frame of it, we will see grounds and reasons why we ought not to be conformed thereto.

1. The *men* of this world is a reason, why the people of God should not be conformed to this world, or to the practice of the men that are in it. Why? it *hardens* the wicked in their wickedness, when they see professors of religion, and those that have the reputation of godly persons, join with them, or too familiarly converse with them: and so this their conformity to the world, is hurtful to the wicked of the world; they will applaud themselves in their wicked courses, when such as are applauded for godly persons do associate with them. Thus, after Saul had spared Agag, Samuel refused to return with him; *And Samuel said unto Saul, I will not return with thee; for thou hast rejected the word of the Lord, and the Lord hath rejected thee from being king over Israel*, 1 Sam. xv. 26. So should the godly say to the wicked, "*Ye have rejected the word of the Lord; therefore I will not return with you, I will not join with you.*" If you join with the vicious, you do vice too much honour. If you join with the sinner, you give sin too much encour-

encouragement. And therefore, it is sometimes the greatest act of love towards wicked men, to deny them our countenance, and withdraw from their society; yea, to refuse to keep company with them, may sometimes be a means to reform them.

2. The *god* of this world is another reason why the people of God ought not to be conformed to it. The god of this world is the *devil*; and to be conformed to this world, is conformity to the devil; and to love the world, is to worship the devil: therefore, as *covetousness* is called *idolatriy*; so the devil tempted Christ to worship him, by offering the world to him, Matth. iv. 9. This world is the devil's walk where he goes to and fro; yea, *goes about as a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour*; and like a crooked serpent, whom he may deceive: and when we are upon the devil's ground, among the wicked of the world, joining in fellowship with the wicked, in their unfruitful works of darkness, it is one to a thousand, if Satan do not cheat us through his subtilty; and, by little and little, captivate us. As thieves usually first put in a little one at the window to open the door to all the rest: so Satan presents us an apple, a wedge of gold to the eye; or a whispering tale, a polluting word, or suspicion to the ear; these are the doors of the house; and these little thieves will open the door, and let in adultery, whoredom, theft, malice, murder, &c. Satan's request seems mannerly and modest at first. As Simiramis desired of Ninus only to reign one day, and that day to do what she pleased, what she listed; which being granted, behold in that day she cut off his head: even so, the devil, the god of this world, will desire only to reign a day, or to have you dedicate a day to him and to the world, and the vanities, and follies, and vices thereof; but, behold, in that very day he may cut off your head, cut off your soul, by drawing away your heart and affections from God.

3. The whole complex *frame* of this world, and *things* thereof, affords a complex reason why we are not to be conformed to this world. Why, *the whole world lieth in wickedness*: for, *All that is in the world, the lusts of the flesh, the lusts of the eye, and the pride of life, are*

nothing but the trash and trumpery of hell.—In a word, the world is but a *contemptible* thing; Christ poured contempt upon it, and disgraced it, when he said, *My kingdom is not of this world.* It is nothing to be contemned and disgraced by the world; nay, sometimes it is a man's glory to be so: but Christ's disesteeming and despising a thing, rubs a real infamy upon it; and why then should we be conformed to it?—The world is a *vanishing* thing, the clock of time is almost run out; and, in a little, it will be winded up in eternity. If a man had a tack of a house, or a farm, but for two or three days, and should fall a building and planting, would he not be judged very foolish: so, when we have such a short and uncertain time here, and death calls us presently off the stage, to thirst immoderately after the world's pleasures, profits, honours, and vanities, is it not extreme folly? It is doomed to destruction; and will be all in a flame and red low ere long.—The world is but a *vain* thing: *Man in his best estate is altogether vanity*, even in his most prosperous state: prosperity, in scripture, is compared to a candle; and many have burnt their wings about this candle. This world cheats all that dotes upon it; it promises pleasure, but cannot perform; for no solid satisfaction can be found in it. The world's votaries are but a pack of cheated fools: *Wherefore do they spend their money for that which is not bread, and their labour for that which satisfieth not?* When the world speaks you fair, believe it not; for there are seven abominations in its heart: its greatest glory is but a fading shadow.—The world is a *hurtful* thing; and we little need to be conformed to it: the customs of it choke the seed of the word, that it cannot grow. The things of this world is the false deception the devil casts over our eyes, that we do not see the glory of the Lord; *The god of this world hath blinded the eyes of them that believe not*: it is the bait that draws so many fish into the devil's net, whereby he bewitches them and allures them into the pit of ruin.

3dly, In respect of their *brethren*; there are many reasons also, why they are not to be conformed to the world, lest their brethren in Christ be either grieved or offended:

offended: for your conformity to the world and joining with the wicked, is both grieving to the strong, and offensive to the weak believer.

1. It is *grieving* to the godly: and, is it nothing to you to grieve the generation of the righteous? The sin of the wicked is a grief to the godly: and, how unnatural is it for any of God's children, to add to their grief, by joining issue with the wicked! It is said of Lot, that *his righteous soul was vexed from day to day, with the unlawful deeds of the wicked*: but for such to be vexed, not only with the ungodliness of sinners, but with the untenderness of saints also, is an additional vexation; and grief upon the back of grief.

2. It is *offensive* to the weak believer; it lays a stumbling-block in his way, over which he is ready to fall; either by discouraging him in the way of duty, or encouraging and leading him into sin, or any other way leading him into some snare, with respect to his own soul: *When you sin so against the brethren, and wound their weak consciences, you sin against Christ*, 1 Cor. viii. 12.

4thly, In respect of *themselves*: and that, 1. Because of their circumstances. 2. Their safety requires, that they be not conformed to the world.

[1.] Because of their *circumstances*. They are quite in other circumstances than the rest of the world. Why,

1. They are people of *another world* than this; and therefore are not to be conformed to this world: they are *not of the world, even as Christ is not of the world*. They are of another *kingdom*; for, *Christ's kingdom is not of this world*. They are of another *country*; for, *they desire a better country, that is, an heavenly*. They are of another *city*; even the *city that hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God*. They are of *another world*; for, *God hath chosen them out of the world*.

2. They must not be conformed to this world, because they are persons of another *state* than this world. The world is in a state of *condemnation*; but they are in a state of *justification*: therefore they are to walk like those that are in favour with God. They are in a state of *adoption*; therefore to be *followers of God, as dear children*.

They are in a state of *grace*; they are *the children of the light and of the day*: therefore they are not to *sleep as others do*.

3. They must not be conformed to the world, because they are acted by another *principle* than the rest of world.—They have a principle of *faith*; and this *faith worketh by love*: while the world lieth in unbelief; and this their unbelief worketh by enmity.—They have a principle of *love*; and *the love of Christ constrains them to serve the Lord*: while the enmity of the world constrains them to dishonour God.—They have a principle of *holy fear*; while *the world hath no fear of God before their eyes*.

4. They must not be conformed to the world, because they are directed by another *rule* than the rest of the world. The rule that the world walks by is their *own will*, their own corrupt wicked will; and hence they say with the people of old, *We are lords, and we will not have this man to reign over us*: but the rule by which the children of God do walk, is the *word and will of God*; and *this is the will of God, even our sanctification*.

5. They must not be conformed to the world, because they aim at another *end* than the rest of the world; whether we consider the end propounded by them, or the end designed upon them.—The end *propounded* by them. Why, the last end, and chief end of the world is *self*: to live to themselves: but the great and chief end of the godly, is to live unto God: the principle end they profess is God's glory, and Christ's honour. And those who differ so far in their end, good reason they differ in their way.—Again, as to the end *designed* upon them; why, the world will come to a dismal issue; for, *the wicked will be turned into hell, and tormented with the devil and his angels*; but the godly, being *chosen out of the world*, will shortly *enter into the joy of their Lord*.—And seeing their ends are so different, surely they cannot both walk in the same road. If one goes east, another west, surely they cannot walk the same way.

6. They must not be conformed to the world, because they are objects of another *love* than the rest of the world: they are *loved with an everlasting love*, and

so drawn with loving kindness; and being drawn with the cords of love, they are to run the way of God's commandments, while others run in the broad way to destruction: the world is the object of God's hatred; *Jacob have I loved, and Esau have I hated*, Rom. ix. 13.

7. They must not be conformed to the world, because they are *servants* of another master, than the rest of the world. The world serves the devil, and serves their lusts, and serves other gods: but every believer is a Joshua in this; *As for me, and my house, we will serve the Lord*. Now, a man cannot serve two masters: and the believer cannot serve both God and Mammon; Christ and the world.

8. They must not be conformed to the world, because they are partakers of another *Spirit* than the world: *They have not received the spirit of this world, but the Spirit which is of God*. The world is led by an ill spirit to the land of darkness: whereas they are led by the good Spirit to the land of uprightness.—The world is led by a poor, pitiful, low, and mean spirit: whereby they are easily put off with trifles, and satisfied with shadows and vanities: but the godly are led by a noble, high, and heavenly spirit; whereby they aspire after divine and celestial things.—The world is led by a blind, ignorant, foolish spirit; whereby they are mad upon their idols: the children of God are led by a Spirit of wisdom, knowledge, and understanding; whereby they are wise unto salvation.—And thus the circumstances of the people of God yield all the reason in the world, why they ought not to be conformed to this world.

[2.] Their *safety* requires it also, that they be not conformed to the world: (1.) The safety of their names, that are in danger to be disgraced. (2.) The safety of their consciences, that are in danger to be defiled. (3.) The safety of their graces, that are in hazard of being marred. And, (4.) The safety of their persons, that are in danger to be punished by their conformity to the world.

1. The safety of their *names* require, that they be not conformed to this world: for their names are in danger  
of

of being disgraced, by such a conformity. Because when they become like unto the wicked, and conformed to the world, they give occasion of their being suspected of the world, and so shame and disgrace their own name and their father's name; *He that is a companion of riotous men, shameth his father*, Prov. xxviii. 7. So the believer shames his heavenly Father by conformity to the world; for, what agreement is there between God and the world? He shameth his earthly father also, whether he be a graceless or a gracious man: if he be a *graceless* man, he shameth him, by giving occasion to say, he is like him; *Like father like son*: If he be a *gracious* man, he shameth him, by being so unlike unto him. But he especially shameth himself: for, whereas a *good name is as precious ointment*; so his conformity to the world, in any measure, is the *dead fly that causes the ointment of the apothecary to send forth a stinking savour*, Eccl. x. 1. They lose their credit and esteem.

2. The safety of their *consciences* require that they be not conformed to the world: because, by conformity to the world, their consciences are in danger of being defiled, and their souls to be depraved; for the sin and way of the world is of an infectious nature: can a man touch pitch, and not be defiled? *Can a man take fire in his bosom, and his cloaths not be burnt? Can he go upon hot coals, and his feet not be burnt?* saith Solomon. We are told of the Jews, Psal. cvi. 35. that when they were mingled among the heathen, they learned their works, and served their idols, which was a snare to them. The finest looking-glasses will gather dust and defilement: even so may the children of God themselves gather dust and defilement, by mingling with the world; for sin is a plague and infection. And the haunting of sinful company will defile a saint: Joseph, in Pharaoh's court, learned to swear by the life of Pharaoh; Peter, in the high-priest's hall, swears and denies his Master; the Israelites, being used to the Egyptian furnaces, framed an idol. They that ly down with dogs, shall rise up with fleas; they that dwell in the kitchen, will smell of the smoke.

3. The safety even of their *graces*, that are in danger to be marred and weakened, require that they be not conformed

conformed to the world. There is not such a gracious person on earth, but if he cast himself, by untenderness and unwatchfulness, into the company of a carnal world he will find their conversation abate the edge of his zeal, and cool the fervour of his devotion; yea, enervate, debilitate, and weaken every grace; and, by little and little, transform him to their manner, in a great measure, till sovereign grace reform him again: *When iniquity abounds, the love of many waxeth cold.* This new-planted colony of grace in the heart, is in great danger when opposed, not only by the native, (I mean, our corruption,) but also by the auxiliary help and aid of the corruption of others.

4. The safety of their *persons* require that they be not conformed to the world: for they who are conformed to the wicked world, are in danger of being punished therewith. Though all that are in Christ are freed from condemnation, and eternal wrath; yet they are not freed from affliction and temporal judgments, especially if they shall associate with the wicked. If Lot had not come out of Sodom, at the command of God, he had perished in the flames: If Noah had not made the ark, at God's command, he had perished in the flood with the world. And hence the command of God to us is, *Come out of her, my people, that ye be not partakers of her sins, and that ye receive not of her plagues,* Rev. xviii. 4. *A companion of fools shall be destroyed,* Prov. xiii. 20. And again, *Come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord; and touch not the unclean thing, and I will receive you,* 2 Cor. vi. 17. *Shouldst thou help the ungodly, and love them that hate the Lord? therefore is wrath upon thee from before the Lord,* 2 Chron. xix. 2.

Thus you see many *reasons*, why the people of God must not be conformed to this world; and that in respect of themselves: their circumstances and their safety every way require it.

V. The fifth thing proposed, in the method, was, To make *application* of the subject; which we shall essay in an use of information, reproof, examination, and

exhortation, inforced with some motives; and then conclude the subject with some directions.

*Use 1.* Let us improve the doctrine in an use of *information*. If then matters be so, as you have been hearing, *That the people of God must not be conformed to the wicked world,* we may hence learn,

1. What are the *rules* by which our conversation in the world is to be squared, and how our conversation with the world is to be cautioned. This non-conformity to the world doth not exclude all conversation whatsoever with the world: for, in several cases, we may lawfully converse with them.

**QUEST.** *In what CASES may the godly converse with the world?*

**ANSW.** (1.) In case of *necessity*; when we are compelled and obliged to live amongst them. This was David's case in Kedar; *Wo is me that I dwell in Mesech, that I dwell in the tents of Kedar,* Psal. cxx. 5. So it was with the church of Pergamus; *I know where thou dwellest, even where Satan's seat is,* Rev. ii. 13. Where God hath a chapel, Satan hath a throne.

(2.) In case of *policy, traffic, trade, and merchandise*: in this respect we cannot live without the wicked of the world. It is lawful to have commerce with them; provided always we mingle not with their vices.

(3.) In case of *courtesy and civility*. As this non-conformity to the world doth not exclude lawful traffic; so neither doth it exclude, or impeach civil courtesy. It is not only lawful, but laudable to do any courteous offices towards them that are without, whereby to gain them.

(4.) In case of *charity*: hence we are called to *do good to all, but especially to the household of faith*. Though the household of faith, in poverty, be the special objects of charity; yet, we are not to exclude others: *Do good to all.*

(5.) In case of *piety*: and thus it is lawful to converse with the wicked as far as, by gentle and seasonable reproofs, we may, through grace, be useful to reclaim them. We are to *walk wisely towards these that are without;*

out ; to visit them in their distress, when they are in affliction ; and to do all the good we can to their souls.

(6.) In case of *affinity*. This non-conformity to the world doth not take away natural affection ; neither will it extend to a separation between husband and wife, for the sake of religion : it is lawful for the *believing wife* to converse with the *carnal husband*, as Abigail with Nabal : nay, for religion's sake, such are called to converse together ; *What knowest thou, O wife, whether thou shalt save thy husband? or, what knowest thou, O man, whether thou shalt save thy wife?* 1 Cor. vii. 14, 16.

In all these, and the like cases, converse with the wicked of the world is lawful. But the meaning of non-formity with them is, we must not chuse them for our daily companions, delight in their discourse, or frequent their haunts ; *Now, I have written unto you, not to keep company ; if any man that is called a brother be a fornicator, or covetous, or an idolater, or a railer, or a drunkard, or an extortioner, with such a one no not to eat,* 1 Cor. v. 11. We are not to affect their society, nor to favour their wickedness ; but *keep ourselves unspotted from the world,* James i. 27.

Thus we see, I say, the *rule* by which our conversation in the world should be squared. In things which are absolutely moral indeed, all rules of art should be affirmative : but in this point, a man may give a negative rule, which may be safe and good. Do not as the world doth : do quite contrary to them. It is a good rule to live by, to mark the courses of worldly men, and to do the quite contrary. Worldly men give themselves to covetousness, to worldly pleasure, world lusts, world affections : now, it is a good rule of walk, to observe what they do, and to do the quite contrary.

2. Hence we may see, if it be the property of a true Christian, not to be conformed to the world, how *few* true Christians there are in the world. There are many professors indeed, but few godly persons : why ? because they are like the world ; they live as others in the world do ; they live as atheists and infidels. Look to yourself, man, woman ; do you not even the same things that the rest of the profane world do ? Do you not live

after the same course, and at the same rate? They restrain prayer before God, both in secret, and in their families: they neglect the word; they regard it not, they obey it not; they swell against it, they snarl at it: they break and profane the Sabbath; they omit the proper duties of it, and do those things which are in themselves unlawful on that day: they are malicious; they are deceitful in their dealings: they live contentedly without Christ; though they be *poor*, they live contentedly without the *tried gold* of his grace; though they be *blind*, they live satisfied without the *eye-salve* of his Spirit; though they be *naked*, they live peaceably without the *white raiment* of his righteousness. Now, what is your life? What contrariety is there between you and the world? Do you not live the very same way? O then, you are conformed to this world with the rest: and, how few are otherwise! Therefore there are but few saints indeed; because the most part are conformed to the world, and taken up with the vanities of it.

I understand there is to be a remarkable meeting here this week; an idle, vain rendezvous; I know not upon what pretence: but I fear the motto of it be, *Vanity and Folly*; if not *Wickedness and Debauchery* in the issue: and in case that prove the issue of it, I must exoner myself on the head. True; some may be thinking, it is better that the minister hold his peace; for, say what he will, the company will but laugh at it when they are convened: But I do not value that; I must answer to God for what I say, and you must answer for what you hear and do at his tribunal; and see who will laugh there.

I have only a few questions to propose to all that design to countenance that convention of idleness and folly.

1. Will it be no conformity to the world, and fostering of its vanity and idleness, to give countenance thereto?
2. Will it be with a view to glorify God, or edify any poor immortal soul, that this meeting shall gather together?
3. Will it be of such a nature, that any, who countenance it, dare go to God and pray for a blessing upon it?
4. Will it be of such a nature, and shall not counteract,

counteract, and contradict the call of providence, at this day, which calls us rather to mourning and weeping, than to joy and gladness? 5. Will it be a meeting of God's approbation, and such as they shall be able to account for, at his awful tribunal, without fear or shame? 6. Will it be such a meeting, as that your countenancing it, will give ground of joyful reflection, when your eye-strings are breaking, and your souls flying out of your bodies into eternity?

If these questions can be answered in the positive, and that it be indeed a meeting of this nature, then I have no quarrel with it: but if otherwise, and that none of these things can be said of it, then I protest against it, in God's great name; and take instruments, in the hands of your consciences, that I do so. And I would earnestly exhort all, that desire to be followers of Christ, that they would beware of it, as they would not offend God, nor grieve the generation of the righteous, and be guilty of conformity to the world: for, before ever it come, it hath no favour of Heaven about it; and, I fear, the interest of hell be advanced, and the vanity of the mind promoted by it.

Why, say you, it is but designed for a little diversion and recreation. Indeed, it is easy for persons to put a fair face upon a foul design: but I fear the promiscuous dancing and revelling that I hear is designed, together with the drinking and carousing that may take place, will discover that the god of this world will be the great master-conveener, and the lusts of the world will be the great diversion; even *the lusts of the flesh, the lusts of the eye, and the pride of life.*

A meeting for prayer and humiliation would be more suitable for the sad state of the souls of many of those who have such designs in view: for, it is to be feared, some will give countenance to that vanity, by whom the ordinances of Christ have been little countenanced these twelve months; and some who will find more pleasure in such merry caballing, than ever they found in God's sanctuary all their days; which says, that they have more need that God set them to their knees, to deprecate the vengeance that is hanging over their guilty heads, than

that the devil set them on their feet, to dance away merrily to hell. †

3. Hence see, that it is no wonder that religious persons be *cried down* for niceness and singularity. Indeed, religion must be cross, and contrary to the world. If this be singularity, not to walk as those do that make no conscience of duty, but mock and jest at better things than they will imitate, then we must be singular: *If this be to be vile*, as David said in another case, *then we shall be more vile*. Why, say you, shall we expose ourselves to be traduced as proud, precise, and singular persons, who think none so good as ourselves? Why, Sirs, it is better that the world speak ill of us without cause, than that God should be angry at us, and proceed against us on just reason.

4. Hence we may see, what a weak argument it is, that is only drawn from *multitudes* and *universality*. Most men do so and so; yea, all men do so and so; and why shall not we follow their example? But the apostle's argument is quite of another nature, Eph. iv. 17, 20. *I testify, in the Lord, that henceforth ye walk not as other Gentiles walk, in the vanity of their mind, &c.; but ye have not so learned Christ*. See 1 Thes. iv. 5. where we are told, that it is but a poor, vain, weak argument for one to urge, others do so and so; and therefore why not I? Why, Paul's argument is quite the reverse; *Let us not sleep as others do*: let us not drink and tipple as others do; *but let us watch and be sober*, 1 Thes. v. 6. Non-conformity to the world faith, on the contrary to this carnal reasoning, "Let us not sleep, as others do; let us not swear, as others do; let us not profane the Sabbath, as others do; let us not commit uncleanness, as others do; let us not lye, as others do; let

† These notes have a relation to a remarkable BALL in Dunfermline, in which much promiscuous dancing, levity, and wantonness, took place.—If there was, at that time, so much occasion for our Author to inveigh so severely against such promiscuous assembling and caballing, drinking and revelling; how much more reason now, in these days of profanity and prodigality, when these practices are become so universal among all ranks, and carried to greater extremes, especially in populous cities and places of public resort, to the dishonour of God, the discredit of religion, the consumption of precious time, the wasting of the substance, fostering the vanity of the mind, and the ruin of the soul in the issue.

“ us not steal and cheat, as others do ; let us not live  
 “ in the omission of religious duties and ordinances, as  
 “ others do ; let us not live without God and Christ,  
 “ and in the neglect of eternity, as others do.” It is  
 a weak argument for one to say, “ Lord help us, if all  
 “ others be in the wrong but you ; if all those that have  
 “ authority, numbers, and multitude on their side be  
 “ in the wrong, and you only right.” This way of  
 reasoning crosses the very scope of the text, *Be not con-*  
*formed to this world* : which supposes that the world is all  
 wrong, and that very few in it are right ; even a few  
 that are *not of the world*.

5. Hence see, that the *wicked world* need not quarrel  
 with the *saints* for *refraining their company* ; why, God  
 encourages them to do so ; yea, commands them to do  
 so : *Now, we command you, brethren, in the name of our*  
*Lord Jesus Christ, that ye withdraw from every brother*  
*that walketh disorderly,* 2 Thes. iii. 6. Why, should  
 we esteem them as dogs, and trample upon them ? No ;  
 we are to *withdraw* from them, in pity to their souls :  
 we are to mourn for their sins ; to pray for their con-  
 version ; to use all proper means to reduce them to their  
 duty ; and to exercise all manner of hospitality and civi-  
 lity towards them : but, in the mean time, to withdraw  
 from *intimate society* and *fellowship* with them ; saying,  
 as Jacob said to Simeon and Levi, *O my soul, come not*  
*thou into their secret ; and unto their assembly, mine honour,*  
*be not thou united,* Gen. xlix. 6. For God hath com-  
 manded us not to be conformed to them. Where, by  
 the bye, we see also how low an esteem the Lord hath  
 of the wicked world ; he will not allow his saints to keep  
 company with them.

6. Hence see the *vanity* of all those *shifts* and *excuses*  
 whereby people cover their conformity to the world.  
 But to speak of these shifts will fall more natively in up-  
 on the following use : only I would observe here, that  
 many indulge themselves in entertaining fellowship with  
 the *unfruitful works of darkness*, and communion with  
 the wicked, and conformity to them, and yet never  
 think it is ill done ; they have never the least check or  
 challenge for it ; while they do not see their own guilt  
 in

in associating with the wicked, nor can they charge themselves with the fault of their associates. Many willfully, delight in such company, whom they know hath no relish for religion; whose discourse is not *seasoned with salt*; and whose ill breath discover that their lungs are infected; being depraved in their morals, dangerous in their communication, scandalous in their lives, erroneous in their principles, and wear their faults upon their foreheads, so as to be pointed at, by common observation, as notorious and flagitious, and despisers of God, his word, his people, and his ordinances, Psal. i. 1.

*Use 2.* Again, the doctrine may be improved for *reproof* to all that are *conformed to the world*; and particularly to all that, having a *profession of religion*, and yet keep company with the *loose and wicked* of the world, notwithstanding the *call of God*, Eph. v. 11. *Have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather reprove them.* Notwithstanding the *danger* that is in such fellowship: the danger of *infection*; for, as *he that walketh with the wise, shall be wise*; so, he that walketh with fools, will learn of them their folly: the danger of *punishment and suffering*; for, *the companions of fools shall be destroyed*: and the danger of *scandal*; so Jehosaphat's joining in affinity with Ahab, did eclipse his honour, and became scandalous; *Shouldst thou help the ungodly, and love them that hate the Lord? therefore is wrath upon thee from before the Lord*, 2 Chron. xix. 2.—How doth this doctrine condemn all such as *profess the name of God*, and yet say, as the Israelites to Samuel, *Nay, but we will be like other nations*, 1 Sam. viii. 20. Tell many a man, You must not do so and so, for thus do Turks and Tartars, and the barbarous nations of the world; you must not join in affinity with the people of these abominations; you must not walk in vanity and idleness; you must *walk honestly as in the day, not in rioting and drunkenness, not in the chambering and wantonness*; for thus much the secure people of the world do: urge them with this argument, and what will they say? Why, this is to be too strict and precise; this is to be contrary to all the world; and this is to be singular: yea, this is  
but

but a proud, hypocritical superstition of ourselves, from all the rest of mankind. Alas! what carnal reasoning is this against the clear command of God? *Be not conformed to this world.*

QUEST. *Who are they that conform and fashion themselves according to this world?*

ANSW. Those that take the *example of men*, and not of the *word of God*, for the rule of their actions. The greatest and most eminent have their infirmities, and are subject to manifold failings. We are to be followers of none, but as they are followers of Christ, 1 Cor. xi. 1.

2. Those that make their *ancestors* the patron of their religious services: *Our fathers burnt incense to the queen of heaven, and so will we.* Our fore-fathers were of such a religion and persuasion, and so will we be. We see no ground to differ from the religion of our predecessors.

3. Those that follow a *multitude to do evil*; and walk in the broad way of wickedness, for the sake of company: but, when vice becomes general, singularity becomes a virtue. When any error, in judgment or practice, becomes universal, then singularity becomes a necessary duty.

4. Those that rule their actions by the *will of their superiors*; so Israel followed Jeroboam: while yet great men are not always the best men. Those are chargeable with conformity to the world, who, to please great men, will make bold with light and conscience directing them another way.

5. Those who hing their *faith* to the *belt of human wisdom and learning*; that follow those whom they think the wisest men, the deepest divines, and most learned doctors. It is the devil's policy to seduce the world by such blazing light, as the serpent beguiled Eve; and the Pharisees misled the people, saying, *Have any of the rulers and Pharisees believed on him? Have any of the learned Rabbies fallen in with that man? But this people who know not the law are accursed.*

6. All that are chargeable with *other mens sins*, by countenancing them: whether it be the sins of fore-fathers, looking backwards; or the sins of posterity, looking forwards; or the sins of the present generation

tion we live among, looking round about us. And people may be chargeable many ways with the sins of others.

QUEST. *How is a person chargeable with the sins of others?*

ANSW. We are chargeable with the sins of others, more generally two ways; either by *imitation* or *interpretation*: when we imitate others in their sinful practices, or put too favourable glosses upon their vicious courses. More particularly; We are chargeable with the sins of others when we *command* others to sin; as Pharaoh commanded to murder the Hebrew children, and Herod to kill the babes of Bethlehem, and Nebuchadnezzar to worship the golden image they were guilty of all that murder and idolatry.—When we *counsel* others to sin; so Balaam did the children of Israel.—When we *consent* to the sin of others; so *Saul consented to the death of Stephen*.—When we *conceal* the sins of others, and do not reveal them, and reprove the committers of them, and use all proper methods to bring them to condign punishment for them.—When we *constrain* others to sin; either by compulsion, provocation, or enticing of them.—When we *seduce* others into sin, by sly artifices, insinuating suggestions, and taking arguments; and so gain their assent to our vicious ways.—When we *commend* and *praise* others for their sinful courses, and applaud them in their sin.—When we wish them *success* in their evil courses; for, *he that biddeth them good speed, is a partaker of their evil deeds*.—When we do not *correct* and *punish* people for their sins as we have access, in our capacities; whether as magistrates, parents, masters, or otherwise related.—When we *defend* and *justify* sin, and *call evil good and good evil*; and not to *condemn* sin, nor hinder the *commission* of it, when it is in our power to do so.—In a word, when we give or take an *ill-example* in sin; or when we learn at others, and others learn at us any sinful ways. And finally, when we *rejoice* at the sins of others, and take *pleasure in them that do so*.

In all these cases we are chargeable with the sins of others, and so with conformity to a sinful world. And, indeed, as I had occasion lately to observe on another subject,

subject, this may let us see, that many will have sins to answer for that they never dreamed of: not only their own sins; but all the sins of other men, that ever they countenanced in this manner, and never seriously reprov'd and mourn'd over.

It is possible one may say to a reprover of his sins, "What have you to do with me? you will not answer for my sins. What hath the minister ado with my faults, my particular failings? Why does he take upon him to rip up my sores?" O man! you do not consider: We must answer not only for our own sins, but for all the sins that we countenance and encourage; and for all the sins that we do not reprove, lament over, and repent of. Alas! little do the world consider, what need they have of Christ as a Saviour and Redeemer, to ransom them from the guilt, not only of their own sins, but their guilt of other mens sins. Little do the companions of drunkards, swearers, fornicators, Sabbath-breakers, and such like, consider how they ly involved in the guilt of all the sins of those, with whom they associate themselves, and whose wickedness they connive at, and consent unto, or make a jest of.—However, all these now are guilty of fashioning themselves like unto the world.

But carnal reason will produce manifold *pleas* why people should be like their neighbours. And if any ask, *What are these pleas and shifts?* We might reply, by condescending upon the four following, amongst many others.

*Plea 1.* "I must conform myself, saith one, to the company I converse with, that I may not be reckon'd *morose, ill-natured, and unsociable*; but become all *things to all men.*"

*Reply.* You must know, if you be religious at all, you must not be neuters in religion: you must be either hot or cold; either wholly for God, or wholly for Baal. Where *courtesy* will not comply with religion, and yield to it, it becomes *cruelty* to the soul. To comply with a course of idleness and vanity, out of a pretence of good nature and sociableness, is to bewray the want of a new nature, and of sweet fellowship with Christ. It is true, *civil* society is no where forbidden, unless it degenerate

into levity, vanity, idleness, chambering, and wantonness: but *intimate* society with those that have no fear of God, no smell of religion, or of Christ, in their words and actions, can never be justified, whatever shift or plea be made use of for that end.

*Plea 2.* “Why, saith another, I must conform myself to, and join with such a drunken company, sometimes; for they are my *customers*, with whom I buy and sell, and on whom my livelihood depends: and, I hope, it is not unlawful for me to go and drink with them.”

*Reply.* Though I said before, that non-conformity to the world doth not exclude traffic and merchandise; yet I shall add here, that though it be not unlawful, but necessary, on many accounts, both to drink and eat with moderation, and to trade and traffic with honesty; yet, I hope, none will thence infer, that it is lawful either to make unnecessary society with the wicked, or drunkenness a part of their trade. Your livelihood doth not depend upon these, but upon the providence of God: it is *his blessing that maketh rich*; and the Lord needs no sinful shift of ours, to supply his course of providence. As Christ saith, *Which of you, by taking thought, can add a cubit to his stature?* Matth. vi. 27.; so, who can add a penny to his estate by drunkenness, or conformity to drunkards? yea, though you should *gain the whole world*, you lose more than you gain, by every sinful compliance; for, *what is a man profited, though he shall gain the whole world, if he lose his soul?* Matth. xvi. 26. He makes a dangerous adventure, that hazards his precious soul to gain the trifles of a perishing world.

*Plea 3.* “Why, saith a third, may not I associate with the wicked, that I may *reclaim* them; for so did Christ?”

*Reply.* Christ's office was a *Physician* to save and heal diseased sinners. Take heed it be not zeal in you, but presumption: be sure of a call.—And again, Christ could not be *infected* with any man's vice: if you had such a preservative, then you might go in peace through the midst of plagues.—Indeed, the nature of grace is to diffuse itself, and communicate good to others; yet many,  
who

who make this their pretence, to convince or convert others, do not consider the deceitfulness of their own hearts, and what sinful by-ends they are led by, even under this colour. But, indeed, if a man had a clear call to join in, for a while, with a company of vain persons, and to sit with them, which the Psalmist owns he *shunned*, saying, *I have not sat with vain persons*; I say, though a man had the clearest call to join company with such, he had need to do as the physicians, when they go into an infected place, they arm themselves with some antidotes: so should we do, if we go into such company; we have need to be armed with faith, and prayer, and holy resolution, and heavenly wisdom, such as may work more strongly than the plague of sin and subtilty of Satan, which we are to encounter with.

*Plea 4.* “Some will plead the violence of *importunity*: “such a company doth urge and press me; and if I refuse to join with them, they will scoff and scorn me.”

*Reply.* If you can never resist a temptation to sin, you have no evidence of being a child of God: but by resisting such assaults as these, providence gives you an occasion both of opposing sin in yourselves, by your refusal; and of destroying it in others, by your example. If they scoff and scorn, do you pity; and bless the Lord that hath given you better counsel, than to run with them into the *same excess of riot*. The more they shew themselves to be scoffers and scorers of religion and grace, the more they are to be resisted, with this meditation, *Blessed is the man that walketh not in the counsel of the ungodly, nor standeth in the way of sinners, nor sitteth in the seat of the scornful*, Psalm i. 1. Make not their violent opportunity your excuse: for, when they call you one way, and Christ calls you another, you need not be at a loss to know what hand to turn to. They say, *Come with us*, Prov. i. 11. Christ saith, *Come with me*, Song iv. 8. And whether it is better to *obey God or man*, judge ye, Acts iv. 18. When they are saying, *Follow us*; remember that Christ is saying, *Follow me*: and *the grace of God that bringeth salvation teacheth us, that denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world*, Titus ii.

(1.) They that are of this world could be satisfied to *live for ever* in this world; and would care for no other heaven, no other Paradise, but the pleasures, profits, and honours of this world. Look in to your heart and thoughts, man: if you can be content with this world for your portion; if you could possibly live and enjoy it for ever: if you could be satisfied therewith, and desire no other heaven, it is an evidence you are of this world.

(2.) They that are of this world, look upon the *comforts* of this world as *realities*; but upon the *promises* of God's covenant as *fancies*. And hence they dote upon the things of this world, and take pleasure in them; but dare not trust God with his promise, nor take comfort therein.

(3.) They that are of this world, they look upon men as *happy* or *miserable*, according to the things they *enjoy* of this world: yea, though they see them to be *wicked* men; yet, if they enjoy the *outward* things of this world, they judge them to be happy. Is it thus that you judge? It is an evidence that you are *of this world*; and consequently are *conformed to the world*.

[2.] Try whether or not you be conformed to the world by your *frame* and *disposition*. If you be not conformed to the world, then your affections will be habitually set upon things that are above: but if you be conformed to the world, then your affections will be habitually set upon things below; and so you *mind earthly things*. Here I will offer you a few marks of a person who minds earthly things, and consequently is conformed to this world.

1. When a man looks upon earthly things as the most *beautiful* and *eminent* things, that is an evidence that he *minds* earthly things, and consequently conformed to this world. The heavenly disposed man looks upon *celestial* things to be the most beautiful and eminent.

2. When a man's *greatest thoughts* are *busied* about earthly things, it is an evidence that he is a worldly man. A man may know himself better by his thoughts than his words and actions; for the thoughts are immediately from the heart: even as we may know better what  
the

the fountain is, by the immediate bullering of it near the spring, than by the streams afar off; *For, as he thinketh in his heart, so is he*, Prov. xxiii. 7. A man is as he thinketh in his heart, when earthly thoughts are sweetest. I speak not of those thoughts which a person, through weakness or temptation, may be subject unto: but of those which are sweetest unto the soul; such as are the habitual delight of his heart.

3. The man minds earthly things, whose *heart cleaves* to the earth. Discourse to such a man never so much of the *vanity of this earth*, he may give you a hearing; but his heart still cleaves to the earth: talk to him never so much of the *glory of heaven*, and the *happiness of the saints*; yet still his heart cleaves to the earth: yea, he himself may comment and flourish in his discourse, concerning the vanity of all things in the world; and yet still his heart cleaves to the earth.

4. The earthly-minded man is filled with *distracting cares* about the things of this earth. If he be disappointed as to these things, he looks upon himself as undone: God, and Christ, and the promises, none of them can give him any contentment or comfort, if his idols on the earth be removed; if he miscarries there, he is undone: *They have taken away my gods, and what have I more?* His greatest business, and strongest endeavours, are the adequate object of his earthly mind; they take up the whole strength of his soul.

5. In a word, an earthly man passes through *many difficulties*, about earthly things, and is *never weary*, because he is in his element: he is like the fish in the sea. A man is soon weary of swimming in the water, because it is not his element; but the fish is not weary, because it is its element. An earthly man is quickly weary of spiritual duties; whereas a spiritual man calls the *Sabbath his delight*. An earthly man will not go through with his work, because his heart and mind is elsewhere: If you mind earthly things at this rate, as I have shewn, it is a shrewd evidence of a worldly frame; and this worldly frame and disposition is an evidence of conformity to the world.

[3.] You may know whether you be conformed to the

the world or not, by your *life* and *conversation*, by your *words* and *actions*. They that are of the world, they speak of the world, they deal with the world, their whole conversation smells of the world; *They favour not the things that are of God, but the things that are of the world.* Worldly discourse goes best away with them; worldly converse is their pleasure; worldly wisdom is their disposition; and worldly company is their delight: but *their delight is not in the saints, the excellent ones in the earth.* And, indeed, those that can take pleasure in vain, wicked, light, and leud company, but never affected fellowship with the saints, nor company with the godly, about soul matters, they discover their great conformity to the world, and their want of conformity to God and Christ.

*Use 4.* This doctrine may be improved for *exhortation*, or *dehortation*, in the words of the text: O Sirs, *be not conformed to this world.* Some sober heathens have sometimes expressed the greatest dislike to the vanity of this world. Socrates thought it one of the greatest torments of men, in another life, to be bound to commit those sins wherein they most delighted in this life. Seneca said of himself. "I am too great, and born to greater things, than that I should be a slave to my body." And Tully thought him not worthy the name of a man, that could spend a whole day in carnal pleasure. And surely they do not deserve the name of Christians, who can spend a whole day in worldly carnal pleasure and recreation. How will those heathens rise up in judgment against us, if we live in conformity to the world!

In order to inforce the exhortation, we adduce the following *motives*. Consider, that conformity to the world is adultery, idolatry, enmity, and contrariety to the power of religion:

1. It is *adultery*, spiritual adultery. If a man's heart goes after another woman, more than his wife; or a woman's heart more after another man than her husband, it is adultery: so, if our heart go a whoring after any thing in the world, more than our Maker, who is our husband, it is spiritual adultery.

(2.) It

2. It is *idolatry*. As *covetousness* is called *idolatry*; so, conformity to the world, is worshipping of idols. If a man should carnally affect a queen, or an empress, though the most beautiful woman in the world, instead of his own wife, it is a great sin; but if he forsake a queen, a most beautiful person, for a dung-hill raker, a nesty scullion, it were a greater evil: so here, to forsake him who is *altogether lovely*, for the empty things of the world, Oh! what an evil is it! It is to *depart from the fountain of living waters, and hew out to ourselves cisterns, broken cisterns, that can hold no water.*

3. It is *enmity*; for, *the carnal mind is enmity against God*: the carnal man is enmity against God; and to embrace a carnal company is to embrace God's enemies, and those that are enemies to all spiritual good.

4. It is a *contrariety* to the power of godliness. Grace and godliness tend to alienate and disengage the heart from the world, and from all things under God: but this conformity to the world, is directly contrary to this end. And, indeed, let a man have the sweetest and most awful impressions made upon his heart by the word, and let him go streight in to a carnal company; behold! how quickly will his impressions be removed, and convictions stifled thereby!

We shall now conclude the subject with a few *directions*; and we shall but just name them in so many words.

1. Seek to be *regenerated and born of God*; born from above: for, he that is born of God is not conformed to the world; but is *transformed by the renewing of his mind.*

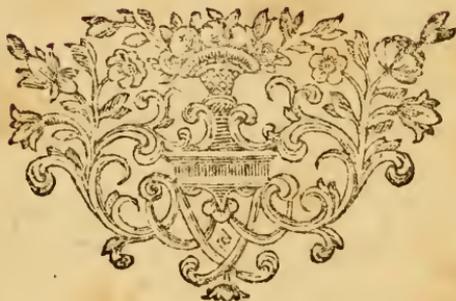
2. Seek the *Spirit* to bring you by *force* out of this world; and to conquer the world for you. But concerning both these, we spoke at some length on the use of *trial*; and shall now pass them.

3. Be aware of *wicked company*; and let your *delight be in the saints, the excellent ones of the earth*: and this, by the blessing of God, will be a mighty preservative from being conformed to the sinful courses and practices of the wicked world.

4. Be restless till you attain *conformity to the Lord*

*Jesus Christ*: and, in order thereto, seek discoveries of his glory, that, beholding it, you may be *changed into the same image, from glory to glory*, 2 Cor. iii. 18. There is a smitting favour in the face of Christ; they who see him cannot but be like him, and desire to be like him: so it is with those about the throne; *They shall be like him, for they shall see him as he is*. Conformity to Christ is the best cure of conformity to the world; for it makes the man to *count all things but loss and dung, for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ*.

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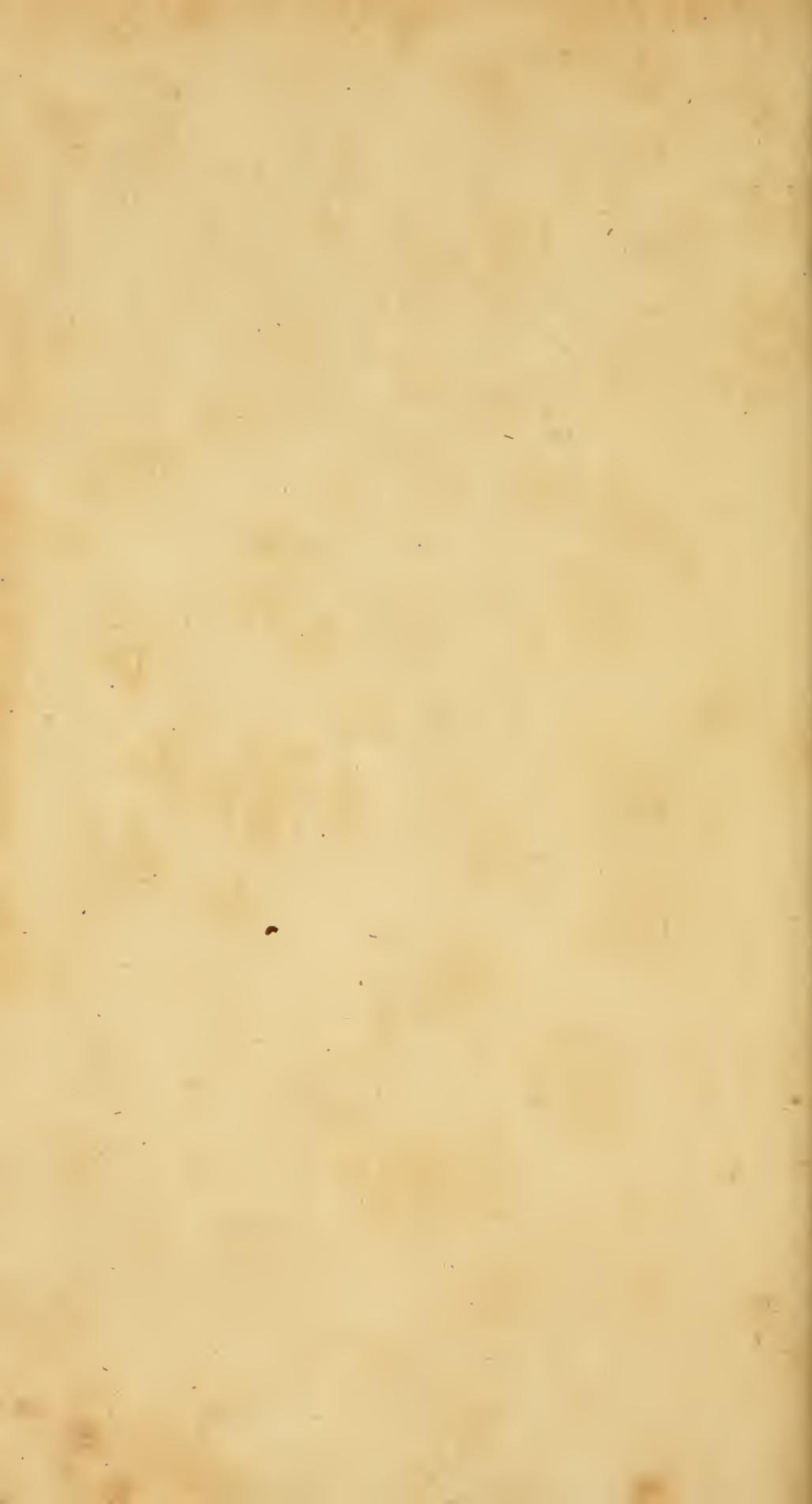
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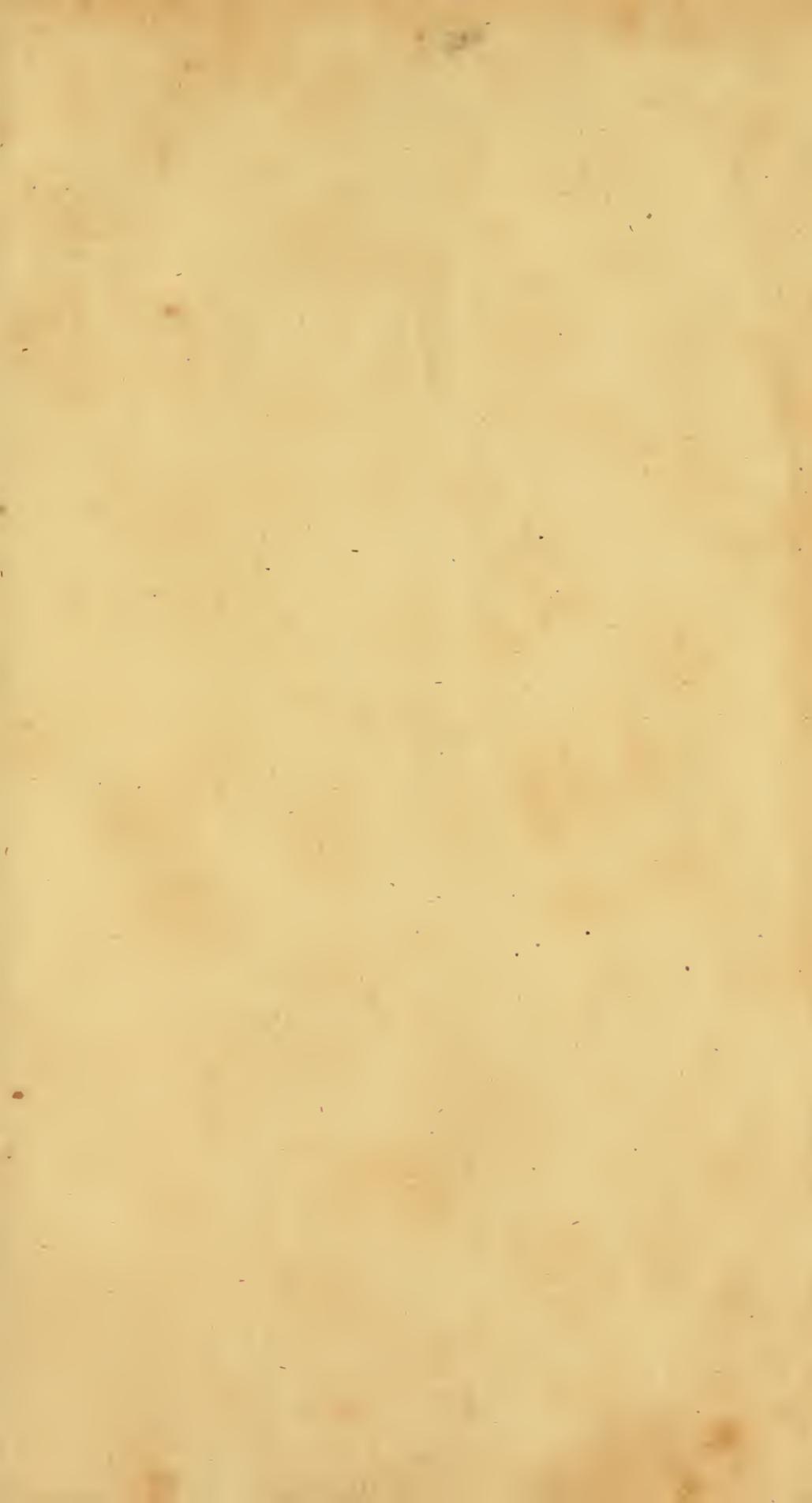
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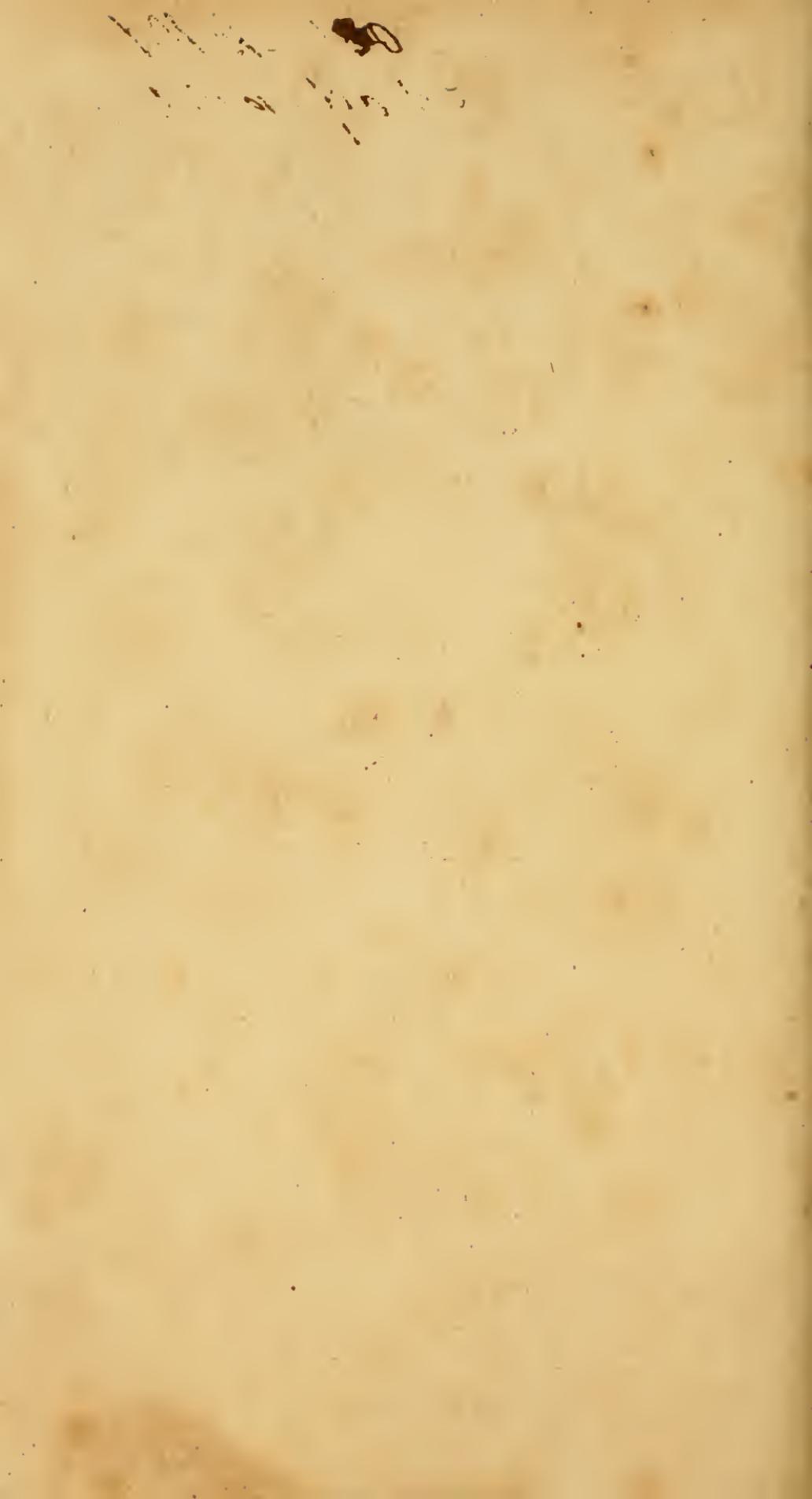
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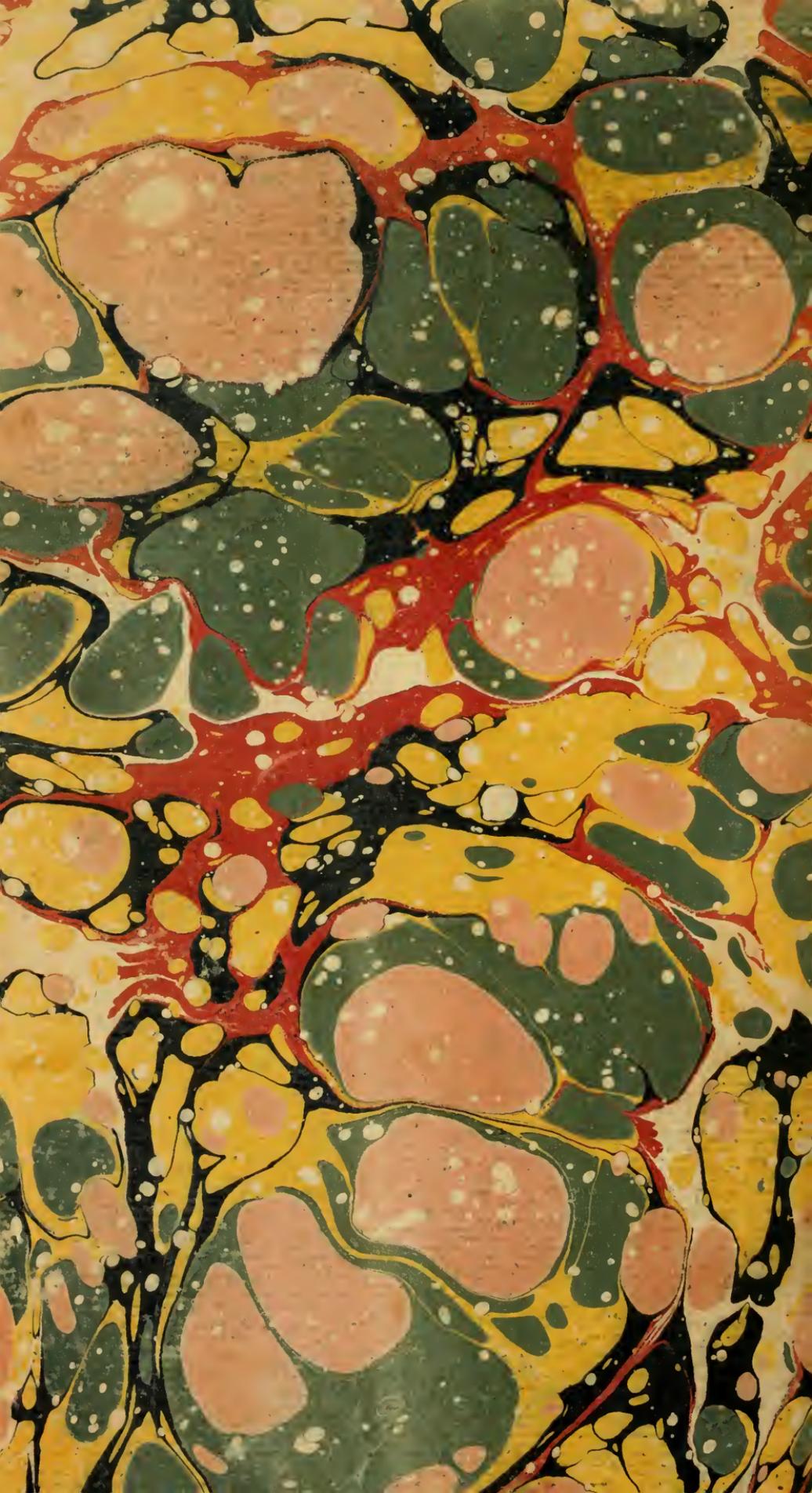








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