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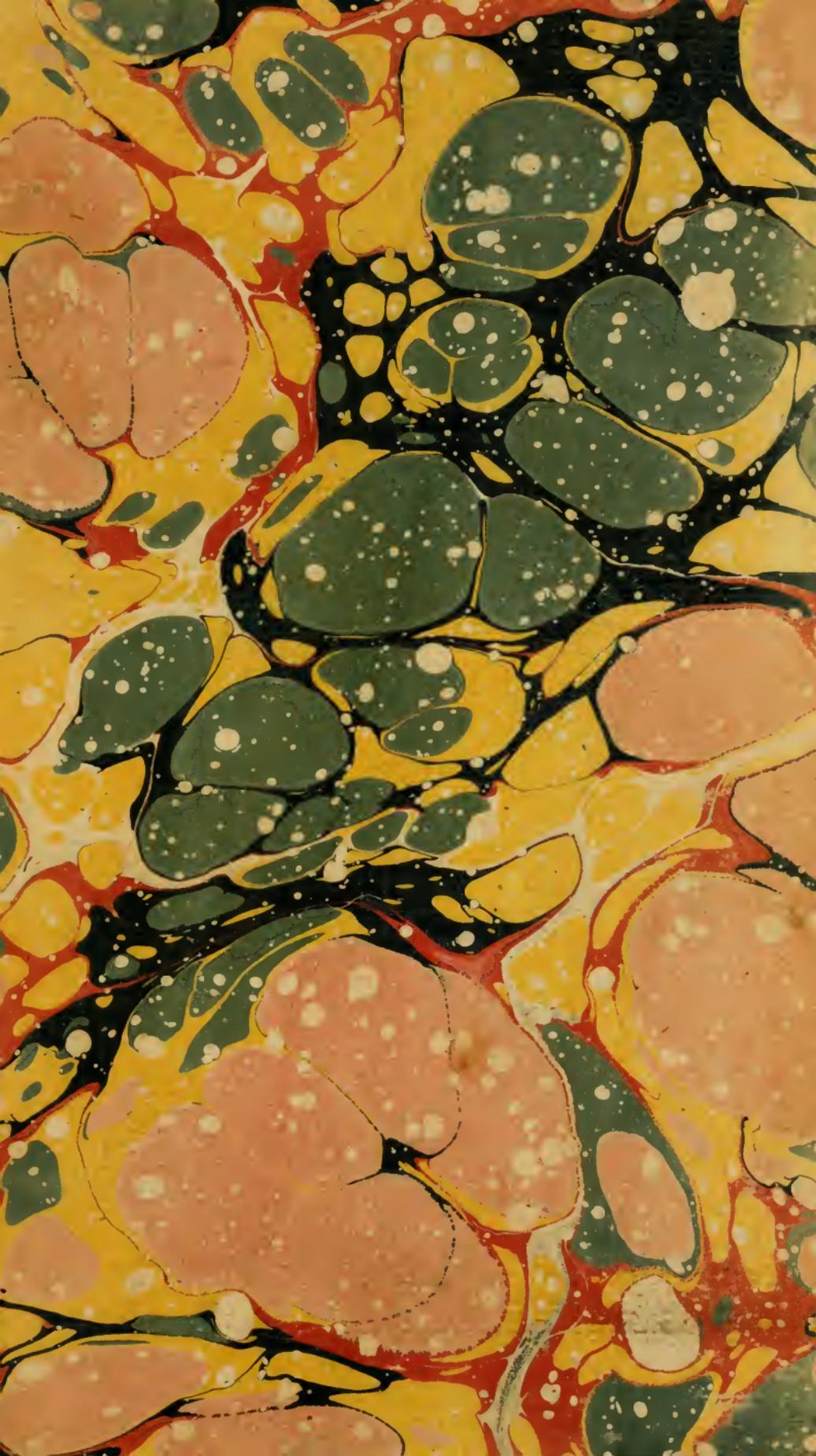
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*Mark the perfect Man, and behold the upright; for the  
End of that Man is Peace. PSALM xxxvii. 37.*

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MDCCLXXVII.



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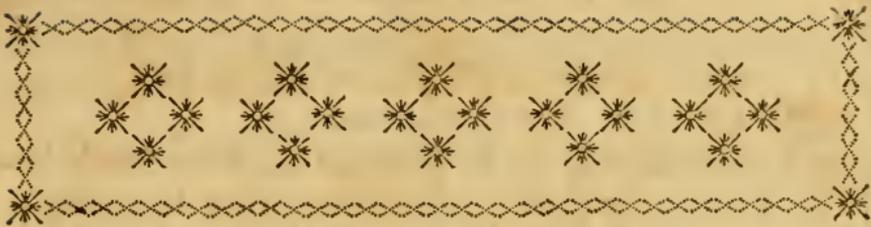
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SERMON



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

PREVENTING LOVE; or, GOD'S LOVE  
to us the *Cause* of our Love to him.

I JOHN iv. 19.

*We love him, because he first loved us.*

**T**HE great design of the gospel, gospel-ordinances, and sacraments, is to commend the love of God in Christ. The sacrament of the supper is a love-feast; and they that have their senses spiritually exercised therein, will find readily all their senses filled with *love*. What do they *hear*, but *love*! What do they *see*, but *love*! What do they *taste*, but *love*! What do they *feel*, but *love*! What do they *smell*, but *love*!—It is a sweet account we have of God, ver. 16. *Hereby perceive we the love of God, because he laid down his life for us.* O happy they that have so learned the gospel-catechism, from their experience, as to be able to answer to that question, *What is God?* And to say, *God is love!* He is essential, boundless, bottomless, infinite *love*. It is true, if we look to him in the glass of the *law*, we will see him to be all *wrath*; a *consuming fire out of Christ*; but look to him in the glass of the *gospel*, and you will see him

\* This sermon was preached after the administration of the sacrament of the Lord's supper at Portmoak, June 3d, 1723. and hath now undergone five impressions.

*all love ; a God in Christ reconciling the world to himself : and the sight thereof produces love : for we love him, because he first loved us.*

The text gives us a short account of the whole business betwixt God and a believer : they love one another. Here is love descending, God in Christ loving his saints ; and here is love ascending, the saints in Christ loving God ; and the former begetting the latter. When love hath descended from heaven to earth, it hath finished the half of its course ; but when it ascends from earth to heaven again, then the circle is completed.

Here is, 1. A description of *God's love ; he loved us first.* 2. A description of *our love to God ; we love him for this cause.* And,

1. We have *God's love described ; He FIRST loved us.* If we were to make a critical division, we might notice how it is described. 1. In the *act*, loved. O wonder that ever the heart of God should have acted that way towards any sinner of Adam's race. 2. The *subject* loving ; *He loved :* O ! a glorious *He*, the infinitely holy and just God. 3. The *object* loved ; *He loved Us ;* poor wretched apostate *us.* 4. The *quality* of this love, he loved *us*, and *first* loved *us ;* intimating, both that it is an *ancient* love, for it is in the preterite time, he *loved ;* yea, loved from eternity ; and also that it is *antecedent love ; he FIRST loved us,* before we had a being, before we were capable to love him ; yea, while we were yet enemies.

2. We have the *saints* love described ; *we loved him, because he loved us ;* which is also described in these four : 1. The *act*, *love ;* and indeed this love of ours is but a drop of the ocean of his love. 2. The *subject* loving, *we ;* we believers, we that got a taste of his love. 3. The *object* beloved, *him ;* we love *him*, who deserves our love above all things in heaven and earth. 4. The *rise* and *source* of this love of ours, *We love him, because he FIRST loved us ;* his love is the incentive and productive cause of our love. But I refer the further explication of the text to the prosecution

secution of a doctrine. Many things might here be observed : As,

1<sup>st</sup>, *None can truly love God, but such as are beloved of him,* Many speak of the love of God, as if it were natural to them : but as true love is a spark of heavenly fire : so there is no love natural to man but the love of sin.

2<sup>dly</sup>, *That God hath a people in the world that love him, because they are loved of him.* There is in God a common love, whereby he loved the whole world ; and a special love, whereby he loves the saints : and so there is in the saints a common love, by which they love all God's creatures ; and a peculiar love that belongs to God only, whom they prize above all other things.

3<sup>dly</sup>, *That divine love works freely.* God does not trade with us upon any terms, conditions, or valuable considerations in and about us. We can neither buy heaven nor beg it ; it must be given. Let not the greatest civilian presume ; let not the greatest prodigal despair : God's love is first on the field.

4<sup>thly</sup>, *That as God and his saints love one another, so the reason of saints loving God, is God's loving them :* there is no reason of God's love, but because he loves. But there is reason enough for *our* love, because *he* loved us. The believer loves God upon God's account, and for good reason ; God loves us without any reason, or any cause from without himself ; but we have all the reason in the world, why we should love God. Many say, they love Christ, but they have not any reason for it ; they that love him know why they do so. There are three things create love, *viz. Beauty, interest, love.* 1. *Beauty ;* and O, but Christ is *white and ruddy, and altogether lovely.* 2. *Interest ;* the more a man sees Christ to be his own, the more he loves him. 3. *Love ;* the love of God is the great parent of love ; it begets love ; *We love him, because he first loved us.*—But having taken this short view of the text, the doctrine I fix upon is this.

OBSERV. *God's love to his people is the source of their love to him.* Their love is influenced by the faith of his love; his love is the cause of theirs; *We love him, because he first loved us.*

Now the general method that seems most native is,

I. To speak of *God's love to his people.*

II. Of the *saints love to God.*

III. The *influence* his love hath upon theirs as the cause of it.

IV. Apply the whole in fundry *uses.*

I. To speak of *God's love to his people*: and indeed to speak of it is to speak of that which is unspeakable and inconceivable, for *it passeth knowledge*; only we may notice a few things that the scripture says of this love. I would offer some *remarks* concerning this love of God; and then shew more particularly, the *import* of this expression, *He first loved us.*

*Ist*, I would offer some *remarks* concerning the love of God.

*Remark 1.* *That the fountain of this love is GOD the Father.* Love begins in order of nature with the Father; hence, says Christ, *I will not say, that I will pray the Father for you, for the Father himself loveth you,* John xvi. 26. Christ prays for all the fruits and emanations of the Father's love to his people; but not for the Father's love itself. You mistake greatly, Sirs, if you do think that Christ doth purchase and pray for the Father's love to his people; nay, it was the Father's love that sent Christ to purchase all the fruits and communications of his love. *God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son.* The love of God cannot be purchased; there is no need of any mediation here; *I will not say, that I will pray the Father,* in this respect, *for the Father loves you.* Here is the fountain of the love. But,

*Remark 2.* *That the channel through which the love of God does run, from this fountain, is the LORD JESUS CHRIST.* God's love does not vent itself towards any sinner, to the disparagement of his infinite holiness and justice;

justice; and therefore it vents and flows in and thro' Christ, *Whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in his blood, to declare his righteousness, for the remission of sins that are past*, Romans iii. 23. God hath taken a marvellous way to manifest his love: when he would shew his *power*, he makes a world; when he would shew his *wisdom*, he puts it in a frame and form that discovered vast wisdom; when he would manifest the *grandeur* and *glory* of his *name* more, he makes a heaven, and puts angels, arch-angels, principalities, and powers therein; and when he will manifest *love*, what will he not do? It is a pity we should deny this love; because God hath taken such a great and mysterious way of manifesting it in Christ; his *death*, his *blood*, his *righteousness*; here is the channel.

*Remark 3. The streams of divine love that flow from this fountain, in this channel, are vastly great; viz. Pardon, peace, safety, adoption, justification, sanctification, audience of prayer, a blessing on all providences, and everlasting triumph in heaven. I cannot enlarge upon these, or any other of the streams that flow from this love of God; the streams are so many, so great, that we should lose ourselves there, as well as in the fountain, if we were to dive thereinto; only we are blessed in Christ with all spiritual blessings; and this love of God, and all the fruits of it, is to be enjoyed in the fellowship of the Spirit, 2 Cor. xiii. 13.; where we read of the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God, and the communion of the Spirit; where Christ is first mentioned, because he is next to us, as being the channel through which the love of God is vented; and this love of God, and grace of Christ, is enjoyed in the communion and fellowship of the Holy Ghost; and that this love is from the Father, as the fountain; in the Son, as the channel; by the Holy Ghost, as the immediate conveyance.*

*Remark 4. The vessels into which these streams are vented, or this love is poured, are sinners; even to them it is declared that he is the Lord, The Lord God merciful, and gracious, pardoning iniquity, transgression, and*

and sin; and that *God is love*. This motto, that *God is love*, is inscribed on the gates of *heaven*; and none will think strange of that, because the love of God, in bringing any sinner of Adam's race there, is manifested to the highest. But we would think strange, if one should say, that this is even the inscription written upon the gates of *hell*, that *God is love*; why? his love to himself, and his own justice, is manifested there; yea, not only so, but millions are damned, because they slight redeeming-love; and their conscience galls them, for contemning all the offers of love. But that which concerns us especially, is, that we may read this inscription daily upon the beautiful gate of the *temp'le*; I mean, in gospel-ordinances, that *God is love*; for therein he manifests his love to sinners, even to sinners of Adam's family, in the general dispensation of the gospel; and particularly to the vessels of mercy, in the special operation of the Spirit upon them in the fulness of time; wherein he hath designed to pour out his Spirit, and so to pour in his love. But to omit many things here, I come,

2dly, To shew the particular *import* of this expression, *He first loved us*. And,

1. It says, That his love is *eternal* love, and from everlasting: *He first loved us*. *I have loved thee with an everlasting love*, Jer. xiii. 3.; as it is to everlasting, so it is from everlasting; as it will never have an end, so it never had a beginning, but it is as ancient as the eternal God is. O! what an amazing thought is this, that God should have had thoughts of love towards any poor sinners, like you and me, from the beginning of his *being*, which is without a beginning!—But, to prevent mistakes, you would know that the love of God is twofold; his love of *destination*, and his love of *approbation*: his love of destination and purpose, whereby he is said to *have chosen us in Christ, before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy*; *having predestinate us to the adoption of children*, Eph. i. 4, 5.; and this love he is said to manifest even before a man's conversion, 1 John iv. 19. *In this was manifested the love of God towards*

towards us, because God sent his only begotten Son into the world, that we might live through him. Herein is love, not that we loved him, but that he loved us, and sent his Son to be a propitiation for our sin.—Again, there is his love of approbation and friendship: such as that spoken of, John xiv. 23. *If a man love me, and keep my words, my Father will love him; and we will come to him, and make our abode with him.* Now, the object of the former love, *to wit*, the love of destination, is every elect soul, and that from all eternity, as well as in time, even before their conversion and union to Christ; the object of the latter, *to wit*, his love of approbation and friendship, is every believer united to Christ, to whom he begins to manifest his everlasting love personally; for, though he loved and approved of them from eternity in Christ, yet they cannot be said to be actually loved and approved in their own persons, till once their persons are united to Christ. Though God's love be everlasting and immutable as himself is, yet there is a time wherein he begins to manifest his love: there is no *variation or shadow of turning in God's love*; all the change is in the person beloved, not in God. It is mere blasphemy to say, that God begins to love them whom before he hated, in a proper and strict sense. It is true, the elect are *children of wrath, even as others*, by nature, whatever they are by divine destination, being ever the object of God's love in this sense; yet in some sense, he begins to love them, in respect of the *manifesting* of his love to them, and the outletting of his love upon them; when his love is taken, not so much for his immanent act, as for his transient act, not for any thing in himself, but for what flows from him to them; the love that is in himself is still the same, but the acts of love that flow forth to them, these begin to appear, when he *manifests himself to them, as he does not to the world*; when he comes to them for their salvation, and *reveals his Son in them*: and here also he is still before-hand with them; *He first loved us.*

2. *He first loved us*; it says, that his love is *ante-*  
*cedent*

*cedent* love; as it is first in point of time, yea, from all eternity, so it is first in point of order of time. We cannot manifest our love to him, till first he manifest his love to us. Men may feign love to God and Christ, before they know any thing of God's love in Christ towards them, but they truly have no love to him; even the elect themselves have no love to him by nature, they are *enemies*, and *without God, and without Christ in the world*; buried in the grave of sin and corruption even as others; *dead in trespasses and sins*, and slaves to *divers lusts*; the devil dwelling in them, working in them, reigning in them, as a man dwells in his house, or works in his shop, or reigns upon his throne; they have no more acquaintance with him, or love to him, than others, till by grace they be regenerated, and made to come to God in Christ, and be raised up to a new and lively hope. Common favours indeed, they may have, and God is always sure to notice his elect, and to have a care of them; and many remarkable deliverances will they meet with, even while unconverted. You will find few gracious persons but they will have even good things to tell of the Lord's kindness to them in their youth; but yet love and hatred cannot be known by these things that are seen; for bad men have had the like deliverances, and manifold common mercies, and common grace perhaps also; but all this while they are strangers to true love to God, till once some rays of his everlasting love go before them, and make way for the breaking of their enmity, and engaging them to love him.

✓ 3. *He first loved us*; it says, that his love is absolutely *free* love. If *he first loved us*, before we have any love to him, or loveliness in us, O how free is it! His love is free in several respects. It is free love in that it is without *force* or *constraint*; we must even put ourselves in his reverence, and not think to compel God, as if he could be obliged to do it; nay, if we get any thing, we must be in grace's debt, and ly at grace's door, as poor beggars, for an alms for Christ's sake.—It is free love in that it is *without*  
*reluc-*

*reluctancy*; it is with all his heart. There are some objects come to our door, and though we give them alms, yet it is with some *reluctancy*; we are not so free-hearted towards them as to others whom we have a kindness for; these we will give to, with all our heart; we give them with as much pleasure as if we were getting to ourselves; so God's special gifts are given with all his heart; he takes pleasure in giving; he *delights in shewing mercy*.—It is free love, in that it is without *merit* and *motive*; his love is neither desired nor deserved, and yet he loves: *I will love them freely*: I will do it undeservedly, even while they deserve to be thrust down to the lowest hell; *Not for your sakes do I this, be it known unto you*.—It is free love, in that it is without *price*; he seeks nothing for what he gives, he takes nothing for it; nay, he deals with us as poor beggars that have nothing to offer for what he gives, and nothing wherewith to recompence his kindness, after he hath given.—It is free in opposition to all proper *terms* and *conditions*. Papists tell us of the merit of *congruity*, and the merit of *condignity*; and many ignorant protestants think they do enough when they exclude the word *merit*, but in the room of merit they bring in a world of *conditions*; and tell us, upon *condition* you do so and so, then God will do this and that to you; telling us, God hath made a covenant with us, not like the covenant of works, but upon easier terms, requiring only some little things accommodated to our weakness: “It cannot be called *merit*,” say they, for there is no proportion betwixt what we do, and what we get; it is, say they, but as if one should hold out a penny, and get a kingdom for it.” Many such subtile reasonings of men there are, that tend to exalt self, and self-righteousness, which would all vanish before the light of this very text, if viewed in a spiritual and evangelical manner. *He first loved us*.

4. *He first loved us*; it says, that his love is a *preventing* love; it prevents our love, and all the good that can be about us; for he prevents with the blessings of his goodness. I might here illustrate this by

shewing, 1. The *object* of his love, whom he prevents. 2. The *time* of his love, when he prevents them. 3. The *dawning* of his love upon them, whereby he prevents them. 4. The *fruits* and *effects* of his love in them, wherein he prevents them.

(1.) The *object* of his love, whom he prevents. If we view whom he loves, we cannot but see it to be preventing love. The love of God lighted upon fallen men, not fallen angels, though much more noble and spiritual beings; and why? even *because he hath mercy on whom he will have mercy*: his love falleth upon the poor, foolish, weak nothings of this world for ordinary; not upon the wise, noble, and mighty; *not many such are called*; he reveals these things to *babes*, not to the *wise* and *prudent* of the world. We must not think, that outward things, such as wisdom, and learning, and worldly advantages, move God to set his love upon any; *Even so Father, for it seemed good in thy sight*: yea, his love vents ordinarily upon the most stubborn and rebellious sinners in the world, more than upon the most civil and moral persons, that had led a better life than the generality of their neighbours; who have had more of the *righteousness of the law* than other people; who have been better-natured, in respect of their pleasant natural disposition, than others; and who have had a liberal education, so as to be trained up, not only in manifold arts and sciences, but in manifold religious duties from their childhood. Grace many times passes by such persons as these, and falls upon more knobby, rugged persons. The young man in the gospel may be put to say, *All these things have I done from my youth up*, and yet go away from Christ, when a bloody Manasses, and persecuting Paul are received into favour and mercy. In a word, whomsoever he makes the object of his manifested love in time, they are persons unworthy of his love; they are full of enmity against him, and bent to backsliding from him, and wofully averse from returning to him. That God should love sinners, and great sinners, O what preventing love is it!

(2.) The

(2.) The *time* of his love, when he prevents them, does also illustrate this. Many a time he makes his grace to reach them, not when they are in their best frame or mood; but behold a Paul going to Damascus, with the knife in his hand, ready to cut the throats of the saints; grace out-runs him, seizes him, lays hold upon him, and the love of a God in Christ overcomes him; he is made Christ's prisoner, vanquished, and brought to subjection. I do not say, that it always holds, that a person gets the revelation of grace, when going on in sin; but the first efflux of grace towards them is many times, when in a very bad case: the Lord arrests them, many times, when they have been about some wicked act of sin; the Lord will fall in at such a time upon their conscience, fill them with terror, and humble them under his mighty hand; and never leave them till he hath quickened them, and made them live; *When thou wast in thy blood, I said unto thee, Live.* But what need we say more concerning the time of his love, to show the preventing nature of it, than what God himself says, Rom. ix. 11. *Jacob have I loved, and Esau have I hated; the children being not yet born, neither having done good or evil, that the purpose of God according to election might stand, not of works, but of him that calleth?* Before the man was born, or had done either good or evil, behold he is an object of divine love; *Jacob have I loved.*

(3.) The *dawning* of his love upon them, whereby he prevents them, may further illustrate this, *That he first loved us.* By this *dawning* of his love, I understand, not only the love and grace that is *objectively* displayed in the glorious gospel; but especially in the first glimmering of the *subjective* light, or the dawning of the day of power, wherein the person is made willing when the gospel comes, *Not in word only, but in power;* when *he girds his sword upon his thigh*, even his *glory* and his *majesty*, as that word may be read, Psa. xlv. 3. for the display of the glory of his grace and love, is the sword whereby he subdues and conquers his enemies: and till this *will-conquering day of power* take place, what is in the will but impotence and insufficiency,

to think any thing as of ourselves? and not only impotency, but aversion from every thing that is good; and not only aversion, but opposition and contrariety to the holy nature and will of God; *The carnal mind is enmity against God, for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be.* This *dawning* then of the day of power, to make them willing, must take place before there can be any gracious motion in the soul towards God; for all the legal conviction and humiliation that goes before this, works only from a principle of *self-love*, and *self-preservation*, till this great master-faculty of the soul, the *will* being conquered, carry the rest of the faculties of the soul towards God.

(4.) The *fruits* and *effects* of his love in them, wherewith he prevents them. And here I will tell you some of these things that his love prevents, in regard that they are *fruits* of his love. And,

1. His love prevents our *holiness*; for that is a fruit of his love. I hope you know that sanctification and holiness is a work of God's free grace, and so an effect of his free love; and yet, I fear, you bewray your ignorance of the gospel in thinking, O must I not be holy before ever God love me? Must not a man be somewhat holy, and therefore God will love him, and give him more? O great ignorance to think so; *What hast thou but what thou hast received?* Is not the very first beginning of holiness from God? Is it not he that infuses the habit of grace, and *takes away the heart of stone, and gives the heart of flesh*; and so his love prevents our habitual holiness, and also our actual holiness, and all our good works? Surely you may know this; for you have learned to say, that as it is by his free grace, that *we are renewed in the whole man, after the image of God*, so it is by the same free grace that we are enabled *more and more to die unto sin, and live unto righteousness*. If any good work, truly good, be wrought by you, is it not the fruit of God's creating power? *For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus, unto good works.*

2. His love prevents our *faith*; for that is a fruit of his love. You will say, it is true, he must make

us holy, but must we not come to him for it? Is it not upon condition that we believe, that he loves us, and saves us? My dear friends, whence is it that we get faith? If ever we have any true faith, is it upon the account of foreseen faith that God loves any man? that is rank Arminianism. Is it because we had faith before? O! does faith come out of our own shop? Or, is it spun out of our own bowels, and forged upon our own anvil? Can we bring faith out of our own head or heart? Can *dry bones live*, or raise themselves out of the grave? Nay, it is as impossible for us to believe, and raise ourselves up to the life of faith, as it is for a carcase of clay to put life in itself; nay, is not faith the *gift of God*? Is not Christ the *author and finisher of faith*? Who says, *When I am lifted up, I will draw all men to me*? It requires the same power that raised Christ from the dead. O then! Let not your imagination in this matter cross the very first principles of religion, so as to think that your faith, if you have any, is the cause of *God's love*, while his love is the cause of your faith; *He first loved us*.

3. His love prevents our *repentance*; for that is a *fruit of his love*: Why, say you, must we not repent and reform, before God set his love upon us? And ought we not, by the exercise of our common gifts and abilities that God hath given us, to work up ourselves to something of this, in order to our obtaining the favour of God? Alas, for such ignorance, and such a gospel-darkening religion, as is like to come in fashion in this generation! O! is not repentance as much the *gift of God*, and fruit of his love, as any other graces and fruits of the Spirit? Acts v. 31. *Christ is exalted a Prince and a Saviour, by the right-hand of God, to give repentance to Israel, as well as remission of sin*. We have a great deal of noise made about the necessity of gospel-repentance before, and in order to justification, and that even as a condition and qualification; here is indeed a *new scheme* of divinity, of which there is no foundation in our *standards* of doctrine. It is true, *repentance* is so necessary, that none can expect pardon without it; and so say I, holiness;

liness and sanctification are so necessary, that none can expect pardon without them: but is therefore holiness and sanctification necessary in order to justification? I think it is hard to maintain this without running to Rome, and making sanctification before justification, and in order to it: for if actual gospel-repentance be not a part of sanctification, I know not what it is; yea, as described in our Catechism, it comprehends the whole of sanctification.—But to return; why, may one say, may we not repent of our sins, in some measure, and reform our lives, and humble ourselves, and mourn? At least, can we not shed a tear? Can we not leave off our tippling, and quit our lusts, and think upon death, judgment, and eternity, so as by the meditation of these we shall get ourselves wrought up to a strong and strange mortification to all things in the world; yea, become as eminent in this as any faint in all the country, for all their boasting? Well, much good may your repentance do you; and would to God that you were doing more than you do. But I would have you suspect your repentance, yea, I tell you assuredly, that even by the utmost use of the highest common gifts and graces, you cannot repent; and when you have brought yourself by these means to the greatest measure of legal repentance, yet there is no promise in all the Bible to that repentance; *For all the promises are yea, and amen, in Christ Jesus*; and till you get in to Christ, by a *faith of his operation*, your common legal repentance is a sinful repentance; *For whatsoever is not of faith, is sin*; and so it is a God-displeasing repentance: *For without faith, it is impossible to please God*. In a word, your repentance, which you so much magnify in your heart, for I suppose you are not so destitute of sense, as to speak thus before the world; this repentance, I say, is so far from disposing you for Christ, that it tends effectually to make you oppose Christ; why? you find heart-melting and mourning, tears and sorrows, great flashes and love-floods of affection, and then you think all is right; you see no more need of Christ, and come short of him, instead of being drawn into him. “A man in this case, as  
“ one

“ one fitly expreffes it, is like one that comes to court  
 “ a lady ; but having got a fight of the handmaid, he  
 “ falls in love with her, courts her, and marries her,  
 “ who yet was but the perfon that fhould have led him  
 “ to the lady, he was propofing to match with : fo  
 “ here, Chrift is the match, the law and the duties  
 “ thereof are the handmaid ; well, thou falls to duties,  
 “ forrowing for fin, and the like ; you have fallen in  
 “ love with that, and feek no further.” Why, you  
 will fay, by this means you would have no prepara-  
 tory work at all. It feems by this doctrine, fay you,  
 a man muft come to Chrift at the firft leap, reeking  
 out of his fins, before his life be reformed ; nay, Sirs,  
 I muft tell you, in the Lord’s name, that the defign  
 of a right preparatory work, is to force you out of your  
 feigned repentance and reformation, and out of your  
 falfe hopes and confidence, and to fweep away your re-  
 fuge of lies : and if ever God prepare you for Chrift,  
 he will bring you to fay, “ O, I cannot repent, I can-  
 “ not reform, I cannot mourn ; and give me a world  
 “ I cannot command a hearty figh, or a sob for fin ;  
 “ I can do nothing ; I am hard like a ftone, and black  
 “ like a devil ; and unlefs Chrift help, I am utterly  
 “ and eternally undone.” And this tends to give the  
 foul a great demonstration of the freedom of his love,  
 that it prevents our repentance : *He firft loved us.*

4. His love prevents our *prayers* ; for that is alfo a  
 fruit of his love. You will fay, though we cannot at-  
 tain to be holy, and cannot believe and repent, yet  
 we muft pray, and feek, or elfe we cannot get his fa-  
 vour and love. Wo is me that people fhould have  
 fuch dark and dangerous notions of the method of fal-  
 vation ! Pray, whence comes your prayers, if they be  
 worth the name of prayers ? Do they not come from  
 heaven, and from the *Spirit of grace and fupplication* ?  
 If you have any defires that are worth the naming,  
 they come from above : and if they come wholly out  
 of your heart, or head, they are not worth ; yea, what-  
 ever defire you have out of Chrift, and whatever prayer  
 is not put up on this altar, *the name of Chrift Jefus*,  
 and by the help of the Spirit of Chrift, there is no pro-  
 mife made to it : for, however feveral promifes are  
 made

made to God's ordinances and institutions, which oblige you to be about his hand in the use of means: yet no promise is made to your performance out of Christ. Expect then no favour for, or upon the account of your duties; for if that be your way of doing, you need to pray that God may force you out of your prayers. Let none think now that I am discouraging any from the use of means, and the performance of duties; nay, I take witness, that, in God's name, I call you to the use thereof; and declare you are obliged thereto by the command and authority of Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. But, in the same name, I call you to the right use of the means, the gospel-use of the means; for that legal notion of praying and seeking, that I find for ordinary among people, as if their seeking would prevent God's love, and procure his favour, is derogatory to the goodness of God; and hath a tendency to make a Christ of their prayers, yea, more than a Christ; in regard it would be ascribing a causality to our prayers, which is not even done to the merits of Christ in this matter: for, as I said before, the love of God in itself, cannot be procured; Christ himself did not procure it; for God's love prevented Christ's mission, and sent him to procure all that he did procure and purchase: and therefore, if you think your prayers will purchase God's love, you make more than a Christ of your prayers; and they are offensive to God, dishonouring to Christ, and prejudicial to your own souls. The saints themselves know that it is not by their duties that they obtain his love; but in duty sometimes they get a sense of his love. Why, may some say, we need pray none at all, if we get no good by our prayers. Really, man, these prayers of yours, which you make your righteousness, and for which you expect to be loved, and justified, and saved, they are the most abominable to God, and unprofitable to you, in the world. *To what purpose is the multitude of your sacrifices? Therefore bring no more vain oblation: your incense is abomination to him; he cannot away with it, it is iniquity, even your solemn meeting,* Isa. i. 11, 13. See Isaiah lxvi. 3. Therefore you have need to pray,  
that

that God would learn you the mystery of prayer; for you will never find it a pleasant, comfortable, and profitable exercise, while you set it before his love, as a cause of it; whereas it follows after his love as a fruit of it. Hence all that ever prayed to purpose, or wrestled with him for the blessing, have found that they could not pray, more than they could move the earth from its center, until his grace prevented their prayers; and they can all set their seal to that word, Isa. lxxv. 1. *I am found of them that sought me not.* None ever sought him aright, till free grace sought them out, and found them in some respect.

*Quest.* But is it not said, Ezek. xxxvi. 37. *For these things will I be enquired of by the house of Israel?* True, betwixt gracious seeking and finding, there is a certain connexion; for gracious and spiritual seeking presupposes grace to seek, and that his love hath already prevented our prayers; and when he gives grace to seek, to be sure he will give more and more, not for our seeking, but for the sake of his promise in Christ Jesus, and upon his account. But if we understand that word as an encouragement to all, whether gracious or graceless persons, *For this will I be enquired of by the house of Israel,* then the meaning is not, *I will give you none of these things,* to wit, *the new heart, the new spirit,* there promised, and *the Spirit to be put within you;* I say, the meaning is not, *I will give you none of these things,* but for the sake of your prayers, and till your prayers produce them; nay, that exposition would be cross to the very context, which says, *Not for your sake do I this, O house of Israel; be it known to you, and be ashamed, and confounded for your own ways:* you may be ashamed of your prayers and duties, as well as your sins and iniquities; and therefore it is not for the sake of your persons or prayers either, *be it known unto you;* and therefore the meaning of the word is, that as all Israel hath a right of access to these promises; and all poor sinners that hear tell of them, may come to a throne of grace, and plead for the accomplishment of them to themselves, in a way of free grace; so in the diligent use of all these means and

ordinances of my appointment, they shall find, that I will yield myself exorable and easy to be entreated; and so it is an encouragement to prayer, in expectation that God will confer the promised blessings, and not that our prayers will obtain them; and therefore the more that a man turns such a scripture to a covenant of works, as if he were upon terms with God, that upon condition that he pray and seek, God will give him the promised blessings; the more he does so, I say, the further is he from all these blessings; whereas the less hope and expectation that a poor soul hath from his prayers, he will always find, that he will come the more speed.

In a word, the prayer you speak of, man, is either a natural or a spiritual prayer; if it be a natural prayer, then, as the natural man is bound to pray, and yet hath nothing to expect, but of sovereign free grace; so there is no connection betwixt his prayer and the promise, unless we turn rank Arminians: If it be a spiritual prayer, then to be sure, the promise hath prevented his prayer; for to say that none of these promises are given, till a man *pray in the Spirit* for them, is cross to the whole current of scripture, and spiritual reason; for, how can a man pray in the Spirit till that promise be accomplished in some measure upon him, *I will put my Spirit within you?* Thus his love prevents our prayers, it prevents our desires and endeavours: *He first loved us.*—And so much shall suffice for the first general head.

II. The *second* thing proposed was, to speak of *believers love* to God and Christ; *We love him*: This is but a small stream that flows from, and runs again to the ocean of his love. We may take up this love of the saints towards God in the following considerations.

1. We may consider this love in its *nature*. It is not a spark of natural kindling; it is not from natural reason or common grace, no; it is from the saving operation of the Holy Ghost, circumcising the heart to love God; *the fruits of the Spirit are faith, love,* and

and the rest of the graces : it is altogether super-natural ; for the *natural mind is enmity against God* : we naturally hate God. Sirs, though the worst person in the world will say they do not hate God, yet they really do it ; and their hatred appears in their aversion from him and his ways, their opposition to his commands and counsels, their contempt of his promises, and neglect of his salvation, and his Christ ; for *they will not come to him, that they might have life*. It is God's prerogative to turn the heart *from enmity to love, from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God* : no man can turn himself more than the *Ethiopian can change his skin, or the leopard his spots*, Jer. xiii. 23. Men, by their improvement of their natural faculties, and by common grace, which most part of men have something of, come to a sermon, and go to their knees, carry somewhat of morality and modesty, but they are not able to command themselves to love God ; nay, duty is a burden ; the word is a weariness to them ; they are mad upon idols ; they make *the Lord to serve with their sin* ; and their duties to serve as a covering to their lusts ; and make use of duty for this, that they may be looked upon as good men, and not Atheists : but let them do their best, they cannot expel that cursed habit of enmity, nor introduce the contrary habit of love, till the power of God come along discovering the bounty and glory of Christ, and transforming the soul after the same image ; for this love imports a saving knowledge of this glorious object beloved, a high esteem of the object thus known, a hearty choice of him whom we thus esteem, and a sweet recumbency in this choice. The understanding is made to see, the judgment to esteem, the will to chuse, and the soul to acquiesce in him.—  
But these things I cannot enlarge upon.

2. We may consider this love in the *kinds* of it. And here I would speak only of two kinds in general, *namely*, a more *common*, and a more *special* love.

(1.) There is a more *common love*, which even hypocrites may have, and may have it as a fruit of God's Spirit in this common operation, while yet they are

not renewed in the whole man. As they may have a temporary faith, so they may have a love proportioned to this. The seed of the word falls into the heart, as into stony ground, and it quickly springs up in some flashes of affection, and fair flourishes of a profession, so as they may seem, to themselves and others, to be among the best of Christians, while yet it is not any special work of God's Spirit, but a common gift and grace. The Lord designs to tame and civilize some, as well as to save and convert others. Now, this love, however great and vehement it may be in appearance, yet it is but a land-flood: at the best it hath not a spring; it is nourished as a pool of water, not as a well of water; the water which the Lord, gives to his people, it is *in them as a well of water, springing up to everlasting life*, John iv. 14. But the hypocrite's love is a *returning to the Lord*, but not with the *whole heart*. It is a love as is described in the Jews, *They served the Lord, and they served Ashtaroth*: to pacify their consciences, they will serve the Lord; but to satisfy their affections, they will serve their lusts: they never sell their *all* for the *pearl of great price*; they never rest upon him as their present, only, and greatest good, nor find full satisfaction in him. They never come to that with it, *Whom have I in heaven but thee? and there is none in all the earth that I desire besides thee*. There is something beside Christ that they desire; they have some esteem of him, when he smiles on them in his providences, when they get ease to their consciences; and, by their false hopes of heaven, apprehend matters to be well-enough with them. But when the Lord begins to frown, and the course of his providence is turned, then their love is turned into hatred; and *the hatred wherewith they hate him, is greater than the love wherewith they loved him*. As John's hearers rejoice *in his light for a season*, and but for a *season*; and Christ's hearers cry this day, *Hosanna*, and the next day, *Crucify him*; and, as *many people followed Christ for the loaves*, because he fed them; so many still follow Christ, some for outward things, and because

because of his general merciful dispensations ; yea, some for inward things : O, say they, ordinances are pleasant ; it is a sweet thing to get a tear at a sermon, and to be ravished with something of the glory of heaven, and privileges of the saints : no doubt the joy with which the stony-ground hearers received the word, had its sweetness and pleasure, and thereupon their hearts are aloft, and they think they love Christ above all things ; but yet their root is rottenness ; they never truly come to Christ, to get rest to their hearts and consciences from the filth and guilt of sin. But,

(2.) There is a *special love*, whereby the whole soul is carried out towards the Lord, as the chief, present, and only good, and whereby the soul sees nothing in heaven or earth desirable in comparison of him ; and that acts towards a present Christ, in rejoicing in him ; and towards an absent Christ, by lamenting after him : it acts by cleaving to him, when they have the greatest temptations to go away, and it appears most when Christ threatens to depart ; and it cleaves most to him, when many are departing from him ; *To whom shall we go, thou hast the words of eternal life.* It counts *all but loss and dung for him* : Christ gets the throne of their hearts, the cream of their affections, the very soul of their souls, their most vehement love ; whatever other things they love, it is but in a subordination to him ; whatever other things they rejoice in, he is their chief joy ; *I will go to the altar of God, to God my exceeding joy* ; Psalm xliiii. 4. Their joy in him exceeds the joy that they have in any thing else in a world.

3. We may consider this love in the *degrees* of it. I would not be for the breaking a *bruised reed*, or *quenching a smoking flax* ; my heart's desire is, that all that love Christ, even in the weakest degree, if it be a special love, may go away rejoicing in him ; therefore I tell you of these four degrees of this love.

(1.) There is a love of *desire* after Christ, that is not yet arrived at a full complacency in him ; *The desire of our soul is to thy name*, says the Church. A poor creature

creature may have a rooted desire after Christ, that is not yet come the length of a rooted delight in him; because through unbelief they question their special interest in him: but *blessed are they that hunger and thirst after righteousness; for they shall be filled.* If a gracious desire after Christ be rooted in the soul, there is true love. Yea, further, this desire hath several degrees also: sometimes the desire is like a *smoking flax*, hardly can one discern the spark of red fire, only they see smoke as a sign of fire; a *smoking flax*.—This desire may be strangely *choked*, sometimes through the prevalence of unbelief: even the children of God, that have sound and saving desires, may become so heartless, as that they have no boldness to come to the Lord, and express their desires; all they can say is, that there is something about the bottom of their heart of an earnest wish, that the Lord would come to them, when they cannot come to him: all they can say is, *O, when will he come to me! Or, when will he give me a visit! O, there is none in the world needs a visit so much I!*—Sometimes their desires are more *vivid* and *lively*, more bright and shining, and break forth in ardent prayers and pantings of soul after him; *As the hart pants after the water brooks, so pants my soul after thee, O God: my soul thirsts for God, for the living God. With my soul have I desired thee in the night, and with my spirit within me, will I seek thee early.*—Sometimes again their desires become so *strong*, as that the person is made to put on a resolution, as David did, *I will neither give sleep to mine eyes, nor slumber to mine eye-lids, till I find out a place for the Lord, an habitation for the mighty God of Jacob. Lo, we heard of it at Ephrata, we found it in the fields of the wood,* Psalm cxxxii. 4, 5, 6.—Their desires may be such as to make them *restless*, till they get their hearts made a fit habitation for him; they may be such as to carry their souls aloft above all temporary enjoyments, and make them *mount up on wings as eagles*; and to look down upon all the enjoyments of time, and sublunary comforts, as altogether contemptible. But then,

(2.) As there is a love of desire, so of *delight* and *complacency*, whereby they take up their rest and satisfaction in him, saying, *Tho' the fig-tree should not blossom, nor fruit should be found in the vine, &c. ; yet will I rejoice in the Lord ; I will joy in the God of my salvation.* Indeed, they that have found saving desires after the Lord, are unsatisfied till their desire be turned to delight, and till they attain this, *Whom having not seen we love ; in whom, though now we see him not, yet believing, we rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory.* When the Lord manifests himself to them, as reconciled in Christ, when he manifests his love to their souls, and opens the flood-gates of his Spirit's influences, O then they cannot but delight in him, and *be satisfied as with marrow and fatness ; for then they have a feast of fat things, and of wines on the lees, well refined.* O sensualists, that never had a more pleasant hour all your days, than when you sat down to a hearty meal of meat or drink, you are but a miserable creature ; *There is meat to eat that you know not of, and joy that you intermeddle not with.* O the joy and triumph that there is in the enjoyment of a God in Christ ; *Thanks be to God, which always causes us to triumph in Christ ; ALWAYS CAUSES TO TRIUMPH!* It is true, the souls of believers may sometimes wander from the Lord, even after they have experienced this enjoyment ; and never more readily than on the back of a sweet communion : their desires may wander after other things ; they may fall asleep ; they are not yet perfect, nor delivered from a body of death ; and therefore after that, they may come under doubts, and great fears ; and these may bring them very low, and may much alienate their hearts from the Lord ; yea, but they are as the needle in the compass, that can never rest or settle till it comes to the right point. They can never rest till they get into his bosom again : they find their case a wilderness case, wherein they are wandering from mountain to hill, and therefore they say, *Return unto thy rest, O my soul :* they are made again to return to him, and take more delight in him

him than ever ; and, by delighting in him get an earnest-penny of heaven.

(3.) There is a love of *benevolence* and *good-will* towards Christ, and his interest in the world, that all his concerns in the world may go right, and *that no weapon formed against Zion may prosper*. By this love, all these things, whereby God makes himself known, his word, his ordinances, his people, his precepts, his truths, are precious. And to this we may join,

(4.) The love of *beneficence*, whereby they do all they can for the honour of Christ, the good of his church, the credit of his truths, and for bearing down every interest opposite to his.—But these things may perhaps fall under another head.

4. We may consider this love in the *dimensions* of it : as God's love towards his people hath *height, and depth, and length, and breadth*, so there is something like dimensions of that sort in their love to him.

(i.) Their love is a *high* love, it hath a height ; it is a transcendent love ; they love him *above all things* ; they love him *more than father or mother, sister or brother, profit or pleasure, credit or preferment* ; yea, *doubtless, they count all things but loss and dung in comparison of him*. The language of their soul is, *None but Christ* : in all things he hath the pre-eminence.

(2.) Their love hath a *depth* ; for it is rooted in the heart, and does not float in the fancy. The love of many is but like a thaw, that will sometimes be on the face of the ground, by the heat of the sun, while there is a hard frost below in the earth ; so their love is but superficial, upon the surface of the soul ; there is some thaw, but the heart is hard ; true love hath a deep root.

(3.) Their love hath a *breadth* : they not only love his mercy and grace, but his faithfulness, justice, and holiness : they love not only his covenant promises, but his kindly threatnings ; not only his favourable providences, but also his fatherly chastisements : they love every thing that hath any thing of God in it ; his people, because they are his image ; his ordinances, because they are his galleries ; they love *the place*  
where

where his honour dwells ; and every thing that hath a divine stamp and superscription.

(4.) Their love hath a *length* in it, as well as a height, and depth, and breadth. It is not like the hope of the hypocrite *that perisheth*. Their hope and love, who are hypocrites, is built upon an airy fancy and empty imagination ; it is built upon sand, and so it falls to the ground ; but the believer's love is built upon the faith of the promise, and the faith of the love of God ; it is built upon the rock of ages, and so the building stands. Some will have a love to a thing to-day, and quit it to-morrow ; but love to Christ will never go quite out. It is true, their love is not always exercised, or always equal in its exercise ; for sometimes it is like a coal below the ashes, yet all the power of hell cannot quench it ; *for many waters cannot quench love* : it may be over-topped with the weeds of corruption, and out of view ; *for the flesh lusteth after the Spirit* ; and the flesh may be strong, and the Spirit or grace weak, but still the root remains, and shall grow up to perfection.

5. We may consider this love in the *properties* of it. Some of them have been touched in the preceding heads, therefore, in short,

(1.) True love to God in Christ is a *free* and *voluntary* love. Some people force themselves up, as it were, to an esteem for Christ, by using manifold arguments ; and after all, it is but imaginary and mercenary love : they are not under the constraint of gospel-grace, but the constraint of legal hope ; expecting some reward for their love and service : but here the person loves the Lord for himself, and serves him without legal compulsion or co-action ; or by legal fears of hell, or legal hope of heaven. As he loves them freely, in opposition to merit, so they love him freely in opposition to legal compulsion.

(2.) True love is a *sincere* love ; *Grace be with all them that love our Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity*. It is a loving the Lord *with all the heart, soul, mind and strength* ; it is hearty, and hath its abode in the inner chambers of the heart. It does not ly in the tongue

or lip, or the outward profession only, but in the heart, and affection, and soul of man.

(3.) True love is an *ardent* love: it is compared to *fire* that hath a most vehement flame: it is like fire for light; it is the discovery of Christ that makes the soul to love him, and it makes the man's *light to shine before men*, so as his heavenly Father is glorified. It is like fire for heat; it heats the breast, and warms the affections, and flames towards Christ when he is seen. It is like the fire for its consuming quality; it consumes lusts and corruptions: *Many waters cannot quench it*: no water of sin, of affliction, of desertion, or temptation.

(4.) True love is *active* love; it makes the soul to act for God, and for Christ, saying, O what shall I do for him? *What shall I render to the Lord for all his benefits?* It constrains to services and sufferings for Christ.

(5.) True love is an *uniting* love: it carries out the soul towards union and communion with God in Christ; he affects communion with him in his thoughts and meditations; *My meditation of him shall be sweet.*—Communion with him in his ordinances, communion with him in his grace, and communion with him in glory.

(6.) True love is a *solicitous* and *careful* love: it is careful to avoid whatever is offending to God, careful to provide whatever is pleasing to him; careful and solicitous lest it should lose his company; careful and solicitous to recover a sight of him when he absents himself.

(7.) True love is a *bold* and *venturing* love; it will adventure upon reproaches, persecutions, dangers, difficulties, yea, and death itself, for the sake of the Lord Jesus. When there are greatest difficulties, true love will cleave most to Christ: when there is a general apostacy, true love will appear most for Christ, as the two witnesses, Revel. xi. 3. When men make breaches upon the truth of God, the true lover of Christ will cast himself into the breach, as Pergamus did, Rev. ii. 13. In a word, when love cannot stand  
in

in the breach, it will mourn for the dishonour done to Christ, and weep in secret places for it. All these proceed from the invincible valour of love.

(8.) True love is a *persevering* love: when faith and hope, in some respect, will carry us no further than the grave, love will go over the border of time, and remain in heaven for ever.

(9.) True love is a *conjugal* love, a marriage love: and as conjugal love is a *loyal* love; so is true love to Christ: It calls Jesus LORD and KING: *He is thy Lord and worship thou him*, Psal. xlv. 11. As conjugal love is a *chaste* love; so true love to Christ cannot endure a rival: it allows no mate, no lust, no Delilah, to come in Christ's room, without the utmost abhorrence. As conjugal love is a *reverential* love; so true love to Christ carries towards him with holy fear and reverence, and filial regard. And as a conjugal love is a *fruitful* and *fruit-bearing* love; so true love to Christ is a love that bears fruit to him; *Ye are dead to the law by the body of Christ, and married to another, even to Christ, that ye might bring forth fruit unto God.*—  
Again,

(10.) True love is an *assimilating* love; it changes the person in whom it is, into the image of the glorious and beloved object, and make him desire, above all things, to be like unto Christ; saying, O, to be holy! O, to be free of sin! O, to be full of God! O, to be conform to the image of Christ! yea, the more love, the more likeness.

(11.) In a word, sometimes it is an *extatical* love, as if the man were beside himself, and out of himself: hence that proverb, *Amantes, Amantes*; like that of the apostle, *If we be beside ourselves, it is to God*, 2 Cor. v. 13. It carries the soul out of itself, saying with the church, *The voice of my beloved, behold he comes*; it is an abrupt kind of speech, like that of a person transported, ravished, and in a rapture: *The voice of my beloved, behold he cometh*: sometimes there is a ray of glory, a bright glance of the Sun of righteousness.

6. We may consider this love in the *effects* of it.

(1.) This love vents itself in *prayer* and *supplication*; *O God, thou art my God, early will I seek thee*, Psalm lxxiii. 1.

(2.) It vents itself in *praise* and *commendation*; *My beloved is white and ruddy, the chief among ten thousand*, Cant. v. 10.

(3.) It vents itself in *wonder* and *admiration*; *Behold what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God*.

(4.) It vents itself in *obedience* and *observatiou* of his law; *If you love me, keep my commandments*.

(5.) It vents itself in *hatred* of sin, and *every false way*; *Ye that love the Lord, hate evil*.

(6.) It vents itself in *loving every thing* that belongs to God. And this might lead me to shew how,

7. We may consider this love in the *object* of it, and in the *extent* of its object: why, the true lover of Christ, he loves a whole Christ.

(1.) He loves him in his *person*, as he is the *brightness of the Father's glory, and the express image of his person*, Heb. i. 3.

(2.) He loves him in his *natures*, as he is God-man; **IMMANUEL**, *God with us*.

(3.) He loves him in his *offices*; as he is a Prophet, to take away his darkness; a Priest, to take away his guilt; and a King, to take away his sin, and to subdue his lusts.

(4.) He loves him in his *relations*; as he stands related to God, being his eternal Son; as he stands related to the covenant, being the Mediator, Witness, Surety, and Testator, and all of it; and as he stands related to his church, being their Head and Husband, and all relations to them. You see what a large field I might here go through.

(5.) He loves him in his *righteousness*, both active and passive, as having fulfilled the law, and satisfied the justice of God in our room.

(6.) He loves him in his *merit* and *purchase*; he loves him in his Spirit and grace; he loves him in his commands, promises, and comforts; he loves him in his work and wages; he loves him his ministers and people;

people; he loves him in his gospel and ordinances; he loves him in his crown, honour, and glory; he loves him in his cross, his reproach, and suffering; he loves him in every thing about him, and especially in himself, as being *altogether lovely*. And this leads to another consideration.

8. We may consider this love in the *grounds* of it. Indeed it is a God in Christ they love: more particularly, if you ask, what are the grounds of the saints love to Christ? Why,

(1.) Their love to him is grounded upon his *worth, beauty, and excellency*; the soul loves him, because of his own amiable excellency. When the soul gets a view of Christ's own beauty, and of the glory of God in him, his power, wisdom, holiness, grace, mercy, and other properties, his heart is ravished with love within him. O the thoughts of his worth, and his fulness of grace and good-will is overcoming? *Because of the savour of thy good ointments, thy name is as ointment poured forth, therefore do the virgins love thee,* Song i. 3.

(2.) Their love to him is grounded upon his *undertaking* for them, and accomplishing that undertaking: they love him because of what he did undertake from eternity, and perform in time; *Who loved me, and gave himself for me!* They love him, because he put himself in their nature, for their good: they love him, because he put his name in their debt-bonds and bills: they love him, because he put their names in his last-will, and in the book of life: they love him, because he put his Spirit, his nature, and his Father's image into them.

(3.) Their love to him is grounded upon his *Father's love* to him, and satisfaction in him; *The Lord is well pleased for his righteousness sake,* saying, *This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.* And, O but Christ be deservedly the object of the saints love, because he is the object of the Father's love, who loves him, both as he is his Son, and as he is our Surety; and therefore as the sum of all,

(4.) Their

(4.) Their love to him is grounded upon his love to them; *We love him, because he first loved us.* This leads me to

III. The *third* general head, *viz.* The *influence* that his love hath upon theirs as the cause of it. And here I would, 1. Clear and demonstrate it, that his loving us is the *cause* of our loving him. 2. Enquire what *influence* his love hath upon ours.

1. As to the first of these, to clear this point, we would offer the following considerations.

(1.) Consideration is, That a natural man, that looks upon God, can never have a heart-love to him, whatever he pretends. It is true, many fancy God loves them, and pretend they have a love to him, like some in the church at Ephesus, who said, they *were apostles, and were not, but were found liars*; so many pretend they know God, and love him, who yet *in works deny him*; and by their practice are found liars; and the vision of their heads is like to end in utter darkness. It is true also, that all that have a love to God, have not the full assurance of God's love to them: some may live under his frowns, who are yet in a state of favour: there may be some true love, where yet there is but little joyful assurance; yet, I say, these who have no faith at all of God's love in Christ, but look upon God as an implacable enemy; they can have no hearty love to him; nay, conscience of guilt, and fear of wrath make them run away from God as an enemy; the spirit of slavish fear, which all awakened sinners are naturally possess'd of, till God shew them his love and favour in Christ, will rather harden men in their enmity, than melt them into love. If there were nothing but the terror of the Lord to be known, conversion would be impossible.

✓ (2.) Consideration is, That the greater the sense of God's love in Christ is, the stronger will our love to him be. Hence there are such different degrees of love to God among the saints, and even in the same saints, or believers, at several seasons, according as they have more or less of the comfortable apprehension of the love

love of God in Christ : for, although the love of God be not variable, yet our views and apprehensions of it are. Every believer hath his dark and gloomy days, as well as his bright and pleasant days ; and the less sensible views he hath of God's love and favour, the more sensible deadness in duty, and decay of love to God takes place. When the believer wants the faith of God's love, his wings are clipt ; but when his heart is fraughted with a large measure of the faith of God's love, then he *mounts up on wings as an eagle* : then the love of Christ *constrains him* ; and his heart is *enlarged to run the way of God's commandments*.

(3.) Consideration, That the love of God discovered, breaks the power of all these things that hinder our love to him. Is self-love a snare to keep us from the love of God ? Well, a display of God's love breaks the powers of self-love. When Job got a discovery of the glory of God's grace, then *he abhors himself*. When we know that God is *pacified towards us*, it makes us *loath and abhor ourselves*, Ezek. xvi. 63. A sinner is never so odious in his own sight, as when he is persuaded of his being precious in God's sight. Does the flattery of the world allure men from the love of God ? Well, but the displays of God's love make *the world to be crucified to us, and us to the world*.—Christ's love discovered obscures all the seeming glory of the world, as the sun darkens the lesser lights, and as the works of nature spoil the reputation of the works of art. Do the frowns of the world scar us from the love of God and his way ? Well, but the display of God's love to us is a noble security against this temptation ; for little matter, who be against us, if God be for us ; *His loving-kindness is better than life* : therefore, though the rage of men should reach our lives, yet what comparison is betwixt the breath of our nostrils, and the favour of an eternal God ? We do not love God in Christ, because we do not know him ; but when his love is displayed, then he is known in the light of the Spirit, *As a Spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of Christ* ; the Spirit comes as  
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a Spirit of light ; and thus the love of God is *shed abroad upon the heart by the Holy Ghost*.

(4.) Consideration, When God displays his love, he at the same time transforms the soul to whom he discovers himself, and makes it a new creature. Now, the new nature is a grateful and loving nature ; depraved nature may reward evil for good, and hatred for love ; but it is not so with the new nature, it natively renders love for love ; it is native to the soul upon the discovery of God's love, his everlasting love, to be constrained to his service and obedience ; *If you love me, keep my commandments*. Now, this love, that is the product of God's love, is virtually all obedience ; and therefore love is said to be the *fulfilling of the law* : and when loves takes place, *his commandments are not grievous*, but pleasant ; yea, when the love of God is in the heart, then the *law of God is in the heart*.— But then,

2. To enquire more particularly what *influence* God's love hath upon ours : *We love him, because he first loved us* : our love is just the reflex of his, as the sun shining upon a glass. Why, how does his love to us influence our love to him ? (1.) It hath a *moral* influence, in point of *motive*. (2.) A *physical* influence, in point of *power*.

(1.) It hath a *moral influence*, in point of *motive* ; and so it is the moral cause of our love ; the incentive, the argument. What will move us to love, if the display of this infinite love does it not ? We cannot but love such a good God, who was first in the act and work of love ; that loved us when we were both unloving and unlovely ; that loved us at such a rate, as to seek and sollicit our love at the expence of his Son's blood. O amazing love ! Is there any motive can be stronger to engage us to love him again ? Shall not the love of Christ constrain us to love him again ? What in all the world will endear a soul to God, if the love of God do it not ?—So much as we see of the love of God, so much we love him, and delight in him, and no more. Every other discovery of God without this, will but make the soul to flee from him. If the faith  
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and apprehension of his free love, of his ancient love, his antecedent love, his preventing love, such as I have spoken of, be no motive or argument to influence us to love him, there is no argument in the world will prevail.

2. It hath a *physical influence*, in point of power; and so it is not only the moral, but the productive cause. There is a power in his love that conquers, captivates, and overpowers the man, so that he cannot but love: God's love hath a generative power: our love is brought forth by his love, James i. 18. *Of his own will he begat us*; that is, of his own free love and good-will. Divine love makes such an impression, that it instamps love upon the soul. As his love hath a generating power, so it hath a creating power; his love infuses and creates love in the person. Beloved, it works good in the man, that is the object of it: his power and will are commensurate; what he wills, he works; and when the time of love or of manifesting love comes, the time of power comes; *Thy people shall be willing in the day of thy power*. His love hath a constraining power; *The love of Christ constrains us*; and his love hath a drawing power; *I have loved thee with an everlasting love; therefore with loving kindness will I draw thee*. He draws with *the cords of love*, and thereby draws the heart towards him *in love*: and hence never a soul tasted the sweetness of his everlasting love, but at the same time he felt the power of it warming the heart, and kindling a fire of love there. O how does his mighty love break the power of their mighty enmity! Was ever pardoning mercy and love intimated, but the pardoned soul behoved to read the pardon with tears of joy; and *to love much when much was forgiven*? Can they chuse but love him, *Who are the called according to his purpose of love*? Rom. viii. 28.—*We love him, because he first loved us*.

IV. The *fourth* general head, was the *application*. Is it so, that God's love to his people is the source and cause of their love to him? Then we may apply it for *information*; and,

1. Hence see the difference betwixt *God's love* to the *saints*, and the *saints love* to *God*. It is true, their loves agree in several things: his love to them is a love of complacency, he delights in them; and their love to him is a love of complacency, they delight in him: he loves them in Christ, and they love him in Christ; but yet vastly great is the difference betwixt his love and theirs. 1. His love is *eternal*, their love is but of *yesterday's date*. 2. His love is the *original cause*, their love is the *native effect* of his. 3. His love is an *antecedent love*, it goes before theirs, as the father loves the child when the child knows not the father, much less loves him; yea, they are by nature haters of God. And surely all must begin on his side; *Hercin is love, not that we loved God, but that God loved us*: yea, his love not only goes before our love, but before every thing that is lovely in us; *God commends his love towards us, in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us*. Sin imports all unloveliness and undesirableness that can be in a creature; yet he loves: but then our love is a *consequential* love. 4. His love being free and eternal is always *equal* and *unchangeable*; for, *The Strength of Israel is not a man that he should repent*; but our love to him is *unequal* and *changeable*, up and down: his love is like the sun, always the same in its light, though a cloud may sometimes interpose; our love is like the moon, hath its waxings and weanings: his love, I say, is like the sun, always the same in its light. It is true, as the sun is sometimes under a cloud; so the fruits and manifestations of God's love may change; now he shines, now he hides his face, as it may be most for our profit; but still his love in itself is the same.—Whatever changes affect the saints, whether as to sin or suffering, yet God's love to them is unchangeable. Why, were it not blasphemy to say, that God loves his people in their sinning, as well as in their strictest obedience? If so, who will care to serve him more? To which it might be replied, The love of God in itself is no more changeable than God himself; and what then? Loves he his people in their sinning? by no means;

means ; he loves his *people*, not their *sinning*. Alters he his love to them ? No ; not his love, but the discoveries of his love : he smites them, rebukes them, and fills them with a sense of indignation. But would he be to us if he changed in his love : nay, *He is God, and changes not ; therefore the sons of Jacob are not consumed*. These very things which seem to be demonstrations of the change of his affection, do as clearly proceed from love to them, even his chastisements, as any other dispensations. Well, but will not this encourage to sin ? “ O sure he never tasted, as one says, of the love of God, that can seriously make this objection.” The *doctrine* of grace may be turned into *wantonness*, but the *principle* of grace cannot. His love, I say, being free, eternal, and preventing love, is in itself always equal and unchangeable ; but our love to God is an ebbing and flowing love. We are scarce a day at a stand. This hour we may be at this, *Though all men forsake thee, yet will not I!* and the next hour at this, *I know not the man*. When was ever the time that our love was equal one day to an end ?

2. Hence see the difference betwixt *justification* and *sanctification* ; and the *priority* of justification to sanctification : We may here notice the difference betwixt the one and the other. Many are the differences betwixt them, but I confine myself to what the text imports. 1. In justification, *God loves us*, and shews his love in Christ ; in sanctification, *we love God*, and shew our love to him : for the comprehensive sum of active holiness is love, *which is the fulfilling of the law*. 2. In justification, we have the *favour of God* ; in sanctification, we have the *image of God* ; and the special part of his image is love. 3. In justification, we are *passive*, as when God set his love upon us ; but in sanctification, we are *active*, while his love causes us to act in loving him. 4. Justification is God’s *act* of love *without us*, in and through the merit and righteousness of Christ *imputed* to us ; sanctification is God’s *work* of grace *within us*, by the Spirit of Christ *imparted* to us as a Spirit of love, as well as of other graces. 5. Jus-

tification is *perfect, equal, and always* the same, like the love of God, the original cause, and the righteousness of Christ the meritorious cause of it; but sanctification is *imperfect, unequal, and changeable*; for the love of the saints, as I said, is up and down 6. Justification is the *cause*; sanctification the *effect*; even as God's love is the cause of our love. 7. *Faith* in justification is an *instrument* receiving Christ, *as the Lord our righteousness*, and apprehending the love and mercy of God in him; but faith in sanctification is an *agent*, employing Christ *as the Lord our strength*, to enable us to manifest our love to him. Thus we see the priority of divine love and favour, and acceptance and justification before any work of ours; and so, how any can maintain, that actual gospel-repentance (which must be a work of ours, and a piece of sanctification at least) doth go before, and is necessary in order to justification, let the judicious consider, without receding from our standards, and binding their faith to the belt of any fallible creatures, councils, or acts. That *legal repentance*, or humiliation and conviction, and sense of sin, does go before justification, in order of *divine operation*, is plain; and that habitual sanctification, or regeneration, and the infusing of all grace into the soul, is also precious, is not denied: But that *gospel-repentance*, or any part of actual sanctification, is necessary in order to justification and pardon, I do not see how it is possible to maintain that, without running into the Roman camp, and fighting with popish weapons, and inverting the order of our text, making any part of our love to God necessary *first* in order to God's *loving us*. But sure God's method of doing will stand in spite of hell and earth: *We love him, because he first loved us*.

3. Hence we may see, that as the persuasion that is in the nature of faith lies in the apprehension of the love and mercy of God in Christ to a man's self in particular; so this doctrine of faith does not *make void the law*, but *establish and fulfil it*, if we consider love as *the fulfilling of the law*; for the language of this text,

text, when read in the singular number is, *I love him, because he first loved me*; *He first loved me*, there is faith's apprehension of the mercy of God in Christ. It is true, a believer may say, I know not whether he loved me or not; but sure I am it is not his faith that says so, but unbelief; but the stronger that his faith is, to be sure the more will he be able to say, *He loved me*; and the more he can say this, the more can he say the other also, *I love him*: and there is obedience, gospel-obedience, the obedience of faith, which is a loving obedience; for the law of Christ is a law of love: it is blasphemy against the love of God to reproach it, as a mother of licentiousness, and a nurse of carnal security. They that have the love of God in their eye, can take no encouragement from thence to sin; for sin tends to cloud that light wherein they rejoice. If it were possible for a believer to think that God loves him, and thereupon should take encouragement to sin, then I am bold to say, it is not the faith of God's operation takes place at that time with him, but only a fancy, and a strong temptation of Satan, working upon that fancy: for a true faith of God's love, brings holiness, love, and obedience along with it, as natively as the rising-sun brings light. God's love of bounty displayed, does as natively bring in our love of duty, as it is natural for the fire to bring heat. Is it possible that God's communicating his thoughts of peace to a child will embolden him to new acts of treason? No; if the sense of God's love did not wear off, and security and unwatchfulness wear on, the believer's love would always be flaming in the fire of God's love. They have no experience of the love of God, who think that the discovery thereof would give them a license to transgress.

4. Hence we see, that as the believer is perfectly free from vindictive wrath, from the curse and penal sanction of the law, so his *gospel-obedience* is not influenced by *slavish fear of hell*, but by the *love of God*. How can the man that is actually justified, and *accepted in the Beloved*, and so the actual object of God's everlasting, unchangeable love, ever fall under his: See

tive wrath, which is the threatenng and sentence of the law as a covenant of works? And, how can the believer that is obliged to believe this love, be ever obliged to serve from a fear of hell and vindictive wrath? That he may, through unbelief, apprehend God's vindictive wrath, and fear to be thrown into hell, is plain from common experience; but that the *fear of hell* should be either a *gospel-grace*, or a *believer's duty*, is some of the *new divinity* of our day. Filial child-like fear, which is the believer's duty at all times, is every way consistent with love, yea, supposes and imports the faith of God's fatherly love; but slavish fear of hell, and vindictive wrath, excludes and opposes it. See the context, verse 18. *There is no fear in love, but perfect love casteth out (slavish and tormenting) fear.*

5. Hence we may see, the difference betwixt the *covenant of works* and the *covenant of grace*. The order of the covenant of works is, in some respect, quite cross to the order here set down in our text; for, in the covenant of works, our love of duty was first to take place; and after that God's love of bounty, as the reward of our perfect love and obedience, according to the old covenant paction; whereas, in the covenant of grace, God's shews first his love of bounty, and then follows our love of duty. Never does the soul turn his affections towards God, if the heart of God be not first set upon him. Herein differ works in the new covenant, (for love, as I said before, is the sum of all work and obedience) from works in the old covenant. In the legal covenant, our love and work is first, and then God's favour and justification; but in the gospel-covenant, God's love and favour in justification is first, and then our love and obedience follows. As the same day that the waters went off from the earth, and were gathered into the sea, the earth was adorned with grass and flowers, and was fruitful; so when the deluge of wrath goes off from the conscience, and the favour of God appears in justification, then it is presently adorned with the graces of the Spirit, and love among the chief of them, springing

springing up: whatever other motives engages to obedience here, yet love is the most prevalent motive; and here gratitude influences to obedience. In a word, the covenant of works was properly conditional to us, but the covenant of grace, however conditional to Christ, who hath performed the whole condition in his obedience to the death, yet to us it is absolutely free and unconditional. Upon what condition have we God's love and favour? Does not his love prevent all conditions? *He first loved us*: his love prevents the true proper condition itself, namely, Christ's obedience; for his love sent him to perform the same, much more does it prevent all that men call conditions. O! how far is our obedience, even the obedience of faith, from having any causality, or proper federal conditionality in obtaining salvation, seeing our imperfect love and obedience here is not the cause, but the effect of God's love and favour partly displayed, and our perfect love and obedience in heaven will be the effect of the full vision of his glorious grace in heaven, *Where we shall be like him, because we shall see him as he is?*

6. Hence we may see the blasphemy of these who say, they are *believers in Christ*, and yet are not *lovers of God*; and who pretend to believe the grace of God, and yet *turn his grace to lasciviousness*, by continuing in enmity against him, and discover their enmity by their ungodly practices; *The grace of God, that brings salvation, teaches us* quite the contrary; what the law teaches preceptively, the gospel teaches effectively, *viz. To deny ungodliness and worldly lusts, and to live soberly, righteously, and godly*, Titus ii. 11, 12. She is not the spouse of Christ, but an adulteress, that impudently abuses his love. They can have no true evidence of God's love to them, who have no love to him; for our love to him is the native result of his love to us; *We love him, because he first loved us*. The love of God discovered, knocks down the natural enmity, which is the root of all disobedience; and influences to love, which is the sum of all obedience.

7. See

7. See hence the *eminent privilege* of the *saints*, whatever low thoughts the world may have of them. It is an honour to stand in the presence of princes, though but as servants; what honour then have all the saints to stand with boldness in the presence of God, and enjoy his bosom-love? The queen of Sheba pronounced a blessing on the servants of Solomon, who stood before him and heard his wisdom; how much more blessed are they who stand continually before the God of Solomon, hearing his wisdom and enjoying his love? As they are happy, so they are safe. Here is a safe and sweet retreat to the saints in all the trials, reproaches, and misrepresentations they undergo in the world. When a child is abused in the street by strangers, he runs with speed to the bosom of his father; there he makes his complaint, and is comforted. In all the hard *censures* and *tongue-persecutions* which the saints meet withal in the streets of the world, they may run to their Father, and be comforted; his love can counter-balance all the world's frowns. O! how are they privileged beyond all the hypocritical world!—Hypocrites, for the most part, cannot be known or differenced from saints, in regard of their external duty and enjoyment; but while they are living in the love of their lusts, the saints are sweetly wrapt up in the bosom of God's love; they have this meat to eat, and refreshment in the banqueting-house, wherein others have no share.

8. Hence see where it is we may get our *enmity killed*, and our *love quickened*; it is even in the love of God. What is the reason that the world have no love to God? Why, they cannot believe his love and good-will through Christ; and so they live in enmity. What is the reason that believers have so little love to God? Even because their faith of his love is so weak. It is by faith we know *that God is in Christ reconciling the world to himself*; it is by faith *we see the King in his beauty*, and so cannot but love him; it is by faith that *we hear his voice*, and understand his words of grace, and say, *It is the voice of my Beloved*: it is by faith we embrace the *promises*, which are so many mes-

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sages of love : it is by faith we *receive out of Christ's fulness, and grace for grace* ; or, as the word may be rendered, *Love for love*. Faith breaks the shell of the promise, and then eats the kernel of God's love and grace that is there. Faith is the bucket wherewith we draw, Christ is the well, God is the fountain, and love is the water that we draw : O ! what get you in Christ, poor soul, whenever you go to him ? Can you not say, O, I get more love to God than I had ! I never approached near him but I got a large draught and ample fill of love to God ; *Out of his fulness, we receive grace for grace, and love for love*. In a word, by faith we *behold the glory of the Lord as in a glass, and are changed into the same image* ; and the image of God is love. O then, the little faith that takes place in our day, makes little love to God and his people ; faith and love are like twins that are born together, and live and die together. Go to the root of all our backslidings, and you will find it unbelief ; *An evil heart of unbelief in departing from the living God*.

Use of *examination*. Try your state by this doctrine, whether or not you be in a state of favour with God, and the objects of his love in a special manner. How shall I know, if he hath loved me ? You may know it by that fruit and evidence of it in the text : if he hath manifested his love savingly to you, then you will love him, because he hath loved you.

QUEST. *How shall I know, if I have that love to him, that is the fruit and effect of his first loving me ?*

ANSW. 1<sup>st</sup>, If your love to him be such as is the fruit of his love to you, then you have been convinced of your *natural enmity*, and that you never had any love, nor could have it, unless the Lord in love had, in some measure, manifested himself in his grace. Many speak of their loving God all their days, as if it were natural for them to love God ; poor creatures, they never saw or considered, that they were born with a dagger of enmity in their hearts against God. These that truly love him have seen their want of love, and something of the power and strength of their en-

mity ; and got it, in some measure, broken in a day of power..

2dly, If you have such love to him, as is the fruit of his love to you, then you have seen his *glory*, and particularly the glory of his grace, and love to draw out your love towards him : *Shew me thy glory*, says Moses to God ; yea, says God, *I will make all my goodness pass before thee*. His goodness and his love is his glory. If you have seen his glory, surely you *count all things but loss and dung, in comparison of him*.

3dly, If you have such love, as is the fruit of his love, then his *loveliness* and *excellency* hath engaged you to *chuse* him ; to chuse himself, for your God ; his Christ, for your husband ; his covenant, for your charter ; his precepts, for your rule ; his people, for your companions ; his purchase, for your jointure ; his Spirit, for your guide ; his promise, for your cordial ; his glory, for your aim. If you have chosen him thus, and resolve to abide by your choice, it is a fruit of his choosing you from eternity : *You have not chosen me first, but I have chosen you*.

4thly, If you have such love to him, as is the fruit of his loving you, then it is the *faith* of his love, that, in a special manner, will influence you to obedience, in all the duties of religion ; *If you love me, keep my commandments* : yea, the faith of his love will influence you to such a love to him, as will bring forth all the fruits of true love. And here I will tell you of some of the fruits of true love to God, by which you may try your love to him.

1. One fruit of true love is this ; true love will make you *love* to be with him on *earth*, and *long* to be with him in *heaven*.

(1.) On the one hand, true love will make you love to be with him on *earth* ; and this love will make you rejoice when he is present, saying, *O ! my soul shall rejoice in God my Saviour* : and it will make you lament when he is absent, saying, *O ! that I knew where I might find him !* You will love to be with him in your *desire*, saying, *He is the desire of all nations*, and the desire of *my soul*. You will love to be with him in  
your

your *delight*, saying, *A bundle of myrrh is my beloved to me, he shall ly all night betwixt my breasts.* You will love to be with him in your *walk* and *conversation*, desiring to *have your conversation in heaven*, and to walk with him. You will love to be with him in your *esteem*, saying, *Whom have I in heaven but thee, and there is none in earth that I desire beside thee.* You will love to be with him in your *thoughts* and *meditations*, saying, *My meditation of him shall be sweet.* You will love to be with him in your *duties* and *performances*, in reading and hearing, and singing, in communicating, in praying. You will love to be with him, and to have him with you: particularly to be with him in prayer, is the most frequent thing with the believer: how does he love to embosom himself to his God! The Legalist may do the duty, but to be with Christ in it, is what he is not much taken up with; the believer is taken up with prayer, as a mean of communion with God. O! I cannot stay away from him, though he shut the door upon me, and cover himself with a cloud, that my prayer cannot pass through; I cannot be absent from him. It is one of the main things that makes earth tolerable to the believer, that he hath sometimes access to God, in Christ, by the Spirit in prayer. If it were not for some sweet meetings that he hath with the Lord this way, he would even be crying, O what a weary place is this earth! O let me out of it! I say, the true lover loves to be with God, and to have God with him. How does he love to have God with him, by his sanctifying grace, by his enlightening, enlarging, enlivening, and comforting grace? True lovers love one anothers company. And,

(2.) As the true lover of Christ loves to be with him here, so on the other hand, he *longs* to be with him *hereafter*. O to be in the place of perfect love, where there will be an eternal emanation of the love of God! O to be in the place of perfect likeness to Christ! *For when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is.* Tho' they are reconciled to his will, and made content to abide here, while he pleases, yet they are even longing for that day, when they shall

have the immediate fruition of him, and be delivered from all sin: they *desire to be dissolved, and to be with Christ, which is best of all.* A carnal man may say, O to be out of an evil world! but the heart of the true lover say, *O to be with Christ?* It is true, when the believer's love is in fresh exercise, he will even sometimes be willing to abide in this world, notwithstanding of all the troubles and trials that are in it, if so be he may glorify God in it; whether by suffering for him, or giving a testimony against sin, and for the truth and honour of the Lord Jesus. O! if I may be of any use to any of thine; if I may be of any service to thy Majesty, and glorify thee by doing or suffering; if thou wilt help me to serve and honour thee in my life, let me even beg from door to door in the wilderness; through grace I will cheerfully endure any trouble, and *glory in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me.* This submission is not inconsistent with his longing to be with the Lord.—Thus, I say, true lovers of God, they love to be with him on earth, and long to be with him in heaven.

2. True love will make you long to be *like him*, saying, *O to be holy, as God is holy! O to be conform to the image of his Son! O to be like unto Christ!* Indeed, the man that hath most of the image of God, will readily see himself the most unlike to him; and look upon himself as the most unholy person on earth. O! my understanding is like a dark dungeon, my will is like a devil, and my heart like a hell; and yet something of the light of God it is that thus discovers him to himself, so unlike to God: and something of the love of God it is that makes him love to be like him, and desire above all things to be quit of sin, which is the devil's image, and to be endued with holiness, which is God's image.

3. True love will make you love to *live upon him*: you will love to live upon God the *fountain of living water*; and love to live upon Christ, *for wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, and redemption.* The lover of God is one that loves to *live by faith on the Son of God; To him to live is Christ*: Christ is the *Alpha and Omega* of

of his life; the food and medicine of his life; the Author and Restorer of his life; and the whole business of his life. Many have little business with Christ; but the true believer, the true lover, Christ is the whole business of life: like the woman that, they say, took the body of her dead husband and grind it to powder, and drank the powder in her daily drink, and so made her body a living tomb for her dead husband. The believer is to live still upon a dead and crucified husband.

4. True love to God will make you love to reverence him: godly fear is a true mark of love; you will have a holy fear of displeasing him; you will have a jealous fear, lest your deceitful heart lead you aside from him: *We receiving a kingdom that cannot be moved, let us have grace, [or, let us hold fast grace,] whereby we may serve God acceptably, with reverence and godly fear: for our God is a consuming fire,* Heb. xii. 28, 29. All this is inconsistent with the slavish fear of hell: for the faith of *receiving the kingdom that cannot be moved*, and the fear of hell, which is a being excluded from that kingdom, are contradictory; but let us fear our God in Christ, who hath discovered himself in Christ to be even a *consuming fire*; for this fire of infinite justice took hold of the man Christ Jesus. When God dwelled in the bush of our nature, the bush burned in the flame of divine wrath, and justice was satisfied this way: herein God gave a more awful instance of his being a *consuming fire*, in taking vengeance upon sin in the Surety, than can be given by all the flames of hell, in which the wicked burn for eternity. But here God being in the bush, the bush burnt, but was not consumed; *He that was dead, is alive; and behold he liveth for evermore.* But we may turn aside, and see this great sight, the bush burning, Christ satisfying divine justice: and what in the world should more influence to a holy fear than this?

5. True love will make you to think well of him, and think no evil of him: *Love thinketh no evil*, says the apostle. You will entertain good thoughts of God; and

and construct all he does in the best sense: though in affliction a saint may have harsh thoughts of God, and under a fit of temptation, yet habitually he entertains good thoughts of all God's dealings towards him. This or that dispensation or affliction, however severe, is either to mortify some lust, or to exercise some grace, or to discover some corruption, and remove it. "O! how good is he that will not let me alone in my sins, nor let me go with my faults, nor *cease to be a Reprover!* Love thinks no evil."

6. True love will make you *love what he loves*, and *hate what he hates*; and also love *as he loves*, and hate as he hates.

[1.] True love will make you love what *he loves*, and hate what *he hates*; and particularly to love his friends, and hate his enemies.

1<sup>st</sup>, To love his *friends*; his friends in *office*, and his friends in *heart*.

(1.) His friends in *office*; his ministers, whose office it is to commend Christ: surely they that love God, will love his friends; they that love Christ the Bridegroom, will love the friends of the Bridegroom, whose work it is to set them forth: *How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of them that preach the gospel of peace, that bring glad tidings of good things, that publish salvation!* Isa. lii. 15. Rom. x. 15. The reason why they love such is, because it is their work to open Christ's love-letter that is sent to his bride, and to read it, and explain it to the bride; and because they love the sweet doctrine of the gospel. Some pretend a great love to the precepts of the law, but for the doctrine of the gospel, and free justification without the works of the law, they suspect that as Antinomian stuff, opposite to the law; they will mock at Christ's messengers when they preach the doctrine of grace. But I seek no further evidence of an enemy to Christ than that. Some love all preachers, and all preaching alike; they cannot discern betwixt the one and the other: if you preach the doctrine of the gospel to them, they love that; if you preach the covenant of works to them, and desire them to do so and so, and there-

thereupon they shall be justified before God, they love that too; all is fish that comes in the net with them: but the sheep of Christ *know his voice*; and the voice of the shepherds, that convey his voice and mind to them, is sweet, and beautiful, and lovely to them.

(2.) They love his friends in *heart*, as well as his friends in office; *the saints, the excellent ones of the earth, are these in whom is all their delight. He that loves him that begat, loves him that is begotten.* They love the *brethren*, as in the verse following the text; *How can you say that he loves God, whom he hath not seen, when he loveth not his brother, whom he hath seen?* He that loves the parent, will love the child: they that love God, will love his children, that have his image, as a man will love the very picture of the person whom he loves: they love the saints, though poor, as a man will love gold, though in a rag; and also will love them, though afflicted, even as mettal in a furnace may be loved.

*2dly*, As the true lovers of God will love his friends, so they will *hate his foes and enemies*, whether it be his open enemies without, or his secret enemies within.

(1.) His *open enemies without*, even all the wicked and ungodly world; *Do not I hate them that hate thee, and am grieved with them that rise up against thee?* They that can delight in fellowship with these that are drunkards, swearers, and blasphemers of the name of God, surely they cannot have the love of God at least in exercise: the true lover of God hates the wicked as such. It is true, as they are the children of Adam, *Bone of their bone, and flesh of their flesh*; as they are poor miserable creatures like themselves, they love them with a love of pity; but as enemies to God, and in rebellion against him, they can have no delight in them; their company is a burthen to them.

(2.) As they hate his open enemies without, so they hate his *secret enemies within*; and these are their own lusts and corruptions. *They hate sin, who love God*; and are engaged in a warfare against sin, and hate their own lusts. He that loves God hates sin, whether

ther in *himself* or *others* : he hates sin as God's enemy, and as that which is displeasing and dishonouring to him ; and as that which mars communion with God, that provokes him to anger, and unfits them for his service. O that loathsome, ugly thing sin ! that evil of evils, and devil of devils ! The man pursues it to death, and cannot rest till he gets his hands embrued, as it were, in its heart's blood : they have taken up arms against it, in the name of the Lord, and resolved never to lay them down, till it be mortified and killed. They find indeed sometimes sin very lively and strong in them, and themselves *led captive by the law of sin* ; but this animates them so much the more to pursue it to death. And as they hate sin in themselves, so also in others ; *I beheld transgressors, and was grieved*. I would not give much for your pretensions to love, if you have no zeal against sin ; love is the fire, zeal is the flame : they that love the Lord will shew forth indignation against sin.—Thus, I say, true lovers of God will love what he loves, and hate what he hates.

[2.] True love will not only hate what he hates, and love what he loves, but hate *as* he hates, and love *as* he loves.

1<sup>st</sup>, They will *hate as he hates* ; they will hate sin, as God hates it ; I speak not of degrees, but of similitude.

(1.) God hates sin with a *natural* hatred, as opposite to his nature, will, and law, and dishonouring to him ; so the true lovers of God will hate sin with a *natural* hatred ; I mean, by virtue of his new nature, he will hate it as opposite to God's nature and will, and dishonouring to his God.

(2.) God hates sin with a *perfect* hatred, and so does the true lover of God ; they say of God's enemies within them, as David, Psalm cxxxix. 21. *I hate them with a perfect hatred* ; their hatred is going on to perfection.

(3.) God hates sin with an *everlasting* hatred ; he will never be reconciled with it : so the true lover of God

God hates sin with an *everlasting* hatred; a durable hatred; they will never be friends with it.

(4.) God hates sin with a *grievous* hatred; sin *grieves his Spirit*; and is, as it were, a burden to him: he is *pressed under it as a cart under sheaves*: so the true lover is *grieved with the body of sin and death*, and pressed under it.

(5.) God hates sin with a *parting, separating* hatred; he casts it away with loathing and abhorrence, *being of purer eyes than that he can behold iniquity*: so the true lover hates sin so as to *part with it*, and *separate from it*: and while he cannot get himself rid of it, he loaths himself for it.

(6.) God hates sin with an *avenging* hatred; he takes vengeance upon it where-ever it is; even when it was found but *imputatively* in Christ, he took vengeance upon it in the Surety: so the true lover of God hates sin with an *avenging* hatred; yea, what *revenge* does he meditate against it! 2 Cor. vii. 11. He would sometimes be at Sampson's work, to pull down the house of that tabernacle upon the Philistines to be avenged upon it, and cannot rest till it be destroyed: he looks upon himself as wretched, so long as it remains with him: *O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this sin and death?*— Thus he hates as God hates.

2dly, They *love* as God *loves*. It is true God's love to them is infinite, their love is but finite; his love to them is the love of a God, their love to him is but the love of creatures; yet their love bears some resemblance of his love.

(1.) God's love to his creatures is a *remembering* love: he never forgets them; *Can a woman forget her sucking child, that she should not have compassion on the son of her womb? Yea, she may; yet will I not forget thee, saith the Lord.* So, true love to God is a *remembering* love: they cannot forget God; *they remember his love more than wine. I will never forget thy precepts, for by them thou hast quickened me. I can never forget such a word, such a glance, such a visit, such*

a day, such a sermon, such a bank, such a valley, such a chamber, where God manifested himself.

(2.) God's love to his people is a *heartly* and *cordial* love; *he loves them with all his heart*; so, where true love is, it will be *with all the heart, soul, mind, and strength*: *as with the heart man believes, so with the heart the believer loves.*

(3.) God's love to his people is a *manifested* love; he does not conceal his love, but discovers it: so true love to God will be a *manifested* love; it will manifest itself, and vent itself in prayer, in praises, in zeal, in obedience; *If you love me keep my commandments.* The true lover will vent his love by desiring to keep Christ's words, keeping them in the heart; *Thy word have I hid in my heart, that I may not offend thee*; keeping them in the practice, *by ordering the conversation aright.*

(4.) God's love to his people is an *uniting* love; it brings them to union with himself; so true love to God is uniting; desires union, and cleaves to the Lord; it affects nearness; more and more nearness; and still more and more nearness.

(5.) God's love to his people is a *prevailing* love; it had many hinderances in its way; mountains of guilt, mountains of sin, mountains of provocation, yet he did not call back his love again: even so, true love to God, notwithstanding of hinderances and opposition from earth and hell, and corruption within, yet is not drawn back, but labours to *prevail*; and will, thro' grace, fight its way through all difficulties; *for love is strong as death.*

(6.) God's love to his people is a *rejoicing* love; he rejoiceth in his love; so where true love to God is, the man will *rejoice* in his love; delight in God and Christ, and *be joyful in the God of his salvation.*

(7.) God's love to his people is a *resting* love; Zeph. v. 17. *He rests in his love*; when it comes, it never thinks of removing any more; *This is my rest, here will I stay*; so where true love to God is, it is a *resting* love; it says, *Return to thy rest, O my soul.* The true lover of God hath no other resting place but a God in Christ.

(8.) God's

(8.) God's love to his people is a *communicative* love; his love inclines him and engages him to make over himself, and all that he hath, for the good of his people: so, where true love to God is, it is such a *commnunicative* love, that it makes the soul to give himself, and all that he is, and hath, to the Lord; he commits his soul, body, and all the concerns of his salvation to him.

(9.) God's love to his people is a *distinguishing* love; he loves them above all others; *Since thou wast precious in my sight, thou hast been honourable; and I have loved thee*, Isa. xliii. 3, 4. So their love to him is *superlative* love; they love him above all things; and in all things he hath the pre-eminence.

(10.) God's love to his people is *in Christ*; they are *accepted in the Beloved*; so, true love to God is a love to God *in Christ*; out of Christ they cannot love him, but fear and flee from him: but in Christ he is amiable and lovely to them.—Now, by these things you may try whether you love God, so as your love is a fruit of his first loving you.

Use of *exhortation*. Is God's love to his people the cause of their love to him? then be exhorted, 1. To seek the *view* of God's love to you. 2. To render him *love for love*.

1. Seek a *view* of God's love to you; say not in your heart, Alas! all are not loved of God, and it may be not you; but rather say, Many are the objects of his love, and why not me? Why, say you, the first object of faith cannot be to believe that God hath loved me. Indeed you cannot know God's love to you till he manifest the same; and he does not manifest his love but in Christ, in whom is proclaimed *peace on earth, and good-will towards men*, because Christ hath brought in *glory to God in the highest*; and therefore the way to know the love of God to you, is to believe his love and good-will in him; and in coming to him, the love of God is known and believed. How do the saints get to know the love of God to them? It is even by believing his love in Christ, 1 John iv. 16. *We have known, and believed the love that God hath to us.*

If you look to God out of Christ, you never see his love to you, or any sinner like you, but wrath and vengeance issued out against you; but if you look to God in Christ, then you may see good-will towards men; for, *God is in Christ reconciling the world to himself.*—Why, say you, I cannot find any love in my heart towards God; and therefore, how can I believe his love, or heart to be towards me? Indeed, man, you will never love God till you take up something of his love and good-will towards you; your way of doing is a preposterous course, and a way to rob God of his glory, to think you must love him first, and then expect that he will love you: lay down your carnal reasoning, and seek grace to apprehend the mercy of God in Christ, and that will open your soul to let out your love towards him.—Why, say you, I see no ground why he should love me! there is no cause, no reason in the world, but all the reason in the world, why he should not love me; and therefore, how can I be persuaded of his thoughts of love towards me? To this we might reply, That God speaks love, mercy, and good-will towards you man, you woman, by this gospel, as particularly as ever he did to any elect soul, the day before he met with the day of power; for the general tenders of grace in the gospel are to all: and as for a cause of love, he hath as much cause to fix his love on you as ever he had upon any of the children of men; that is, he had no cause at all *without himself*: and if you can attain to believe his grace and good-will towards you, and that by a faith of his own operation, you shall not be deceived. When I call you to believe thus, I am not calling you to fancy that God loves you, or to persuade yourselves in a natural way; nay, I call you to a *saving faith*, which I know you can never attain unto without a pull of omnipotency: and if that power accompany the call, then the duty called to will be put in practice, and not otherwise: therefore, O seek the power of God to persuade you of the good-will of God in Christ. All that hear me are obliged to receive Christ, as a token of God's love;

love; For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth on him, and receiveth him, might not perish, but have everlasting life. He that believeth, shall be saved: he that believeth not, shall be damned. If there be insuperable difficulties and objections in your way, I cannot help it; the God who calls you, can remove them; but it is at your peril, if you reject his call: you shall never have it to say in hell, that the good-will and favour of God was never proclaimed to you; for I take the mountains and hills that are in your view, to witness, that I proclaim, through Christ, *Peace on earth, and good-will towards men*; and that *God is in Christ reconciling the world to himself*. Why, would we have the greatest sinner, and vilest debauchee among us all, to believe the love and good-will of God towards them? To this we reply, Whilst you are in a sinful state, you are indeed under the wrath and curse of God; and if you continue therein, you will be damned for ever, as sure as God lives; and you will continue there for ever, unless you come to get the apprehension of the mercy of God in Christ; but whenever you get this apprehension of God's love, then I defy you to continue in a state of sin, or in a course of sin and enmity. Will a man receive Christ, and believe the love of God in him, and yet keep fast hold of his lusts? No, I defy him, it is not possible; and therefore it is to kill your enmity and destroy your sin that God would have you to believe his good-will in Christ. I remember that story of a godly man, that said to a witch, when nothing else could soften her heart, "I do, *says he*, in the name of the Lord Jesus, charge you to come to Christ for salvation; to come to him for faith, repentance, and remission of sin, and you shall have acceptance, and be received into the favour of God in him." The poor witch was made to say, "O, Sir, shall I believe your word? My life for you, *says he*, if you rely upon Christ." Immediately her bands were loosed; and the Lord brought her to a deep humiliation for sin, and sense of the favour of God, so as she gave evidence, by the testimony of discern-

discerning persons, that the Lord had shewn mercy to her. O if you knew how the Lord is saying to his servants, O fy upon you! will you not compel those people to come in and close with Christ, as the great pledge of God's love? O! go to God, when you can get an opportunity to be alone, and say, Lord, I have been called to believe, but my heart is hard, and thou only can break it: O! come and save the chiefest of sinners, whereby thou wilt get more glory than ever thou had by any of Adam's posterity: cry to him, *Lord, I believe, help thou my unbelief.*

2. I would exhort you to render him *love for love*: and this exhortation concerns believers particularly. O, love him, because *he first loved you*. What a shame is it for you, believer, if you do not love him who first loved you! And to engage you, consider,

(1.) Whose love it is; it is the love of him, who in himself is *all-sufficient*, who hath no need to go forth with his love to others; the love of a God, O what a vast consideration is it!

(2.) Consider who *you are* that are the objects of of his love; so wicked, so wretched, so unworthy of his love. That God should love the *glorious angels* is no wonder; for they are *messengers* and *ministers executing his pleasure*: that he should love *inanimate creatures* is not strange; for *hail, snow, vapour, and stormy wind fulfil his word*: but to love *you* is a wonder; and to love you *while enemies*.

(3.) Consider what *sort* of love it is. It is *eternal* love; *before the foundation of the world, his delights were with the sons of men*, from eternity: the very thoughts of this is enough to make all that is within you, like the babe in the womb of Elizabeth, to leap for joy, that you lay in the bosom of his love from eternity: and will you not love him!—His love is a *free love*; if you deserved his love, his love would be of less value; but that which is eternally antecedent, must be absolutely free.—His love is *unchangeable* love: though you change every day, his love is unchangeable. Could any provocation turn away his love, it had ceased long since; but as he set his love upon you, not-

notwithstanding all the faults you were, and he knew you would be, guilty of, so it continues notwithstanding all.—His love is a *distinguishing* love; why should he have fixed on you, and passed by millions from whom you differ not by nature? Why hath he passed by your father, mother, brother, sister, and set his love upon you? And, O! will you not love him?—His love is a *bountiful* love; with his love he gives himself, his Christ, his Spirit, his grace, his glory, and all. See how the psalmist extols this love, Psalm ciii. 1. *Bless the Lord, O my soul, who pardons all thine iniquities, who healeth all thy diseases, &c. Who pardons all thine iniquities!* O, it is no small thing to forgive or to pardon three or four sins, but it is yet more to pardon three or four thousand sins: Who can conceive of that love! but to forgive many millions of faults; O what love is here! And so he deals with these whom he loves; *He multiplies to pardon; yea, more, he heals all your diseases.* O poor sinner, have you not many plagues, many diseases, yea, more than you are aware of? If you knew the plagues of your own heart, you will be crying out, O the plague of my mind, the plague of my will, the plague of my affections! O my atheism, unbelief, hardness, blindness! &c. O what innumerable evils compass me about, say you! O what horrible evils! yea, why do I call them evils, they are so many devils within me; yea, but for as many as they are, *He heals all thy diseases;* and for as grievous as they are, *He supplies all your wants:* such also is his bountiful love, *My God shall supply all your wants.* Are you not made up of wants? Do you not want light, life, love, faith, repentance, joy, assurance, peace, communion with God? Yea, but sometimes even on earth he supplies all wants, so as to make you say, *I have enough.* O does not this bountiful love, call for love?

(4.) Consider the *channel* in which this love runs: Christ is the means of the communication of the love of God; you have the love of God the Father, in the Son, by the Holy Ghost: Christ is the *channel*. Love in the Father is like the honey flower; it must be in  
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the comb, before it be for our use: Christ must extract and prepare this honey for us. And, O how sweet is that love, that runs through such a glorious channel!

In a word, consider the *excellency* of the grace of love. Love to God is the *fulfilling of the law*; all that it requires is *love*; love is the great qualification of the saints above; the more love you have, the more like heaven you will be; and the more love, the more meetness for heaven: heaven would be a burden, and a weariness to you without love; if you had not love, you would throw yourself out of heaven into hell. If you have love, you will find it make every duty pleasant; the obedience of love is sweet obedience. Yea, love will make all your crosses to be comforts; where there is little or no love, the cross is insupportable; the man cries, O a bitter cross! *O the gall and worm-wood!* yea, but love would be like the tree cast into the waters of Marah, to make them become sweet. If you have much love, it will make you say of affliction, O this is the cup that my kind Father hath put in my hand! *And shall I not drink it?* Welcome whatever he sends.

*O love the Lord, ye his saints,* and manifest your love by your obedience: will you render him hatred for love? O let his love to you warm your heart with love to him; and in order thereto,

1. O do not *doubt* of or *question* his love to you; beware of renouncing that which engages you to love him: it is the devil's great aim to have you mistrusting God's love, that so you may not love God again.

2. Attend all his *love visits*, and thankfully receive them; think not little of his ordinary visits, when in any measure he manifests his love through the lattices of ordinances; *Despise not the day of small things*; and especially, O make much of his extraordinary love-visits, when he mounts you up at any time into the *chariot paved with love!*

3. Take heed of *abusing* his love: beware of *spotting your garments with the flesh, after God has spread his skirt over you.* To sin against love is a dreadfully  
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aggravated sin. It was a sad blot upon Solomon, that his heart was turned from the Lord, *After that the Lord God of Israel had appeared to him twice*, 1 Kings xi. 9.

4. Beware of *confidence in the flesh*, and expecting that your love should influence God to do you good; *the love of Christ must constrain you*; think not that your duties and obedience should constrain him: O beware of inverting the gospel at this rate, and turning it upside down! If his love excite you to love and obedience, then your love and obedience does not excite him to love you. We might fear every day, that the heart of God would be turned to hate us, if our hopes of abiding in his favour were built upon our best love and obedience.

I would send away the *haters* of God with a word of *terror*. Know that if you cannot be persuaded to the love of God, if his love does not break you in time, his vengeance will break you to eternity: *The enemies of the Lord shall be like the fat of rams, they shall consume; into smoke shall they consume away*. If you love not Christ, know what the apostle says, *If a man love not our Lord Jesus Christ, let him be Anathema*. I will tell you what is sad, the day is coming, wherein you shall say *to the rocks and mountains, fall on us, and hide us from the face of him that sitteth on the throne, and from the Lamb; for the great day of his wrath is come; and who shall be able to stand?* You will ly for ever under the fiery mountain of divine vengeance. I will tell you what is yet sadder, and you will think strange what that can be; in short it is sad, that before this day eight days, all that I am saying will be forgotten; yea, before the morrow at this time, the impression of all will be gone.

I would send away the lovers of Christ, the lovers of God with a word of *comfort*. You love God, and God loves you, and God's love to you is ground of comfort.—Comfort in what you *have*; what you have in possession, you have it with a *blessing*; what you have in expectation in the promise, is in love; and therefore the promise is free, because of God's love in it; the promise is firm, because of his love in it.—

Comfort in what you *want* ; since you have God's love, you shall not want.—Comfort in what you *fear* ; You need fear no evil.—Comfort in what you *do* ; All your services will be accepted ; all your sins pardoned, tho' he should take vengeance on your inventions.—Comfort in what you *suffer* ; you shall be sustained and supported ; and though you may suffer the loss of gifts, goods, liberty, life, yet you cannot lose God, Christ, the Spirit, grace, heaven, or God's everlasting love.—O go away with the comfortable sense of his distinguishing love !

In a word, Are you lovers of God? O go away rejoicing in it, *that he first loved you* ; he is not behind hand with you ; *He loved you before you loved him*. You were elected by the grace of God from eternity ; you were redeemed by the blood of Christ, you are certainly effectually called ; *For they that love him are the called according to his purpose* ; and the day comes, when you shall enjoy the object of your love in a full manner. If you be true lovers of Christ, I certify you, the time is coming, when you shall see *Christ as he is, and be for ever with the Lord*, and enjoy him for evermore ; and love without decay, and love without wearying shall be your everlasting exercise : you shall rejoice in an immediate enjoyment of him. You were upon his heart from eternity ; you are upon his heart this day in heaven, for you his eternal Son came to the world ; for you he lived, for you he died ; your love to Christ is a reflex of his and his Father's love to you ; and there is not a true lover of Christ here, but hath as good ground to say as ever Paul had, *He loved me, and gave himself for me*. Your love to him is an infallible pledge of his ancient love to you, a pledge of his present love to you, and a pledge of the future enjoyment of him. O let your heart, and life, and tongue, and all that is within you, and about you, vent love to him, and say, *We love him, because he first loved us* !

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

The MILITANT'S SONG; or, the BELIEVER'S EXERCISE while here below.

PSALM ci. 1.

*I will sing of mercy and judgment : unto thee, O Lord, will I sing.*

**I** HOPE, the subject I am here in providence directed to, will natively lead us, if the Lord bless it, to a suitable exercise upon a thanksgiving-day after a communion; even with gratitude of soul to sing the praises of a God in Christ, and that whether we have met with a smile or a frown from heaven, or both, at this occasion. If any here have got a smile, or found him to be a smiling and a present God, they may sing of *mercy*; if any here have got a frown, or found him to be a hiding God, they may sing of *judgment*; or, if any here have got both a smile and a frown, they may sing of both, and say, *I will sing of mercy and judgment : unto thee, O Lord, will I sing.*

The words contain the psalmist's *holy resolution* to praise and glorify God for all his dispensations towards him, now that he was advanced to the kingdom of Israel: and in them you may shortly notice, 1. The *sweet work* that is resolved upon, namely, *to sing*. 2. The *sweet singer* that thus resolves, namely, DAVID;

\* This sermon was preached at Carnock, on Monday, July ----, 1723, being a thanksgiving day, immediately after the celebration of the sacrament of the Lord's supper there; and hath already undergone six impressions.

*I will sing.* 3. The sweet *subject* of the song, namely, *mercy and judgment.* 4. The sweet *object* of this praise, and the manner in which he would sing it ; *Unto THEE, O LORD, will I sing.*

1. The sweet *work* that is resolved upon, namely, to *sing.* It is the work of heaven, and a very fit work after a communion, to sing a song of praise to God, in the manner which we may afterwards explain.

2. The sweet *singer ; I will sing.* The title of the psalm shews it was David's, the man after God's own heart ; the man anointed by the God of Jacob, and the sweet psalmist of Israel ; for so he is called, 2 Sam. xxiii. 1.

3. The sweet *subject* of the song, or the matter of it, namely, *mercy and judgment.* God's work towards his people is chequered work ; a mixture of mercy and judgment : and when he exercises us with both, it is our duty to sing of both, and to be suitably affected with both ; whether our circumstances be joyful or sorrowful, still we must *give glory to God ;* and, *in every thing give thanks :* neither the laughter of a prosperous condition, nor the tears of an afflicted condition must put us out of tune for the sacred songs of praise.

4. The sweet *object* of this praise, and the manner in which he resolves to sing it, *Unto THEE, O LORD, will I sing.* It is in the most solemn manner that he addresses the Lord JEHOVAH, Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, and dedicates his song to the praise of a God in Christ ; *Unto THEE, O LORD, will I sing.* But I refer the further explication to the prosecution of a doctrine from the words.

OBSERV. *That, as the people of God hath both mercy and judgment in their lot in this world ; so, from both they may have matter of a song of praise unto God.*

They have occasion in this world to sing both of mercy and judgment. We find the psalmist frequently singing both of mercy and judgment ; as Psalm xxx. 6,—9. Psalm xlii. 7, 11. You have an elegant description

scription of the lot of God's people, while here, as consisting both of mercy and judgment, and so affording occasion to sing of both, 2 Corinth. vi. 8, 9, 10.; where you will see the blink and the shower; the mercies and judgments that are in their lot; how God hath set the one over against the other; By honour and dishonour, by evil report and good report, &c. Thus they have occasion to sing both of mercies and crosses, while they find the Lord supporting them under trials, and remembering mercy in the midst of wrath, and making all things work together for good to them; I will sing of mercy and judgment; unto thee, O Lord, will I sing. The Chaldee paraphrase of this text is remarkable, and suitable to the doctrine I have raised from it, namely, it is as if the psalmist had said, 'If thou bestowest mercies upon me: or if thou bringest any judgment upon me; before thee, O Lord, will I sing my hymn for all.'

The method I propose, for prosecuting this doctrine, through divine aid, is the following,

- I. I would speak a little of the *mercies* that the people of God meet with; and what it is *in* these that affords them matter of a song of praise.
- II. I would speak a little of the *judgments* they are tristed with; and what it is *in* judgment that may be matter of a song of praise to God.
- III. What this singing *imports*; and *how* we are to sing of *mercy* and *judgment*: where we may notice what is imported in the psalmist's *resolution*, and the *manner* of expressing it; I will sing of mercy and judgment; unto thee, O Lord, will I sing.
- IV. *Why* it is so ordered of the Lord, that his people are made to sing, both of mercy, and of judgment.
- V. Draw some *inferences* for the application,

I. I am *first* to speak a little of *mercy*, of which they ought to sing; and here I would shew, 1. What this mercy *is*; and, 2. What it is *in* mercy that may be matter of a song, or afford ground of singing.

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1st, What this mercy is. Mercy, in God, signifies a propensity or readiness of mind to help and succour such as are in misery: and it carries in it an inward commotion and moving of bowels, as God says of Ephraim, *My bowels are troubled for him; I will surely have mercy upon him*, Jer. xxxi. 20. God, to accommodate himself to our capacity, speaks after the manner of man, ascribing human affections to himself. I might here speak of the *general* mercy of God towards all, both just and unjust: for, *He is good to all, and his tender mercies are over all his works*, Psa. cxlv. 9. He makes his *sun to shine, and his rain to fall upon good and bad*: and all should sing of his mercy, if it were no more but for life, and health, and strength from him. There are some common gifts that all men have from him, and some common graces that some have more than others; but I speak especially of special mercies; and indeed there are of these, that the visible church hath, besides the rest of the world, even the wicked among them; and, if they could, they should sing of these mercies; such as, their hearing the gospel, and the joyful sound; their getting the offer of Christ, and salvation through him: but I speak mainly of the special mercies, that bear the stamp of his everlasting love towards his chosen and hidden ones: mercy bred in God's breast from all eternity, whereby he made choice of some of the fallen mass of mankind in Christ, who is the channel wherein this mercy does flow in various streams: and I shall mention a few of these, for there would be no end of speaking, to mention all that might be said, or yet to enlarge upon all that may be mentioned.

1. There is the mercy of God, in *sending Christ to be the Saviour*. We find the angels singing of this mercy, Luke ii. 11, 14. saying, *To you is born in the city of David, a Saviour; Glory to God in the highest, on earth peace, and good-will towards men. Good-will and mercy towards man, because there is peace on earth, and reconciliation through Christ, who brings in glory to God in the highest; God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him,*  
*should*

should not perish, but have everlasting life, John iii. 16. It is indeed a *so* without a *such*; a love without a parallel: here mercy shines.

2. There is mercy in the *death of Christ*; see how the four and twenty elders sing of this mercy; *Thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God by thy blood, out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation; and hast made us to our God kings and priests: and the angels join issue with them, to the number of ten thousand times ten thousand, and thousands of thousands, saying, with a loud voice, Worthy is the Lamb that was slain, to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honour, and glory, and blessing, Rev. v. 9,—12.*

3. There is a mercy that he shews, in *raising of Christ from death*, and in *raising and quickening us together with him*. We find the apostle singing of this mercy; *But God, who is rich in mercy, for his great love wherewith he hath loved us, even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together with Christ, and hath raised us up together, and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus, Eph. ii. 4, 5.* If Christ must die, he must conquer death, that his people may be *more than conquerors* in him over death; both *spiritual* death, whereby we were under the *power* of sin; and *legal* death, whereby we were under the *guilt* of sin, and sentence of the law. In opposition to both these, the life of regeneration, and the life of justification is connected with this merciful quickening together with Christ; as you see, Col. ii. 13. *You, being dead in your sins and the uncircumcision of your flesh, hath he quickened together with him; having forgiven you all trespasses.* O how does the psalmist sing of this mercy! *Bless the Lord, O my soul,—who forgiveth all thy sins, and healeth all thy diseases, Psalm ciii. 2, 3.*

4. There is mercy that he shews, in *cleansing the soul* from the *filth* of sin, as well as the *guilt* thereof, till it be washed and made quite clean at last. See how the saints do sweetly sing of this mercy, Rev. i. 7. where I think they sing both of pardoning and purifying

fying mercy; *To him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood, to him be glory and dominion for ever and ever, Amen.*

5. There is mercy that he shews, in adopting such heirs of hell by nature, to be the children of God by grace: and you may see how believers sing of this mercy; *Behold, what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God!* 1 John iii. 1. He makes them his children, and gives them the Spirit of adoption; *Because ye are sons, he hath sent forth the Spirit of his Son into your hearts, crying, ABBA, Father.* He gives them the mark and seal of his children, even the Spirit as a Spirit of prayer, and as a Spirit of faith, and a Spirit of love, working the love of God in our hearts, who are by nature enemies: and, O what mercy is here!

6. There is mercy that he shews, in conferring the high dignity of *priesthood* and *royalty* upon them; see how they sing of this mercy; *To him that loved us,—and hath made us kings and priests unto God, and his Father [or, to God, even his Father;] to him be glory,* Rev. i. 5, 6. *Kings unto God, how? Even to fight for him against sin, Satan, and the world, and conquer all our enemies in his name. Priests unto God, how? Even to offer spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God by Jesus Christ; to offer our prayers and praises, souls and bodies to him, on our altar, Jesus Christ. Thus they are made kings and priests; and therefore called a royal priesthood: a priesthood of kings, or a kingdom of priests.*

7. There is mercy that he shews his people, in abiding and standing by them in all difficulties, so as nothing shall ever be able to separate them from the favour of their God. See how sweetly the apostle Paul sings of this mercy; *Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation, or distresses, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword?—Nay, I am persuaded, that neither death, nor life, 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*

*Christ Jesus our Lord*, Rom. viii. 35,—39. But tho' neither *death*, nor *life*, nor *angels* do it, yet may not *sin* separate me from the mercy and love of God? Indeed it may separate, so as to make a fearful desertion, but never so as to make a final separation; for, *His mercy endures for ever*: and he hath said, *I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee*. He will visit their iniquity with the rod,—but his loving-kindness will he not take away. My mercy will I keep with him for evermore, and my covenant shall stand fast with him, Psal. lxxxix. 28, 32, 33.

8. There is mercy that he shews, in giving many merciful experiences of his goodness and mercy following them all the days of their life; such as the psalmist sings of, Psalm xxiii. 6. It is true, the leading mercy of all, is God himself, Christ himself, the Spirit himself; one God in three Persons, is their God; made over to them in that word, *I will be your God*. Here is the fountain-mercy of all mercies, of which they may sing, saying, *This God is our God for ever and ever, and will be our guide, even unto death*. And indeed to sing of mercy, is to sing of a merciful God: but as we know the nature of the fountain by the sweetness of the streams, so we may take a view of some more of these streams, under the notion of merciful experiences; and I name these following, by which a song of mercy may be excited.

(1.) There are merciful intimations and communications, that they sometimes get, to make them sing of mercy. Sometimes he intimates his love, saying, *I have loved thee with an everlasting love*: Sometimes he intimates pardon, saying, *I, even I am he, that blot-teth out thy transgressions, and will remember thy sins no more*: Sometimes he intimates acceptance, saying, *O man, greatly beloved*; and the intimation sets them a wondering and praising: Sometimes he communicates his mind and his secrets to them, *The secret of the Lord is with them that fear him, and he will shew unto them his covenant*: Sometimes the secrets of his providence; he will tell them what he hath a-mind to do with themselves, and what he hath a-mind to do with such a friend,

friend, and such a child, and such a land or church ; *Shall I hide from Abraham that which I do ?* Sometimes he communicates himself to them, saying, *I am thy God, I am thy shield ; Fear not, for I am with thee :* Sometimes such intimations and communications are given, as make all their bones to say, *Who is like unto thee ?*

(2.) There are merciful *visits* after desertion, and after backsliding, that they sometimes get to make them sing of mercy, when they have been heaping up mountains of sin and provocation betwixt him and them ; yet, after all, he hath come and given them occasion to say, *The voice of my Beloved, behold he cometh skipping upon the mountains, and leaping upon the hills,* Cant. ii. 8. *The voice of my Beloved !* O an exceeding sweet and powerful voice ! It had a sound of heaven ; I thought the mountains would have kept him away, but I heard the sound of his feet upon the mountains, that made my heart warm toward him again ; I had departed from him by an evil heart of unbelief, and I thought he would never return ; but, O he restored my soul, and helped me anew to wrestle with him : *We found him in Bethel, and there he spake with us.*

(3.) There are merciful *accomplishments of promises*, that they sometimes get, to make them sing of mercy. The Lord sometimes lets in a promise with life and power, and gives them a word on which he *causes them to hope.* It may be he will give them a promise for *themselves*, and it may be a promise for their *children* ; such as that, *I will be thy God, and the God of thy seed ;* and sometimes a promise for the *church* ; such as that, *Upon all the glory there shall be a defence :* and sometimes he gives a wonderful *accomplishment of promises*, like that of Hezekiah ; *What shall I say ? he hath both spoken, and himself hath done it :* He hath come to my soul, and made me see that he is as good as his word ; and that *faithfulness is the girdle of his loins.*

(4.) There is a merciful *grant of all their desires*, that they sometimes get, to make them sing of mercy. As the *desire of their soul is towards him, and the remembrance of his name ;* so he *satisfies the longing soul,*  
and

and fills the hungry with good things; and gives them sometimes a Christ in their arms, who is all their salvation, and all their desire: *Delight thyself in the Lord, and he will give thee the desire of thy heart.* Some have got their desires satisfied abundantly, now and then; they have got all that they could desire with respect to temporal mercies; all that they could desire with respect to spiritual mercies; yea, all that they could desire within time, till they get an armful of him before the throne.

(5.) There is merciful *instruction* and *illumination*, that they sometimes get, to make them sing of mercy; *The path of the just is as the shining light, shining more and more unto the perfect day.* And therefore he gives them to learn some lesson more and more; some gospel-lesson, and gospel-mystery, that they were in the dark about: and one great lesson that he teaches them is, even the difference betwixt the *law* and the *gospel*; he teaches them, that the *law is holy, just, and good*; and how the gospel crowns the law in all these respects: he teaches, that the law is *holy* in its *commands*, commanding perfect holiness, perfect obedience; and how the gospel shews where this perfect obedience is to be had, even in Christ, in whom they have not only strength to answer it as a rule of duty in part, but perfect righteousness to answer it as a covenant of works completely: he teaches them, that the law is *just* in its *threatening*, the threatening of eternal death; and how the gospel shews where this threatening hath vented itself, even in demanding and getting complete satisfaction from Christ the Surety; and therefore may the soul say, Well is me, for the shower of wrath is over my head, and hath lighted upon the head of my Cautioner! He teaches them, that the law is *good* in its *promises*, namely, its promise of eternal life to perfect personal obedience: but withal he teaches them by the gospel, how they hold their title to life, only in Christ, to whose perfect obedience now all the promises are made, and *in whom all the promises are Yea and Amen.* O what a mercy is it to learn these lessons in a saving way; *To you it is given*

to know the mysteries of the kingdom of God: he hath hid these things from the wise and prudent, and revealed them to babes; even so, Father, for so it seemed good in thy sight.

(6.) There are merciful *sensible enjoyments*, which they sometimes get, to make them sing of mercy: sometimes they get *sensible sights* of his glory, and that in a way of believing; *Said I not unto thee, If thou wouldst believe, thou shouldst see the glory of God?* O says the man, I found faith to be the hardest thing in the world, and yet he made me find it to be the easiest thing in the world, when he carried me on the wings of the Spirit of faith; and by faith I saw his glory, and the glory of God in the face of Jesus. When I speak of *sensible sight*, do not mistake me; for I know that faith and sight, or faith and sense, differ in several respects, which I am not now to open; and yet faith brings in a kind of sense, it being *the evidence of things not seen, and the substance of things hoped for*; and therefore, by a *sensible sight*, I mean, the *spiritual sense of seeing by faith, and seeing clearly*; for sometimes the man gets a sight of Christ, as clearly as if he saw him with his bodily eyes: O, says the man, I have seen his fulness and sufficiency; I see his fitness and suitability for me; I see his worthiness and excellency in himself. O none but Christ, none but Christ; as once a martyr, standing at a post, and having matches kindled upon him, and the flames about his finger-ends, he clapped his hands together, and cried, *None but Christ, none but Christ.*

Some men they get *sensible tastes* of his goodness; *I sat down under his shadow with great delight, and his fruit was sweet to my taste.* O how sweetly did I feed upon the apple-tree, and plucked off the apples that grew upon this tree, the apple of imputed righteousness, the apple of imparted grace, the apple of peace, the apple of pardon, the apple of assurance, the apple of joy, the apple of contentment, the apple of love, the apple of liberty! O the sweet fruit, the sweet apples that grow upon this tree of life! *I sat down under his shadow with great delight, &c.*

Sometimes they get a sensible *hearing* of his *voice*; like that in the Song, *It is the voice of my Beloved that knocketh*, Song v. 2. He knocked by his voice, saying, *Open to me, my sister, my spouse.* O sweet was his voice, when he said to me, *I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee!* How sweet was his voice, when he said, *Be of good cheer, thy sins are forgiven thee!* when he said a word like that of the angel, *Fear not, Mary, for thou hast found favour with God! Did not my heart burn within me, when he talked with me by the way?* In such a word, and at such a sacrament, and such an ordinance, and such a duty? *Never man spake like this Man.* It was the voice of a God that I heard; for it was with such a glance of glory, as set my heart all in a flame of fire.

Sometimes they get a sensible *smell* of his *ointments*. O! his *name* had a smell of heaven; for, *because of the savour of his good ointment, his name was as ointment poured forth.* O! his *garments* had a smell of heaven; *all his garments smell of aloes, myrrh, and Cassia, out of the ivory palaces.* The garment of his *righteousness* had a smell; it is a *sacrifice of a sweet smelling savour*; and the perfume thereof puts away the stinking smell of sin: the garment of his *graces* had a smell, when the Spirit breathed upon them, and the north and south-wind awakened, the spices sent forth a pleasant smell; when the Spirit warmed my cold heart in duties, and *fire from heaven kindled the sacrifice*, then it mounted up to heaven, *like a pillar of smoke, perfumed with myrrh and frankincense, and all the powders of the merchant.*

Sometimes they get a sensible *feeling* of his *power*; they have felt a sweet power coming along with the word, the sacrament, the prayer, the duty, that hath set a lawful captive at liberty, and loosed their bands; *Truly I am thy servant, thou hast loosed my bands*, Psal. cxvi. 16. O says the man, At such a time I am quit of the band of fear, I am quit of the band of unbelief, I am quit of the band of doubts, I am quit of the band of corruption; a power hath come, and knocked

off my fetters: I felt his hand passing through the hole of the door of my heart, and my bowels were moved for him; he said to me, as it were to unbelieving Thomas, *Reach hither thy hand, and put into the hole of my side*, and let my wounds silence all your faithless fears, discouragements, and jealousies; and I was obliged to cry out, *My Lord, and my God*. I thought he took me, as it were, by the hand, as he did Peter upon the water, ready to sink, saying, *O why didst thou doubt?* He shed abroad his love upon my heart so sweetly, that I could doubt no more. I could have been content that the valley of vision had been my burial-place, and that I had never gone back to the world again; for his love ravished my heart, and struck the bottom out of all my doubts and fears: I got all my backslidings healed; I got all my prayers answered; I got my burdens eased; I got grace to pour out my soul into his bosom; I got grace to bring all my corruptions to him, to be dashed to pieces; I got grace to creep into his heart, and hide myself in his wounds; I got grace to cast all my burdens over upon him, and my heart was lightened; and my soul was more eased and pleased, than if I had been a crowned emperor of all the kingdoms of the world.—These are some of the merciful experiences that sometimes they will get, to make them sing of mercy. I might have mentioned many more to this purpose, both of ordinary and extraordinary mercies; but I go on,

2dly, To the second question here proposed, *What it is in mercy that affords ground of singing?*

1. The *freeness* and *undeservedness* of the mercy, makes them sing of mercy: when the man deserves hell, and the just sentence of the law to be past against him, mercy comes and takes hold of him. What is the cause of mercy? There is nothing in man to merit it but misery; which is indeed the occasion that God takes, to manifest his mercy through Christ; but yet misery cannot be the cause of mercy; for neither merit nor misery can be considered here to have any causal influence, it is just absolute sovereignty; *It is not of him that willeth, nor of him that runneth, but of*  
 God

*God that sheweth mercy.* Sovereign mercy is a thing that can neither be obtained by any good, nor hindered by any evil about us ; he gives no account of his dealings : *I will have mercy on whom I will have mercy.* He loves, and we shall be loved : let all our high imaginations and proud reasonings strike fail to the sovereignty of free grace. O shall I not sing of mercy, that when I deserved a hell, I got a heaven ! I, deserved eternal death, and I got a sweet view of eternal life ! This accents the praises. *O what am I,—that thou hast brought me hitherto ?*

2. The *unexpectedness* of the mercy, makes them sing of mercy : O ! when I was expecting a frown, I got a smile ; when I was expecting nothing but wrath, I got a glance of love ; instead of a stroak of vengeance, I got a view of glory. Hezekiah got a message of death, and was looking for it, when he got the news of life, and it made him sing of mercy, *Isaiah xxxviii. 15.* The mercy of God is surprizing mercy ; some have gone disconsolate and cast down to an ordinance, and ere ever they were aware, their souls have got something, which hath caused them to cry, *O ! is this the manner of man, O Lord ?* Some have gone to a closet, or a field, or a barn, or perhaps to a dike-side, with little or no expectation ; but behold they have been surprized with an armful of heaven ; perhaps at such a sermon, they have been surprized with a word of love on the back of deep humiliation, or desertion : a word, like a live-coal, hath been cast in, and set their breast on fire, and their heart in a flame.

3. The *seasonableness* of the mercy, makes them sing of mercy ; for, he comes with grace to help in time of need ; *I was brought low, and he helped me ;* I was brought to the brink of ruin, and the border of despair, when mercy stepped in for my relief and comfort : when I was at the lowest extremity, he stepped in, and made it the sweetest time that ever I saw ; *He brought me out of the horrible pit, and set my feet upon a rock, and put a new song in my mouth, even praises unto our God. He pitied us in our low estate, for his mercy endureth for ever.*

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4. The *greatness* and *riches* of the mercy, makes them sing, saying, *O how great is thy goodness, which thou hast laid up for them that fear thee, which thou hast wrought for them that trust in thee, before the sons of men!* Psal. xxxi. 19. We read of the *riches of his mercy*; the *exceeding riches of his grace*; his people sometimes meet with exceeding rich favour; such as not only exceeds their worth infinitely, but even exceeds their sense, exceeds their thoughts, exceeds their words, exceeds their desires, exceeds their prayers, exceeds their praises, exceeds all that they can ask or think; and this makes them sing. We read of his *abundant mercy*; it is abundant in respect of its *fountain*; for his mercy is his nature, and must be infinite: it is abundant in respect of its *streams*, as it is let out abundantly towards the *object* thereof: it is abundantly great in respect of its *various kinds*, temporal mercy, spiritual mercy, eternal mercy; *temporal mercy* makes them sing, and say, *I am less than the least of all thy mercies*; *spiritual mercy* makes them sing, and say, *He hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ Jesus*; *eternal mercy* makes them sing and rejoice in *the hope of the glory of God*. O how abundant are they in their kinds, outward and inward mercies! *Outward mercies* are abundant: O the mercy that attended my birth, my education, the place of my situation in the world, so as to be brought under the drop of the gospel; my preservation from innumerable dangers; my protection, my provision; he hath fed me all my life long. *Inward mercies* are abundant; the mercy that appeared in my being awakened, convinced, humbled, converted, confirmed, comforted, called, justified, adopted, sanctified. O what ground of singing of mercy! It is great and abundant in respect of the *qualities* of it: O what matter of singing might be gathered out of the views of mercy, as it is preventing mercy, sparing mercy, condescending mercy, covering mercy, tender mercy, waiting mercy, constraining mercy, restraining mercy, restoring mercy, following mercy! Even when I fled away from mercy, mercy and goodness followed me.

But

But the bare mentioning of all would be impracticable; O the greatness of the mercy of which they may sing! O the greatness of the *Author* of it, a great God! If we be saved, what does he get? if we be damned, what does he lose? yet he shews mercy. O the greatness of the *object* of it! it is extended towards the chief of sinners. O the greatness of the *effects* of it! Hereby great sins are pardoned, great blessings are conferred, great wrath is averted, and great salvation is obtained: O! how can they but sing of mercy! O the greatness of the *attendants* and *companions* of it! It makes them sing, not only when they notice the mercy, but the contents concomitants of it, and what comes along with it: how sweetly will the soul sing, when it can say, I not only got such a mercy, but I saw God in it, and Christ in it, and the Spirit in it, and heaven in it, and glory in it! O! how sweet, when they consider this favour hath a necessary connection with heaven! it is a fore-taste of what I shall enjoy for ever: it is connected with God's everlasting love. And hence,

5. Not only the greatness, but the *sweetness* of the mercy makes them sing. And there are two things, among many others, that make it sweet to them, namely, the *excellency* of the mercy itself, and then their *relation* to it. On the one hand, the *excellency* of the mercy; *How excellent is thy loving kindness, O Lord! Thy favour is better than life. His mouth is most sweet, says the church: The words of his mouth are sweeter than honey, or the honey-comb.* On the other hand, their *relation* to the mercy, contributes to the sweetness of it; the more of faith's application, the more sweet. O says faith, there is a promise, and it is mine; there is a pardon, and it is mine; there is a robe of righteousness, and it is mine; there is a crown of glory, and it is mine; there is a God, and he is mine; all is mine, because Christ is mine. O then he sings of mercy. But,

6. To name no more, The *sureness* and *firmness* of the mercy makes them sing; they are called the *sure mercies*

*mercies of David*, Isa. lv. 3. The Septuagint renders it as the apostle does, Acts xiii. 34. τὰ ἁγία Δαβὶδ, the *holy, just, and faithful things of David*. The mercies of God in Christ, our mystical David, are his *holy, just, and faithful things*; his holiness, justice, and faithfulness are concerned to make good and secure his mercy to them that believe. Hence it is said of believing penitents, 1 John i. 9. that *God is faithful and just to forgive him his sins*. Faithfulness hath a respect to God's promise, and justice a respect to the price and ransom paid by Christ: and God hath bound himself; he is bound by his own faithfulness, on the one hand, he will be faithful to his word of promise; and he is bound by his own justice on the other hand, which is fully satisfied in Christ: he is thus obliged to give out mercy, and secure it for the believer; this makes it indeed the *sure mercies of David*; and so they are eternally secured, and therefore everlasting mercies. In a word, the thing that makes them sing of mercy is, When then they see the mercy to bear in it the tokens of God's love; when they find such a mercy is not only the answer of prayer, but the fruit of God's electing grace; when they see God's everlasting love to be the fountain from whence it flows, Christ's everlasting righteousness the channel in which it runs, and the powerful operation of the Spirit making the effectual conveyance and application of all.—Now, these are some of the mercies, and the things in these mercies, both more ordinary and extraordinary, that are ground of singing: *I will sing of mercy*. But to the other part of the song.

II. The *second* thing was, to speak of the *judgments* that the Lord's people meet with; and what it is in judgment that may be matter of a song of praise unto God. To sing of mercy is what I understand, may you say; but how to sing of judgment, I want to know. Here then I would follow the same method as in the former head, namely, 1. To speak of some of these *judgments* they may meet with. 2. What it is in judgment.

judgment that may be matter of a song of praise to God.

1st, Now, as to the *first* of these, viz. The judgments of which they are to sing; in order to clear this, you would know, that the word *judgment* hath various sanctifications in scripture; I shall name some of these.

1. *Judgment* sometimes signifies (when spoken with relation to *man*) *understanding* and *equity*: sometimes it signifies *understanding*, and a faculty of *discerning*, in opposition to *ignorance*; *I pray that your love may abound yet more and more in knowledge, and in all JUDGMENT*, Phillip. i. 9. Sometimes it signifies *equity*, in opposition to *injustice*; *I know Abraham, that he will command his children and his household after him, that they keep the ways of the Lord, and do justice and JUDGMENT*, Gen. xviii. 19. Now, though the doing judgment thus, and that with an understanding heart, be one of the ways by which we are to sing the praises of God, and glorify him, of which more afterwards; yet other things are here intended. Therefore,

2. *Judgment* (when spoken of with relation to *God*) signifies several other things; as,

(1.) It sometimes signifies *God's just and righteous government of the world*, particularly by *Christ Jesus*; *The Father judgeth no man, but hath committed all JUDGMENT to the Son*, John v. 22. *Righteousness and judgment are the habitation of his throne*; and that both in the iron rod, by which he takes vengeance on his enemies; and in the golden sceptre, by which he rules his own people. And indeed, whatever be intended in the text, this government of *Christ* is matter of a song of praise; *The Lord reigns, let the earth rejoice; the Lord reigns, let the earth be glad*. But,

(2.) *Judgment* sometimes signifies the *rectitude of Christ's administration*, in his reforming the world, and bringing things in order, which sin and Satan had put into confusion; so may that word be understood, John ix. 34. *For JUDGMENT am I come into this world*: and again, *Now is the JUDGMENT of this world; now shall the prince of this world be cast out*. Of this *judgment*

ment also will the believer sing, when the Spirit is come to convince, as of *sin* and *righteousness*, so also of *judgment*; because the prince of this world is judged. But,

(3.) *Judgment* sometimes signifies the *precepts of the law*, as ye know they are frequently called, God's testimonies and *judgments*, especially, Psal. cxix. And when a man learns these in a gospel-way, they are matter of a song of praise also, Psal. cxix. 7. *I will praise thee with uprightness of heart, when I have learned thy righteous JUDGMENTS.* Yea, they delight therein, and sing of these *judgments*, Psalm cxix. 54. *Thy statutes have been my song in the house of my pilgrimage.*

(4.) *Judgment* sometimes signifies the *doctrine of the gospel*; *I will put my Spirit upon him, and he shall bring forth judgment to the Gentiles*, Matt. xii. 18. It is cited out of Isaiah xlii. 1. *He shall shew judgment to the Gentiles*; that is, He will publish the gospel; the way and method of salvation, which he came, as a Prophet, to teach and proclaim; as a Priest, to work out; and as a King, to apply; and if we should take *judgment* in this sense, surely all believers sing of judgment, whenever faith is in exercise; for the gospel is the song of the saints; it is the joyful sound, while with joy they draw water out of this well of salvation. Psal. lxxxix. 15. Isa. xii. 3.

(5.) It sometimes signifies the *punishment inflicted upon Christ*, when he substitute himself in our room; *He was taken from prison and from JUDGMENT*; or, as it may be rendered, and as you will see in the margin of some of your Bibles, *He was taken away BY DISTRESS and judgment*;—while it pleased the Lord to bruise him, Isa. liii. 8, 10. O but this infinitely severe act of justice and judgment against Christ was an infinite act of mercy towards us! And, as we had perished eternally, if we had not been thus judged and condemned in a Surety; so this *judgment* execute upon him is noble matter of a song. To sing of *judgment*, in this sense, is one of the sweetest hymns to the praise of God.

(6.) *Judg-*

(6.) *Judgment* sometimes signifies the solemnity of the last day; Behold, the Lord comes with ten thousands of his saints, to execute JUDGMENT upon all, Jude, ver. 14, 15. And though it will be a day of terrible vengeance to the wicked Chrifless world, yet the saints may sing of joy; for, the day of their redemption draws near; when Christ, who is their life shall appear, they shall appear with him in g'ory. Awake and sing, ye that dwell in the dust.

(7.) *Judgment* sometimes signifies the punishment of the wicked in a wrathful manner; and the heavy plagues which he pours out upon any person or people, whether it be sword, famine, pestilence, or any other stroak; Exod. vi. 6. I will redeem you from Egypt) says God of Israel) with a stretched-out hand, and with great JUDGMENTS; that is, with great plagues and punishments upon the Egyptians. The Lord is known by the JUDGMENTS which he executeth. And sometimes the Lord gives his church and people occasion to sing of judgment in this sense, as Israel did at the Red-sea, after God had poured out all his plagues upon Pharaoh and upon his proud host; on which occasion you have the song of Moses, Exod. xv. In this sense it is said, The righteous shall rejoice when he sees the vengeance; not that he will love to feed his eyes upon the blood and ruin of his fellow-creatures, but rejoice in that God is glorified in the destruction of his enemies, and the salvation of his church and people.

(8.) *Judgment* sometimes signifies the chastisement of the godly: for, as there is a wrathful judgment, which God exercises towards his enemies; so there is a fatherly judgment, which he exercises towards his friends. In this sense we may understand that word in the institution of the sacrament, even as it concerns the godly themselves, He that eateth and drinketh unworthily, eateth and drinketh damnation [or, JUDGMENT], to himself, as the word may be rendered, 1 Cor. xi. 29. And indeed, as a believer may communicate unworthily, so his unworthy communicating may

may bring on him heavy judgments or chastisements from the Lord; For this cause many are weak and sickly among you, and many sleep, verse 30. Judgment, I say, signifies sometimes fatherly judgments or chastisements: and thus it is to be understood, 1 Peter iv. 17. The time is come that JUDGMENT must begin at the house of God; and in this sense especially I conceive judgment to be meant in the text, I will sing of mercy and of JUDGMENT: So that by judgment here we are to understand all the hardships and sorrows of a believer's lot, whether punitive or probative, that is, whether for the punishment of his sins, or the probation of his graces: all penal dispensations for his correction, or whatever dispensations make for his trial: all adversity, sufferings, and distresses, of whatsoever kind.

Now, if you ask more particularly what these judgments are? I think they may be all reduced to these four ordinary words, 1. The judgment of affliction. 2. The judgment of temptation. 3. The judgment of desertion. 4. The judgment of sin itself, which may be so called, when a man is left to fall into it for the punishment of other sins. I am not yet come to shew how these, or any of these, may afford matter of a song; I am as yet telling you what are the judgments they may meet withal. And,

1. The judgment of affliction. Many are the afflictions of the righteous, even their outward afflictions: sometimes they are afflicted in their bodies, with sickness; sometimes in their estate, with poverty; sometimes in their name, with reproach; sometimes in their relations, either by the gracelessness of their relations, or by their death; if they were gracious, then they are afflicted with grief that they have lost them; if they were graceless, then they are afflicted with fear lest they be gone to hell; if they know not whether they died in Christ or not, they are afflicted with perplexity, because they know not what is become of them: sometimes they are afflicted in their families, with this and the other cross, and disorder, and confusion; sometimes in their neighbours and brethren, whether wicked or godly, from whom they may have trials of many sorts; some-

sometimes in their cause they maintain, and for conscience sake, they may be persecuted and harassed; *If any man will live godly in this world, he must suffer persecution: through much tribulation we must enter into the kingdom of God.* There is a necessity for it; for the believer here is like the tribe of Manasseh, half on this side Jordan, in the land of the Amorites; and half on the other side, in the holy land: I mean, he hath both corruption and grace, and hence a necessity of affliction and suffering; for if he hath any good in him, the devil will surely gnash at him, and endeavour, if he can, to devour him; and if he hath evil in him, he must look that God will afflict him. But,

2. There is the judgment of *temptation*, that the children of God sometimes meet with, even *the fiery darts of the devil*: for the Lord sees fit sometimes to let Satan loose on his people; who will not be wanting to improve any liberty granted to him, with his uttermost power and policy, as we see in the case of Job. It is strange to read how Christ was tempted of the devil, Mat. iv. 3,—10. And after that, let none think strange, that the followers of Christ may be tempted to deny their sonship; tempted to doubt of God's care; tempted to destroy themselves; yea, tempted to worship the devil: for, *In all these things he was tempted like as we are, yet without sin*; and in that he himself, though he sinned not, yet suffered, *being tempted, he is able to succour them that are tempted.* The children of grace may be tempted to atheism, and to doubt of the being of a God; tempted to blasphemy and horrible things, that they dare not tell for a world. It is said by the spouse, Song ii. 4. *He brought me to the banqueting-house, and his banner over me was love.* Why? what is the meaning of a banner in a banqueting-house? A banner is rather for a battle: but indeed, Sirs, here the banquet and the banner go together: for the battle many times follows the banquet. It may be, Satan and corruption are sleeping, as it were now; but I assure you, they are not dead: so long as ye have sin, ye shall have temptations to sin; so long as there is a finger of the believer  
out

out of heaven, the devil will be striking at it. If temptations have not assaulted you already since the sacrament, as I fear they have, yet be sure the Philistines will be upon you.

3. There is the judgment of *desertion*, which is yet sorer than any of the former; *Thou didst hide thy face, and I was troubled*. Sometimes the believer comes under the sad loss of the light of God's countenance, and the sense of his love; and may lose his gracious comfortable presence very suddenly, even when he is just opening the door of his heart, as it were, to let him in; *I opened to my Beloved, but my Beloved had withdrawn himself, and was gone*, Cant. v. 6. Sometimes he loses that comfortable presence very unworthily, even in a fit of drowsiness and spiritual security, as in that same fifth of the Song, verse 3. Sometimes he loses it very long; *I sought him, but I found him not; I called on him, but he gave me no answer*. I went from duty to duty, from ordinance to ordinance, and yet not so much as a word or a look from him. In this case, it cannot but be a very melancholy time with the believer, when he goes *mourning without the sun*, saying, *O that I knew where I might find him! O that it were with me as in months past!* Especially if he knows that he hath not lost that presence by sovereignty on the Lord's part, but sinfully on his part, and that he hath sinned him away. How ill went it with Afaph, when he was forced to say, *I remembered God, and was troubled*, Psalm lxxvii. 3. Why? he remembered his own unkindness and ingratitude, that provoked the Lord to be gone. O! it is not easy to comfort the soul in this case. This soul-desertion is ordinarily attended with the want of life and for the performance of duty; *Mine iniquities have taken hold upon me, so that I am not able to look up*, Psal. xl. 12. His spiritual strength was so worn away, that he was neither able to pray nor praise; or do any duty with liveliness or activity. In this case, the soul cannot pray with life or power; it cannot hear with joy or profit, it cannot meditate with any delight or spirituality; it cannot act with any freedom or liberty; it cannot suffer for God with any zeal, patience, boldness, or resolution.

resolution. O what a judgment is desertion! In this case, the soul is filled sometimes with fearful apprehensions of the wrath of God, and everlasting vengeance; though believers be secured against this, by the oath of God, the blood of Christ, and the seal of the Spirit; yet, under unbelief, temptation, and desertion, they may have fearful apprehensions of it, and that for their correction for their sins; for, though he *pardon their iniquity, he will take vengeance on their inventions.* Here the believer may be afraid of terrible judgments; *my flesh trembleth for fear of thee, and I am afraid of thy judgments,* Psal. cxix. 120. He may sometimes be afraid, lest God lay open the filthiness and wickedness of his heart to the world, and make him a reproach and a scandal to the godly and the wicked; this made the psalmist pray, *O make me not the reproach of the foolish: let none that fear thy name be ashamed for my sake.* Sometimes he may be afraid lest God strike him suddenly with a visible and signal judgment, and take him off the stage in a terrible manner; hence says David, *Take me not away in thy wrath.* Sometimes he may be afraid lest he be the Jonas that hath raised, or may raise the storm of God's wrath against the family, the congregation, the church, the land where he lives: the apprehensions of this nature may be grievous and perplexing, and create a multitude of thoughts within him; yea, in this deserted case, he may be filled with the *terrors of God, and the arrows of the Almighty drinketh up his spirit,* Job vi. 4. They may be brought to that pass, that the *sorrows of hell compass them about* so as they *choose strangling and death rather than life*; and yet all this may be in a way of fatherly judgment, for the punishment of their sins; as David's bones were broken for his murder and adultery: though sometimes he hath done it in sovereignty; yet the terrors of the Lord may bring them the length of distraction; *While I suffer thy terrors, I am distracted,* Psal. lxxxviii. 15. O what a storm is this! Desertion may come to a great height, and bring along with it dreadful storms of fear, terror, and distraction. It may be, your mountain is standing strong, believer; but look to yourself,

and beware of God-provoking sins, for he may hide his face, and then be sure ye shall be troubled. Many, under sensible enjoyments, are like a man in a meadow, the sun shining upon him, and, or ever he is aware, the mist comes about him, and he knows not where he is. There may come a mist about your soul, that you will hardly know where you are, or where you have been, or whether your former experiences have been any thing, but a dream. However, this is one of the judgments that the people of God may meet with.

3. There is the judgment of *sin*, which is worst of all, and hath the nature of a judgment; when God lets the man fall into one sin for the punishment of another, as he may do even with his own, when his fatherly anger burns hotly against them; this is the saddest judgment and severest chastisement that, I think, a child of God can meet with: and it would seem that David's adultery was thus, in part, chastised, by letting him fall into murder; and Peter's pride and self-confidence, by letting him fall into a threefold denial of his Lord and Master; and thus he may do till the time of restoring their souls, which he hath determined, shall come. O how ill, how dreadfully ill does it go with the children of God, when they are brought to that pitiful complaint, *O Lord, why hast thou made us to err from thy ways, and hardened our hearts from thy fear!* Isaiah lxiii. 17. And when led captive by sin, Satan, and an evil heart; by *the lust of the eye, the lust of the flesh, and the pride of life.*—Thus I have told you some of these judgments that the people of God may meet with.

2dly, Now the *second* question upon this head, was, What it is *in* or *about* judgment, that may afford matter of singing, or of a song of praise? And now, some may be thinking, O Sir, these judgments you have been speaking of, are just the things that mar all my singing, and it will be strange, if there be any matter of singing, notwithstanding of these; for if these be the judgments, what can be the song or ground of singing, when they afford such ground of sighing and lamen-

lamentation? I shall endeavour to shew you, upon what grounds the sovereign Lord may even make these things matter of a song of praise. And,

1. Say you, What ground to sing of judgment may a child of God have, when *affliction* is the judgment? Indeed, *No affliction of itself is joyous, but grievous; but the Lord can bring meat out of the eater, and sweet out of the strong; and a sweet song out of a sad stroak and affliction: Hence David sings of affliction, and says, It was good for me that I was afflicted, that I might learn thy statutes, Psal. cxix. 71.* Now, there is ground to sing of judgment, when affliction is not in wrath, but in love; when it comes not from a wrathful, but a fatherly judge; when it is not satisfactory, but castigatory; when it is not to satisfy divine justice, but to correct vicious habits; when it is not expiatory, but exprobatory; when it is not to expiate sin, but to prove grace: *That the trial of your faith being much more precious than of gold that perisheth, though it be tried with fire, might be found unto praise, and honour, and glory, at the appearing of Jesus Christ, 1 Pet. i. 7.* That Christ drank out all the wrath out of the cup of affliction, and left nothing behind but love for his people to drink, O what matter of song is here! For, *Being justified by his blood, we are saved from wrath through him, Rom. v. 9.*—There is ground to sing of judgment, when affliction is attended with *instruction*, even saving instruction: to this purpose the psalmist sings, *Blessed is the man whom thou chastenest, and teachest out of thy law.*—When, by affliction, a man comes to learn the sinfulness of sin, and the evil of it; the emptiness of the creature, and the vanity of it; and the fulness of Christ, and his all-sufficiency. O when the God of heaven does famish all our gods on earth, and starve us as to creature-comforts, to make us hunger after the fulness and sweetness of Christ. What matter of singing is this!—There is ground to sing of judgment, when affliction make us *conform* to the Lord Jesus Christ, who, as he suffered for us, so he left us an example that we should follow his steps: surely, to be herein conform to the Son of God, who

endured the contradiction of sinners against himself, is ground of singing.—Again, there is ground to sing of judgment, when affliction tends to the *destruction* of sin ; *For by this shall the iniquity of Jacob be purged, and this is all the fruit to take away his sin.*—When it tends to gain the heart more to God, and wean the heart from the world, and all the things of the world, and lusts of the world ; and is a fire to remove the dross, and a file to remove the rust.—Again, there is ground to sing of judgment, when afflictions are *badges of honour* ; when they are signs of love ; *For whom the Lord loves he chastens* : when they are marks of sonship ; for, *He scourges every son whom he receives* ; and, *If you be without chastisement, whereof all are partakers, then are ye bastards, and not sons,* Heb. xii. 8. Yea, what a badge of honour is it, when a man is helped to a patient submission to his heavenly Father ? What an honour did God put upon Job, in that signal sentence, *Ye have heard of the patience of Job ?* Alexander the conqueror is not so renowned as Job the sufferer.—Again, there is ground to sing of judgment, in that affliction tends to make you *happy and holy* ; *We are afflicted for our profit, that we may be partakers of his holiness* : For though the affliction be *grievous for the time, yet afterwards it yields the peaceable fruits of righteousness to them that are exercised thereby.* Heb. xii. 10, 11. When the deluge of affliction makes us fly as a dove to the window of the ark, and when by faith we make use of the water of affliction to make us swim the faster to Christ ; then it is ground and matter of a song.—In a word, there is ground here to sing of judgments, in that they make *preparation* for glory ; *For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory.* And so the worst that God does with his children by affliction, is but to whip them home to heaven.—Thus you see what ground there is to sing of judgment, when affliction is the judgment.

2. What ground to sing of judgment may a child of God have, when *temptation* is the judgment ? Indeed,

deed, under temptation he is ready to say, *All these things are against me*, and yet they may all be *working together for his good*: and therefore, if a child of God be tempted, in the manner that I spoke of before, there is here ground to sing of judgment, in that temptation forces him to his knees: the more furiously Satan tempts, the more seriously the believer cries and prays; *A messenger of Satan was sent to buffet me, but for this I besought the Lord thrice*, 2 Cor. xii. 7, 8.—There is here ground to sing of judgment, in that temptation abates the man's *pride*, ver. 7. *Lest I should be exalted above measure*, this messenger of Satan was sent: the temptation that humbles the soul, and makes it low in the dust, is matter of praise.—There is here ground to sing of judgment, in that temptation is sometimes the opportunity of the *communication of grace*; *I besought the Lord, and he said to me, My grace is sufficient for thee, and my strength is made perfect in thy weakness*; hereupon the man falls a singing, *Most gladly therefore will I glory in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me; for when I am weak, then am I strong*, ver. 8, 9, 10.—There is ground to sing of judgment here, in that many times temptation to sin, keeps from *committing* a sin: the more Satan tempts to blasphemy, the more the believer trembles at it, and is afraid of himself, while he does not see the tempter.—There is ground to sing of judgment, in that the temptation hath *mercy* in it; mercy to others, while we are the more fitted to comfort them when they are under temptation, 2 Cor. i. 4.; mercy to ourselves, in that we became the objects of the Mediator's sympathy; *For we have not an High-priest that cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities, but was in all things tempted like as we are, yet without sin*; therefore will succour them that are tempted.—There is here ground to sing of judgment, in that as it is *no sin* to be tempted; so the temptation can do no harm, where there is no yielding: I said, that it is no sin to be tempted, and I say it again; though to yield to the least temptation is a sin, yet it is no sin to

be tempted to the greatest sin; for Christ, who could not sin, was tempted to sin: there is no sin in it, where there is no yielding to it: in that case, it is the sin of the tempter, but not the sin of the tempted.—

But, say you, O the temptation conquers me, and therefore how can I sing of judgment in this respect? Why, the prevailing of a temptation is a sad thing indeed; but yet there may be ground to sing of judgment, if the prevailing of the temptation tend to the increase of grace and godly sorrow, as Peter's fall cost him many a salt tear; and if the prevailing of the temptation tend to the increase of watchfulness, and make him more afraid to commit sin, and more afraid to neglect duty, and more careful to improve Christ; in this case there is ground to sing of judgment.—

Why, say you, if the prevailing of a temptation will issue in a song of praise, may not that make us careless whether we yield or not. *Answer*, The prevailing of a temptation is one thing, and the yielding to a temptation is another thing; the prevailing of it may issue in joy, as I have told you, but the yielding to it may issue in sorrow; and if that sorrow be turned into joy, it will be a wonder of grace; O! *Shall we thus sin, that grace may abound? God forbid.* The wind of temptation is cross to the wind of the Spirit; and if we flee before the wind of temptation, we flee away from God and heaven: and therefore, if we sing of judgment sweetly and safely, it will be by reason of the wisdom of God making use of cross winds to blow us to heaven, and not of our fleeing before these. Thus you see what ground there is to sing of judgment, when, and even though temptation is the judgment.

3. What ground to sing of judgment may a child of God have, when *desertion* is the judgment? Desertion and divine withdrawing is a very heavy case, whether it be a withdrawing in respect of grace, the withholding the influences of the Spirit, the quickening, grace-exciting influences thereof; or in respect of comfort, the withholding the light of his countenance, and leaving the soul in the dark: when light is away, there is nothing but darkness in the air; when the

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Lord is away, nothing but darkness, disorder, and confusion in the soul. Now, *How can I sing one of the songs of Zion in such a dark land?* Nay rather, *Mine eye, mine eye weeps, because the Comforter that should relieve my soul is far removed: Instead of singing, I must hang my harp upon the willows.* Is there any ground to sing of judgment, when desertion is the judgment, unless it be a heavy song, while I cannot but *mourn as a dove, and chatter as a crane?* Why, even in desertion, the child of God (and indeed none but a child of heaven is capable of desertion) he may sing of judgment; in regard, that as the seed of grace may be where there is not the flower of joy; so, though *weeping may endure for a night, yet joy comes in the morning; and they that sow in tears, shall reap in joy:* and the reaping time is hastening on, for desertion is but for a *short time*, Isaiah liv. 8. There the Lord gives this to be the ground of singing, even in such a case; *For a small moment have I forsaken thee, but with everlasting mercy will I gather thee; in a little wrath I hid my face from thee for a moment, but with everlasting kindness will I have mercy on thee.*—There is ground to sing of judgment, when desertion tends to *awaken the soul* out of its *drowsy distemper*; *I sleep*, says the spouse, Song v. 2. and presently Christ withdraws; *My Beloved had withdrawn himself, and was gone.* Why, then she fell *seeking him whom her soul loved.* It is true, it is one of the sad effects of desertion many times, that the soul grows careless, and cannot seek with any life: but yet, if a godly soul become sensible of the Lord's departing (for some time, the Lord may be away, and they do not know or consider, as it is said of Sampson, *He wist not that the Lord was departed from him;* but I say, when a godly soul becomes sensible of it) and sees him going off, or hears him saying, *Farewel:* O then, like friends at parting, he follows him, and cannot part with him.—There is ground to sing of judgment here, when desertion tends to *alienate the heart from the world;* when the soul refuses to take comfort from any thing in time, because the absence of Christ darkens all, or makes all things

things bitter to you, because his sweet presence is away, it is matter of praise.—There is here ground to sing of judgment, in that desertion makes you *prize the light of his countenance*, the more, saying, *O to see thy power and glory, as I have seen it in the sanctuary!* When the night of desertion makes you welcome the rising of the Sun of righteousness, it is a happy parting ; that contributes to make a joyful meeting.—There is here ground to sing of judgment, in that desertion makes you *hate sin* that caused the same, as a stone in the pipe hinders the current of the water : that desertion is matter of praise, that makes sin odious to you, as that which robs you of your best jewels, and that makes you lament his absence, and the cause of it. It is indeed matter of sighing, to want his presence ; but it is matter of singing, to lament his absence. It is ground of sorrow, to be without him at any time ; but it is ground of praise, that you cannot live contentedly without him : I mean not a sinful discontent, that frets at his absence ; but a holy discontent, that longs for his presence, and laments his absence ; this I call matter of praise.—There is ground to sing of judgment, in that Christ drank out all the wrath of God out of the cup of desertion, when he suffered that heavy desertion himself, that made him cry, *ELI, ELI, LAMASABACHTHANI ; My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?*—Further, there is ground to sing of judgment here, in that this desertion makes the *expectation of heaven sweet* here, and the *possession of it pleasant* hereafter : when the believer longs for heaven the more now, and loves it the better, then, is it not matter of praise ? O there is no hiding, no desertion, no cloud there, but a constant vision of glory ; *We shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is.*—In a word, there is ground to sing of judgment, in that desertion makes room for *faith and hope*, till *vision and fruition* come. It is matter of sorrow indeed, when there is occasion to say, *Verily thou art a God that hidest thyself, O God of Israel, the Saviour* ; but it matter of praise, when the soul is brought

to say, *I will wait on the Lord; that hideth his face from the house of Jacob, and I will look for him,* Isaiah viii. 17. It may be, ye get a breathing now and then in the air of sensible manifestations, but ye must up to faith and hope again; and through the cloud ye must look for him, and bless him when he helps you to do so; for, though it were a killing desertion, or a slaying-like dispensation, yet there is reason to sing, when he helps you to say, *Though he slay me, yet will I trust in him.*—Thus you see what ground there is to sing of judgment, even when desertion is the judgment.

4. What ground to sing of judgment may a child of God have, when *sin* is a part of the judgment; when either the sins of others are the affliction, or his own sins are the affliction? When the *sins of others* are the affliction, can there be any ground to sing of judgment; When I see the generation loaden with sins and abominations, grievously departing from the Lord, surely it is ground of sighing and lamentation; and it is duty to *sigh and cry for all the abominations that are done in the midst of Jerusalem,* Ezek. ix. 4. It is true: and yet the song of praise must not go down among the children of God; for there is ground to sing in this case, when ye can say, *I beheld transgressors and was grieved.* For, as it is child-like to be grieved for the injuries done to your Father; so it is Christ-like, for *he was grieved for the hardness of their hearts*: Yet it is matter of singing, as it is a mark of love to God; for one may weep for his own sins from fear of hell, but he weeps for the sins of others from love to God.—It is matter of singing, when the more sin you see in others, it makes you *hate sin the more*, and swim against the stream when the faster they run to hell, it makes you run the faster to heaven, and sets you a praying; that when they are hastning to the prison, ye may hasten to a palace.—It is matter of singing, when the sins of others are the *glass wherein ye see your own hearts*, and see the roots of all that wickedness to be within you; and therefore are made the more thankful, that God restrains you by his power from doing the same; and constrains you

by his grace to do otherwise. When ye are helped to say thankfully, what the Pharisee said boastingly, *the Lord be thanked that I am not as other men ; and that I have not so learned Christ.*—It is matter of singing also, when their sins make you *more holy* ; and when their unfavouriness makes your graces to send forth a *fragrant smell* : and when thereby the Lord gives you an occasion to *convince* and *convert* them ; and to be the instruments of doing good to their souls.—Well, say ye, but the great question is, when my *own sins* are the affliction, can there be any ground to sing of judgment ? Indeed sinning can be no ground of singing ; for sin is in itself a damnable thing, worse than hell : and, in God's name, I will say, Whatever tends to discourage holiness, and encourage sin, let it be ANATHEMA ; and cursed be the preaching that tends to encouragement of sin ; yea, cursed be the thought, in the preacher or hearer, that makes the doctrine of grace an encouragement thereto. Many such thoughts may enter into us all ; but may vengeance from heaven come down upon them, and destroy them in us, that we may not blaspheme a holy sinless Jesus, to make him a minister of sin. However, sin being the worst of all affliction and judgment, it would be an everlasting damp to the song of mercy and judgment ; if a sovereign God could not, in his infinite wisdom, bring a song of praise out of the evil of sin. Why then, there is ground to sing, notwithstanding of sin, when God makes your sin a *burden to you*, and you to look upon yourselves as wretched because of it, saying, *O wretched man that I am ! Who shall deliver me from the body of this sin and death ?* When the burden of sin makes you *wearry of this life* ; saying with Rebecca, *I am weary of my life because of the daughters of Heth.*—There is ground to sing notwithstanding of sin, when God makes the *prevalency of sin* the mean of drawing you to a *Saviour*, and to the *blood of Christ that cleanses from all sin* ; when daily sin makes daily application to the *fountain open for sin and uncleanness* ; when the bitterness of sin makes Christ sweet and precious to you, and the sting of sin draws out your eye to look to the brazen

zen serpent ; and so the man sees God get more glory, and Christ more honour, and his righteousness more renown, then he sings and *glories in his infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon him.*—There is ground to sing, notwithstanding of sin, when the sense of sin makes a man to *judge himself*, and condemn himself, that he may not be judged and condemned of the Lord ; when it makes him examine himself more strictly, saying, *Search me, O God, and try if there be any wicked way in me ;* and observe himself more closely, so as to watch over his heart and way, so as to find out sin, and expel it, through grace, and live more circumspectly for the future.—There is ground to sing notwithstanding of sin, when sin makes a man to *abhor himself*, and to *repent in dust and ashes ;* when it makes him, with David, to *water his couch with his tears ;* and with Peter, to *go out and weep bitterly*, and lays him low in the dust before the Lord : ‘ Therefore, ‘ as one says, Better is the sin that makes us humble, ‘ than the duty that makes us proud.’ The hypocrite’s rising is the mean of his fall ; but the believer’s fall, is the mean of his rising. While the sense of his sin makes him holy, and sense of his pride makes him humble, his hypocrisy sincere, his hardness makes him soft, his carnality makes him spiritual ; happy that victory of sin over a man, that issues in a bloody war against it : yet no thanks to sin, but to a sovereign wise God, that turns the malady into a medicine.—If any should hereupon take encouragement to sin, let them consider, if they do so, whether their spot can be the spot of God’s children ; for, *to sin, that grace may abound,* is a presumptuous sin of the highest degree ; and true grace dare not draw such a bitter conclusion from such sweet promises ; or, if a child of God should do so, and make bold with sin, let him consider, if this be all his *kindness to his friend ?* Though God do not damn you, he may send you to a hell in this life, and fill you with horrors, terrors, and agonies of soul, such as I spake of before : let this therefore be a rail to keep you back from the burning mountain. To sing of judgment in respect of

sin, is not to sing of our folly in committing it, but to sing of God's wisdom in destroying it: you have no cause to sing of sin, which of itself brings death, ruin, and damnation; but still cause to sing of judgment concerning sin, or of the Lord's executing judgment upon it.—But what if *hell* be the judgment at last, would you have me to sing in that case? I fear I go to hell when all is done; I fear I never get to heaven; and how should I sing? I *answer*, Have you not cause to sing, that ye are out of hell, and that it is not as yet your lot? But I will tell you, if you were beginning to sing, it would be the beginning of heaven: *Blessed are they that dwell in thy house; they will be still praising thee.* Will you say, as an honest exercised Christian once said, when tempted to fear hell, and thereupon to give over the duties of religion, 'Why, says he, if I shall never praise him in heaven, I shall endeavour to praise him all that I can on earth.' This would be a sweet token that you shall sing in heaven for ever, among the redeemed.—And thus you see, whether we view judgment with respect to affliction, temptation, desertion, or sin, in what respects it is that we are to sing of judgment; it is even to sing of the mercy that God exercises in these judgments: and so *I will sing of mercy and of judgment.* It comes all to this, as if the psalmist should say, *I will sing of MERCIFUL JUDGMENTS*; for judgment is mercy, as it is the matter of the song: or, to take them separately, *I will sing of mercy IN mercies*; and, *I will sing of mercy IN judgment*: and so I will sing of my blinks and of my showers; I will sing both of my cloudy and my clear day; both of my ups and downs; both of smiles and frowns; I will sing both of frowning and favourable-like dispensations; *I will sing of mercy and judgment; to thee, O Lord, will I sing*—So much for the second head.

III. The *third* general head proposed was, What this singing *imports*; and *how* we are to sing of mercy and judgment to the praise of God. I shall speak a little to the *quality* and *import* of this song.

1st, The import of this singing: *I will sing to the Lord*; that is, I will praise the Lord; and it does not ly in the simple sound of a voice, but imports the glorifying of God with our hearts and lips, in our lives, and in our death or suffering.

1. To sing to the Lord, is to glorify him with our hearts; to give him the love and adoration of our hearts. In this singing, there is the inward act of the soul; *Bless the Lord, O my soul: and all that is within me, bless his holy name*, Psalm ciii. 1. It imports a deep impression of God upon the soul, and a lively sense of his mercy in Christ, and of our unworthiness of it: and here the soul, and all that is within it, is acting and moving: the judgment moves with admiration and wonder at God for his glorious grace; the memory moves with a thankful recording of his favours, *Forget not all his benefits*; the affections move with joy and delight in God, and love to him for the riches of his grace in Christ. O shall I not love the greatest and best of Beings, for the greatest and best of benefits! The heart is here employed: neither prayer nor praises, without the heart, are of any worth; many sing with their voice, when their hearts are a hundred miles off, gading here and there: but a fixed heart is a singing heart; *My heart is fixed, O Lord; my heart is fixed, I will sing and give praise*. We are called to *sing with grace in our hearts*, Col. iii. 16.: we are to sing with faith in our heart; *He that is strong in the faith glorifies God*: we are to sing with love in our hearts, with fear in our hearts, and with joy in our hearts.

2. To sing to the Lord, is with our lips to glorify him: we are to give him *the calves of our lips*. When the heart is full of love, the tongue will be full of praise. Our tongues should be as well-tuned organs, to sound forth the high praises of God, pleading his cause, defending his truths, avouching his name, and confessing him before the world; *Thy loving-kindness is better than life, therefore my lips shall praise thee*, Psal. lxiii. 3. When our hearts are inditing a good matter, our tongues will be as the pen of a ready writer, to speak

of the things that concern the king; Psalm xlv. 1. when our hearts are glad, then our glory [*i. e.* our tongue,] will rejoice, Psalm xvi. 9. and xxx. 12. O! the little heavenly discourse argues a very sad degeneracy.

3. To sing to the Lord, is, with our *life* to glorify him; when the love of our hearts, the calves of our lips, and the service of our lives, are presented unto God together, they make a harmonious song: the praise of the life is the life of praise; *Whofo offereth praise, glorifieth me*, Psalm l. 23. When we devote all the actions of our life to his disposing will, then we sing a song of praise unto God. When we live by faith on the Son of God; for no less is worth the name of life, but what is derived from him, and devoted to him, then we may be said to glorify him in our lives. It is a practical way of singing the praise of God, that is here intended by the psalmist, as appears from the rest of the psalm.

4. To sing to the Lord, is, with our *death* and *sufferings* to glorify him, as well as with our life and actions: thus we are called to *glorify the Lord in the fires*, Isaiah xxiv. 15. Does God call you to suffer affliction in person, name, estate, family, or concerns; to suffer want of husband, wife, brother, sister, children, or other outward comforts? Why then, you sing of mercy and judgment, by suffering patiently and submissively; and God is as much glorified by your passive obedience, as by your active. Whenever you are afflicted any way, believer, know that then God hath some employment for your graces, and expects praise thereby; yea, if he should call you to suffer death and martyrdom for his name, you are to sing his praise, by dying in and for the faith, as well as living by faith. O man, woman! could you die for him, that died for you? That is a great matter.—“O it is a small matter to die once for Christ, *said a martyr*; if it might possibly be, I could wish that I might die a thousand deaths for him!”—Thus you see the import of singing to the Lord.

2dly, As to the *qualities* of this song; or how we are to sing of mercy and judgment. And,

1. We are to sing of mercy and judgment *cheerfully*. Singing is a cheerful work; we are to sing *with melody in our hearts to the Lord*, and to make a joyful noise unto God. It is an antedating of the joy of heaven; though you be in a hell of troubles and trials, yet you have reason to praise him that you are not in a hell of fire and brimstone: though you had one hell on your back, and another in your bosom, you have reason to praise him, that you are not in the midst of hell among devils.

2. We are to sing of mercy and judgment *highly and loftily*, saying with the angels, *Glory to God in the highest*. We are to praise him with the highest estimation, with the highest adoration, with the highest admiration, with the highest delight, the highest ravisment, the highest wonder: for, as he is highly exalted above all things and beings, and above all blessings and praises; so his mercies are the highest mercies, and his judgments the greatest deep; and therefore as we ought to sing loud and high, so we ought to sing low. Therefore,

3. We are to sing of mercy and judgment *humbly and lowly*. Pride and praise are inconsistent; and therefore we should join trembling with our praise and singing; having awful impressions of God upon our souls, and knowing the infinite distance betwixt him and us. When the twenty-four elders sing, they *come down from their thrones, and cast down their crowns and their palms*, Revel. iv. 10. as if they would say, We are not worthy to sit upon a throne, or to wear a crown in his presence: they make their crowns and their thrones a footstool unto him. When we sing of mercy and judgment, we are to mind, his judgments are a great deep, and we ought to be deeply humbled before him, saying, *O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! how unsearchable are his judgments, and his ways past finding out!* Rom. xi. 33.

4. We are to sing of mercy and judgment *constantly and unweariedly*. Every new mercy and judgment should be matter of a new song: and O, his mercies  
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are new every morning, new every moment; and therefore we should still be singing and saying, *I will bless the Lord at all times, his praise shall be continually in my mouth*, Psalm xxxiv. 1. *Let such as love thy salvation, say continually, The Lord be magnified*, Psalm xi. 16. It is true, the saints will never sing without intermission, till they reach above these clouds: It is true also, when they see mercy, they are ready to sing; but when they cannot see the sun of mercy, through the cloud of judgment, they are ready to *sigh and hang their harps upon the willows*: yet nevertheless, as the obligation to sing does always take place; so they have always matter of praise, and ground to sing of mercy and judgment.

5. We are to sing of mercy and judgment both *conjunctly* and *severally*; when you meet with a mercy, sing of mercy; when you meet with a judgment, sing of judgment; when you meet with mercy and judgment both, then sing of mercy and judgment both; and improve both for matter of a song of praise, so as God may be glorified, both in his mercy and judgment.

6. We are to sing of mercy and judgment *devoutly* and *obedientially*, as knowing it to be a commanded duty. It would take many an hour to tell over all the scriptures, whereby we are called to praise the Lord: it is a good, pleasant, and comely duty; *Praise ye the Lord; for it is good to sing praises unto our God; for it is pleasant, and praise is comely*, Psalm cxlvii. 1. —There you see three epithets given to this duty, to move us thereto.

(1.) It is a *soul-enriching* duty; it is a good way to make a sad case grow better: the spouse, under desertion, fell a singing and saying, *My Beloved is white and ruddy, the chief among ten thousands*; and never was she in a better case than when in this praising tune. It is good to cry down our complaints with praises; it is good, in that it is all the tribute that the King of heaven can have from us; and to deny him this, is the height of treason, for it is rent due to him; *Give unto the Lord the glory due unto his name*. It is good  
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by way of eminency; for it is a greater mark of love than other duties: self-love may influence a man to prayer; but love to God makes him praise. If you can draw out a long libel of complaints before God, and yet have never a word of praise for the mercies you enjoy, it is to be feared that self-love hath the penning of your prayers. It is a token of enmity with your neighbour, when you receive many favours from him, and never so much as give him thanks; so it is a token of enmity against God, when notwithstanding of his mercies, yet you do not sing his praise. It is every way good.

(2.) It is a *pleasant* duty: no music does God delight so much, in, as singing his praises. It is the pleasant work of heaven, where new scenes of glory will open, and open, and open to all eternity, and new songs of praise will still be sung for ever and ever. It may be you think, when once you come to heaven, you will praise your fill; but now, when so many dead weights are upon you, you cannot, and should not sing and praise: well, no thanks to you to praise him when you are once in heaven; but, if you glorify him now in the fires, and praise him now, in spite of devils and opposition in your way, you do more honour to him than to praise him in heaven, where there is no trouble, no temptation, no sin or sorrow to interrupt your song. To sing like Paul and Silas in the stocks, is more than to sing in heaven; though not more pleasant, yet in some respect it is more honourable, noble, and glorious. And so,

(3.) It is a *comely* duty; the garment of praise is a very graceful ornament. An ungrateful and unthankful man is an ugly ill-favoured man; nothing more uncomely in the eyes of God and man. We are to praise him then devoutly, under a sense of duty.

7. In the *last* place, we are to sing *resolutely*, or with holy purpose and resolution; saying, with the psalmist here, *Unto thee, O Lord, will I sing*. And, because this is a part of the text, I shall shew what is *imported* in the Psalmist's *resolution* and the *manner* of expressing it;

*I will sing of mercy and judgment ; unto thee, O Lord, will I sing.*

(1.) I think it imports a *grounded* resolution, that he had got a discovery of the glory of God's mercy and justice in the face of Jesus Christ ; and a discovery of the glory of God in all his merciful and afflictive dispensations. He had a sense and impression of the goodness of God, in all the favours that he met with ; and he had a sense and impression of the wisdom of God, in ordering all afflictive providences to his soul's advantage.

*I will sing of mercy and judgment.*

(2.) It imports a *grateful* resolution, that the spirit of gratitude filled his soul : so much does his resolution to sing import ; for it says, that his spirit was sweetened with a sense he had of the kindness of God ; his *meditation of him was sweet*, and that makes him resolve upon such a sweet exercise : he saw what strong and manifold obligations he was under to praise and magnify the name of the Lord.

(3.) I think, the manner of expression imports a *cordial* resolution ; heart and will are engaged in it : there is twice *I will* in the text ; *I WILL sing of mercy and judgment ; unto thee, O Lord I WILL sing*. He had a good will to the work : where the understanding is enlightened in the knowledge of God, in his mercy and judgment, there the will is subdued and made willing ; willing to praise, willing to glorify God by the obedience of faith and love through grace.

(4.) The manner of expression imports a *fervent* resolution ; so much I think lies in that word, *O LORD, I will do it ; to thee, O LORD, I will sing*. To be fervent in prayer, is a notable exercise ; but to be fervent in praise, is yet more notable : fervency in seeking is good ; but fervency in singing is yet better ; *To thee, O Lord, will I sing*. Perhaps this *O* imports also a wonder ; *O, I will sing* ; for thy mercies and judgments are so wonderfully great ! *O, I will sing with wonder and admiration !*

(5.) The manner of expression imports a *humble* resolution : I cannot sing of merit ; but I will sing of mercy, and through mercy I will sing of mercy. To  
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sing of mercy must be a humble song ; for mercy towards a miserable sinner is a melting word ; and to sing of judgment must be a humble song ; for judgment in every sense is an awful word ; and the psalmist breathes out his resolution in a most humble manner, *O Lord, I will sing of mercy and judgment.*

(6.) The manner of expression imports a solemn resolution made in the presence of the great JEHOVAH ; *To thee, O LORD, will I sing.* It is not only resolved in his own mind, that he will sing to the Lord, but by way of solemn address to the God of heaven, the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ ; *To thee, O Lord, will I sing* : to thee will I give the glory of thy mercy and judgment : behold, I resolve upon it before thee, O Lord.

(7.) The manner of the expression imports a skilful harper, a dexterous musician, even in spiritual sense ; he knew what should be the subject of the song, and therefore says, *I will sing of mercy and judgment* ; and he knew what should be the object of the song, or to whom it should be sung, and therefore says, *To THEE, O Lord, I will sing* : he knew who should be the Singer ; and therefore says, *I will do it* : he knew what should be the manner ; and therefore says, *I will SING of mercy and judgment ; to thee, O Lord, will I SING.* It is before the Lord he resolves to sing, as he did before the ark, which was a type of Christ : and so it is a song to the praise of God in Christ.

(8.) The manner of the expression imports a firm, fixed, and constant resolution ; so the redoubling of it seems to import ; *I will sing, I will sing.* He had a mind this exercise of singing should not go down, but be his continual trade ; *I will sing, I will sing* ; I will sing on earth, and I will sing in heaven ; I will sing in time, and I will sing through eternity. And indeed, all on whom the Spirit of praise and gratitude is poured out, they resolve never to give over singing. And because they know it will not last always in time, nor their harp be still in tune ; therefore they resolve, as it were, to make it their great errand to heaven, to sing, to sing there for ever ; *I will sing, I will sing.* David

had heard *once*, yea *twice*, that *mercy* as well as *power* belongs to the Lord; and therefore, not only *once*, but *twice* in a breath, he resolves to *sing unto the Lord*. The word hath a great deal of elegance and emphasis in it; *I will sing of mercy, I will sing of judgment: O, I will sing; O Lord, I will sing; and I will sing unto thee.*

In a word, it imports, that a God in Christ was the ALL of the song; even the *Alpha* and *Omega* of it, the beginning and the end of it: it was *of him*, as the *Alpha*; for the discovery of the mercy of God in Christ brought him to it; *I will sing of mercy and judgment*: and it was *to him*, as the *Omega*; for the song is dedicated to the Lord; *To thee, O Lord, will I sing.*—These things, I think, are imported in the manner of the expression, and they may help to regulate our resolutions in *singing*.

IV. The *fourth* head proposed was, *Why* it is so ordered of the Lord, that his people should have ground to sing of *mercy* and *judgment* both? why is there both mercy and judgment in their lot, to be the matter of their song, while in this world?

1. The *first* reason is, To put a *difference* betwixt *heaven* and *earth*; for in heaven there will be no judgment, no affliction, no desertion, no sin, no song of judgment present, but of judgment past: The song of heaven will be of mercy present, and judgment past, among the triumphant company; but the song of the militant church, is of mercy and judgment, both present. Now, *we see through a glass darkly*, and therefore sing confusedly; but then shall we *see face to face*, and therefore shall sing distinctly: now *we know in part*, and sing in part; but then the perfect knowledge will make a perfect song: now we are very unlike to Christ, because we see but little of him, and so the song is but heavy, dull, and flat; but then *shall we be like him*, for *we shall see him as he is*, and so the song will be chearful and ravishing: now when a mercy raises the song, a judgment bears it down, some cloud or other interrupts the singing; but then there shall be

be no present judgment, no cloud, no night, no complaint to mar the song, for there the mercy is not mixt with any judgment, nor the joy mixt with any sorrow.

2. The *second* reason is, That they may put *honour upon the divine wisdom*, that does so wonderfully reconcile these opposites, such as mercy and judgment are. O the infinite wisdom of God, that can make antipods meet in a song of praise, and contraries in a hymn of glory to him. O the wisdom that makes *mercy and judgment meet together, and kiss one another!* O the wisdom that brings the greatest good out of the greatest evil, and the best blessings out of the worst of evils; as out of the first Adam's sin and fall, brings the second Adam's glory and honour, and the greatest happiness of his seed! O the wisdom that brings life out of death, light out of darkness, liberty out of bondage, love out of enmity, happiness out of misery, holiness out of sin, joy out of sorrow, mercy out of judgment! O, can we look down to this great depth, without crying with the apostle, *Ὅ Βάθος Πλάτους καὶ Σοφίας καὶ Γνώσεως Θεῆ!* &c. *O the depth of the riches, both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! how unsearchable are his judgments, and his ways pass finding out?* Rom. xi. 33.

3. The *third* reason is, That they may be *trained up gradually for singing hallelujahs in heaven.* They are not yet fit and qualified for singing of mercy without judgment; and though judgment is turned into mercy to the people of God, and so is matter of a song: yet the present sense and feeling that they have of judgment, makes the manner of their singing suitable to their imperfect condition, wherein they are not capable to sing of mercy without a mixture of judgment. They are but learning to sing; and by judgment they are disciplined to sing gradually better and better; when mercy does not prevail to make them sing aright, he sends a judgment to make them sing better. They are learning the language of heaven before they go there; but at their first learning they are but scholars, and need the correction of judgment. If they  
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abuse mercy, and do not sing aright of it, there comes a heavy judgment to make them take heed how they sing, and then they learn to sing the seventy-first verse of the hundred and nineteenth Psalm, saying,

*It hath been very good for me,  
That I afflicted was,  
That I might well instructed be,  
And learn thy holy laws :*

And then they learn to sing the seventy-fifth verse ;

*That very right thy judgments are,  
I know and do confess ;  
And that thou hast afflicted me,  
In truth and faithfulness.*

4. The *fourth* reason is, That the *burden of the song may be proportioned to their back*. They cannot bear to have all mercy, and no judgment ; for then they would swell in pride, and be exalted above measure : they cannot bear to have all judgment, and no mercy ; for then would they sink into despair, and be pressed above measure. On the one hand, to sing of nothing but mercy, would be a burden too great and heavy ; they find, when their hearts at sometimes are lifted up to a high note, they cannot get praised ; they are ready to invite angels, saints, sun, moon, and stars, to help them to praise, for it is too great work for them alone ; they cannot get their notes raised high enough : but when the praising frame is over, if nothing but a sense of mercy remain, then having a body of sin that abuses all mercies, some proud thought and self-exalting imagination, rises in their breasts, and would rise above measure, if it were not kept down with judgment.—On the other hand, to sing of nothing but judgment, would be a damp instead of a song, a melancholy sighing instead of singing : and therefore they are well mixed together in infinite wisdom.

5. The *fifth* reason is, That their song may be the more *melodious*. As in natural, or artificial music, there

there is no melody where there is but one note; there must be different sounds to make the music melodious. I think the apostle speaks after this manner, 1 Cor. xiv. 7. *Even things without life giving sound, whether pipe or harp, except they give a distinction in the sound, how shall it be known what is piped or harped!* So it is here in the spiritual music, whether you look to the consummate song of the redeemed above, or the initial song of the redeemed below, the song of mercy present, and judgment past, makes the sweetest melody in heaven; and the song of mercy and judgment, both present, makes the sweetest melody that can be attained on earth. Mercy and judgment like bass and treble, make holy melody in the spiritual song: here are the different notes of music; mercy makes a high and lofty note, and judgment makes a humble and low note, and both make the song melodious. When a man not only sees mercy, but mercy and judgment, mercy before judgment, and mercy after judgment, and mercy in judgment, and mercy with judgment, and mercy out of judgment, and mercy backing judgment, and mercy blessing judgment, and mercy ordering and disposing judgment, mercy qualifying judgment, and mercy moderating judgment, and mercy sweetening judgment, and mercy rejoicing over judgment, and mercy running through judgment, and mercy at the root of judgment, and mercy at the top of judgment, mercy on this side of judgment, and mercy on that side of judgment, mercy round about judgment, and mercy turning judgment into mercy; O then, how does he sing with melody in his heart to the Lord!—It is to make the song melodious.

6. The *sixth* reason is, That they may prize both their mercies and their judgments; both their crosses and their comforts, both their rods and reliefs, as both affording matter of a song; and that they may neither on the one hand spot at his mercy, nor on the other hand spurn at his judgments; and that they may neither abuse enlargements, nor despise chastisements, but that they may give both their proper place and room in their hearts and esteem; that they may sing  
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of both, and love the Lord their God in both, and so may love a frowning as well as a smiling God, an absent as well as a present God, a hiding as well as a shining God, a correcting as well as a comforting God: and that both out of their clear and cloudy days they may pen a song to the praise of his name.—In a word, the Lord orders it so, that their song should be both of mercy and judgment, and puts both in their lot; that, in the *view of mercy*, they may not *despair*; and, in the *view of judgment*, they may not *presume*: that they may sing hopefully, because of mercy; and humbly, because of judgment: and that their song may be full, and take in all his dispensations, like the song of Moses and the Lamb; *Great and marvellous are thy works, Lord God Almighty; just and true are thy ways, thou King of saints*, Rev. xv. 3.—So much for this head.

V. The *fifth* head was the *application*, in the following *inferences*. Hence see,

1. That there is an over-ruling and wise providence, making *all things*, whether comforts or crosses, sweet things or sad things, *contribute* and *co-operate* for the *good* and *advantage* of the hidden remnant; *We know that all things work together for good, to them that love God, and are so called according to his purpose*, Rom. viii. 28. Mercy and judgment, and all adverse and prosperous things, work together to be the matter of a song: surely there is a *wheel within a wheel*; there is a secret hand that draws up and tunes all the strings of the harp of providence, to make a sweet song of praise unto God; there is an infinitely wise hand, like that of a cunning player upon his harp, that makes all the most seemingly jarring notes to contribute to melody, even as he made the malice of the Jews, the treason of Judas, and the rage of devils, to work for the salvation of an elect world.

2. See the *sweetness of true religion*, and that *wisdom's ways are pleasantness*: a religious life is a singing life, whether providence smile or frown. If a believer sigh and mourn at any time, and be not singing at the same

same time, it is when religion is at a low ebb with him. You may think religion is a melancholy life, man, because *many are the afflictions of the righteous,* and *judgment may begin at the house of God*; but you do not consider, that true religion makes a man to sing of judgment, as well as of mercy. Out of all the ups and downs, the vicissitudes and changes, smiles and frowns, of the believer's lot, the Lord brings a song of praise. *Truly, God is good to Israel,* whether Israel think it or not; for even judgment will be matter of a song. It is the language of unbelief, when they say of judgment, as Jacob did of his afflictions, *All these things are against me*; but when once the gallant grace of faith takes the field again, it will say, *All these are for me,* and I will sing of all.

3. See hence the *difference* betwixt *carnal* and *spiritual mirth*, carnal and spiritual singing; betwixt the joy of the world and the joy of the saints. The world may rejoice, if they have, and while they have some outward mercy; but to sing of judgment, when these mercies are withdrawn, is what they know nothing of; nay, take away the world, and then they will say with Micah, *They have taken away my gods, and what have I more?* But spiritual joy can sing in the midst of sorrow, and say, *Though the fig-tree shall not blossom, neither shall fruit be in the vines, the labour of the olive shall fail, and the fields shall yield no meat, the flock shall be cut off from the fold, and there shall be no herd in the stalls: yet I will rejoice in the Lord, I will joy in the God of my salvation,* Hab. iii. 17. 18. O Sirs, down, down, down with all carnal mirth and worldly joy, in comparison of this: down with singing, piping, and dancing; these things are but folly and madness.

4. Hence see, that the *godly need not take any sinful shift, to shun suffering*, or any sinful course to shun the cross; for, come the cross when it will, they may even sing with the cross on their back, as Paul and Silas in the stocks, Acts xvi. 24, 25. Is the godly tempted to make any sinful compliance with the courses of the time? What need he be annoyed, as if his life of outward comforts in a world would be at an end, as if

bonds and imprisonments, the loss of worldly goods and enjoyments were abiding him, if he makes not this and the other compliance? What need any annoyance? For his suffering time may be his singing time; *I will sing of mercy and of judgment.* Besides, all his *light afflictions here, which last but for a moment, work for him a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory.*

5. Hence see, what a *sweet place heaven must be, and what singing must be there*: If a song of mercy mixt with judgment here is sweet, and sometimes even ravishing, O what a sweet song is that of the redeemed about the throne, where there is no more judgment, no more sorrow or sin! And little wonder that the believer long for heaven, seeing his sweetest songs are mixt with sighs, and his mercies with judgments; his sweetest songs here have still this heavy sigh in them, *Ab, and wo is me*, that wherever I go in this world, I am always drawing a body of death along with me.— O what a happy time is the day of death to a believer, when he shall take an everlasting farewell of all his lusts and idols! O believer, what would you think to be saying, Farewel darkness, and welcome everlasting light; farewell enmity, and welcome everlasting love; farewell sorrow, and welcome everlasting joy; farewell all my sins, and heart-plagues, and strong corruptions, and welcome eternal happiness, and uninterrupted felicity? O would you not say, Farewel, farewell, with a thousand good-wills to all these evil things, and triumphantly say, Glory to God that we shall never meet again? Hence see then, I say, what a sweet place heaven must be: if even judgments, sufferings, and temptations to sin here be made matter of joy and singing sometimes to the believer, what shall glory be? If the worst things on earth may contribute to a song, what will the best things in heaven do? If the cross be sometimes so sweet, what will the crown be? If the waters of Marah be made so sweet, what will the wine of paradise be? If God's rod hath honey at the end of it, what will his golden sceptre have? O! how happy are they who have got the start of us, and are exalted above these

these visible heavens already, and past all their fears and doubts, and are singing praises without wearying!

6. Hence see, what a *black and white garment the believer wears*. The garment of praise is a garment of diverse colours; dyed white and black with mercy and judgment; *I am black, but comely, O ye daughters of Jerusalem, as the tents of Kedar, and yet as the curtains of Solomon*, Cant. i. 5. Not only black in themselves, and comely in Christ; black as sinners, and comely as saints; black with sin, and comely with grace: but sometimes black with persecution, and comely with consolation; black with affliction, distress, and judgment, but comely with the mixture of mercy in their cup of adversity, while they get *the oil of joy for mourning, and the garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness*. Hence, with what heaviness have you gone to prayer! sometime under the sense of inward trouble from your lusts, or some outward trouble from the world; some particular affair about your husband, your wife, your children, your family, that hath been distressing to you: You have in heaviness gone away to God in prayer, and come away with your soul leaping as a hart within you. O believer, you need not shudder or be grieved at the cup of affliction, which your Father gives you to drink; for, though it be bitter at the top, yet the sugar is at the bottom of the cup: *What I do, thou knowest not now, but thou shalt know hereafter*.

7. Hence we may see, the *happiness of the saints*, and of *all believers in Christ*: They may in every thing give thanks; for this is the will of God in Christ concerning them; be it prosperity or adversity, mercy or judgment, in life or in death; he may sing, that nothing in a world can make him miserable, no losses, crosses, bonds, persecutions, famine, or pestilence. If he may sing of judgment, surely the judgment are not vindictive judgments, but fatherly chastisements; for God deals not with him according to the tenor of the law, as a covenant of works; nay, he is not under the law, nor liable to the penal sanction of it: they

are judgments of a fatherly judge, not of a wrathful judge, otherwise he could not sing of judgment. How little cause hath the believer to be discontent at outward trials? What! are you discontent at that, out of which God is bringing a song of praise in time, and a weight of glory through eternity?

8. Hence see the *misery of the wicked*. Whatever matter of singing the children of God have, yet ye have matter of sighing, howling, and lamentation; for ye are under the curse of God, under the curse of his law, and so continue in a dreadful, damnable state; while ye are out of Christ, all the mercies that ye meet with are curses to you, and all the judgments you meet with are drops of divine indignation, and pieces of hell. Your temporal mercies are curses; *The prosperity of fools destroys them*; and so your table is your snare: spiritual mercies are curses to you; from all the flowers of heavenly blessings ye suck poison; the word is the *favour of death* to you; the gospel is a *stumbling-block* to you, over which ye fall into perdition; and as the same wind that blows one ship to an haven, blows another on the rock; so the same breath of the minister, that blows some to heaven, blows you to hell: the sacrament is a curse to you, for *ye eat and drink your own damnation*; the Bible is a curse to you, for the word of the Lord is against you, and ye are against it. What shall I say to you, graceless, Christless, desperate sinner? O will you tremble and quake, lest Christ himself, the blessing of all blessings, and mercy of all mercies, be a curse to you, and a stone of stumbling, over which you will break your neck! for, *he is set up for the falling, as well as the rising of many in Israel*. O that this thunder would awaken souls that are sleeping securely in a course of sin! As all mercies are curses to a reprobate world, so judgments are judgments indeed to you that live all your days without Christ; for judgment without mercy is the portion of your cup: every affliction is a judgment of wrathful and vindictive nature unto you. You will say, O for patience under such a trouble and sickness! Poor graceless soul, speaking of patience under trouble;  
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you are thus contending with God, and struggling like a fly under a mountain, and striving to be quiet under that which God hath sent to disturb you. God does not afflict men that are out of Christ to exercise their patience, but to disturb their false peace and security. O that God would awaken you! If God call for famine on the land, and make you feel the effects of this terrible drought\*, it is a judgment indeed, and a pledge of hell unto you; if God lay you on a sick-bed, and afflict you in your name, estate, person, friends, all is a piece of hell to you; judgments to you are drops of vengeance. Again,

9. See how *reprovable* they are, from this doctrine, who *never sing of mercy and judgment*. Some never sing at all the praises of God: there is a gentle or rather deistical fashion among some in our day, in public ordinances, they do not open their mouth to sing with the congregation. Oh! will they ever sing in heaven, that scorn to sing on earth? Many indeed sing with their mouth, that know not what it is to sing with their heart, nor sing with their life to glorify God. Many never sing of mercy, notwithstanding of their receiving many mercies; they pray for what they want, but never praise for what they have: and there is much of this ingratitude among believers themselves. Many again, instead of singing of mercy, they slight their own mercies, and fight against God with his own favours; they abuse their peace to security, their drink to drunkenness, their meat to gluttony, and their mercies to presumption. *Do ye thus requite the Lord, O foolish people and unwise?* Many, if they sing of mercy, they know not what it is to sing of judgment; *When God's judgments are in the earth, the inhabitants of the world should learn righteousness.* What are ye learning out of this great drought, whereby God is

\* The summer in which this sermon was preached [*viz.* 1723.] was a very remarkable season for drought, there being scarce one drop of rain during the summer months; on which account, many were afraid that the staff of bread would have been cut off from them; though providence so interposed, that, by the frequent and heavy dews, there was, in the issue, abundance of corn for man, but little provender for the cattle.

threatening to send a famine on the land, and break the staff of bread? To sing of *judgment*, is to *hear the rod, and who hath appointed it*; to sing of *judgment*, is to see the hand of God in the affliction, to kiss the hand that smites; to glorify God in the fires; to bless him that *remembers mercy in the midst of wrath*; and to answer the call of God by such and such a dispensation. Many, instead of singing of mercy and judgment, they slight both mercy and judgment; mercy does not melt them, and judgment does not move them. O take with the reproof.

10. See how *comfortable* this doctrine may be to *all believers and lovers of our Lord Jesus Christ*; ye have ground to sing, not only of mercy, but of judgment: I know no case you can be in, believer, but there is room for *singing*: the faint may *sing of mercy in the midst of judgment*. O how can I sing, when I missed my errand at this occasion? says one: let them give the praise that have got the profit; but for me, I am left under heavy judgment, under affliction, temptation, desertion; yea, and the prevalency and power of sin and corruption; and therefore there is no room for my singing, but rather for my sighing, mourning, and lamenting before the Lord, and to be humbled to the dust. Why, man, indeed it is not humility, but pride, that makes you refuse to praise: you undervalue the *day of small things*, and any little measure of grace and mercy you enjoy, because, forsooth, you have not all you would be at; and, it may be, God is saying, I will send trouble after trouble upon you, till you be so humbled as to be thankful for the least mercy, till you be thankful that you are out of hell, and thankful that you was not born in America, where people are worshipping the devil. O how many millions of mercies have you to bless God for! And will you take offence at, or differ with your God, and deny him his due, because you get not all your will? You have ground of singing, believer, notwithstanding all that you have said.—O! but how can I sing, when I find sin, by which God is dishonoured, rag-  
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ing in my heart; and corruptions, like so many devils, roaring and domineering? If corruption were slain, I think I would sing, but no otherwise. Why, poor soul, I tell you, that you must even in that case *sing of mercy and judgment*, and sing because he hath said, *Slay them not, lest thy people forget*, Psalm lix. 11. If your corruptions were slain, as you would have them, you would, perhaps, forget your own weakness; forget your deliverer; forget your dependence on him; forget prayer; forget pity towards these that are afflicted and tossed as you are: it may be, you would forget the fountain open; forget to make daily use of Christ; forget to sympathize and bear with others, when they fall or are overtaken in a fault; forget to walk humbly; forget the sweet experiences of his *pardon*ing and *purging* grace; and forget to call yourself a *dog*, when you go before him, saying, *Truth, Lord, I am a dog*, I am a devil, I am a lump of hell: And therefore, though you may think it strange to hear of blessing the Lord that corruptions are not slain outright, yet, since infinite wisdom sees that nothing less will cure your *forgetfulness* while here, even bless him, who hath said, *Slay them not, lest my people forget*. Bless him that he hath not only said, of affliction, temptation, desertion, *Let not my people want them, lest they forget*; but even of sins, corruption, and spiritual enemies, *Slay them not, lest my people forget*: better they be not slain, than that you forget to give Christ the glory of his saving offices, by employing him daily to heal all your diseases, and fight all your battles.

11. Hence see the *mark of a true believer*, and try yourselves by this doctrine. Do you sing of mercy and judgment? I might tell you for marks, that if you have learned this song of mercy and judgment, as the song hath been introduced with sorrowing, I mean with legal conviction and humiliation; so you will find it *interrupted with sighing*, because all the powers of hell and corruption will oppose this sweet exercise; you will find your harp must perpetually be tuned by the hand of the Spirit, and that you are incapable to sing,  
till

till he pen the fong ; for it is with the believer as with the marygold, it opens and fhuts as the fun riles and fets ; and yet even when the fun is fet, as it were, that you cannot open and praife, you will find *praise waiting for the Lord in Zion*, Pfal. lxxv. 1. ; or as it may be rendered, *Praise is SILENT for thee in Zion* : Why ? the Spirit of praife is fometimes filent, but yet it is a waiting filence ; you will be waiting for the Spirit of praife to be poured out, and in the mean time acknowledging your debt of praife ; and fo, while it is not fenfibly running out, it is gathering a dam, as it were, till the Spirit be poured out from on high, and then it will flow amain.—But, inftead of all other marks that might be mentioned, I offer this ; If you be one that hath learned to fing of mercy and judgment, then you have got a difcovery of the *glory of God's mercy and judgment*, as reconciled together, and mutually embracing one another in Chrift Jefus. There are two letters of God's name, Exod. xxxiv. 6. 7. the one is *mercy and grace* ; *The Lord, the Lord God, merciful and gracious* ; the other is *justice and judgment* ; *The Lord that will by no means clear the guilty* : and thefe are the two ftrings of the harp, on which the believer fings. Now, have you been taught of God, to reconcile thefe two letters of God's name, and fo to play upon thefe two ftrings, by admiring the infinite wifdom, that hath made them *meet together*, and *kifs one another* in Chrift ? Pfal. lxxxv. 10. Have you feen falvation fpringing out of both thefe, and glory arifing to both thefe attributes of God, from Chrift's obedience to the death, *whom God hath fet forth to be a propitiation* ! Have you feen mercy running in the channel of a complete fatisfaction to juftice, and fo God by no means clearing the guilty, without a facrifice and atonement ? Many pretend to fing of mercy, and fay, I hope in God's mercy ; but they know not what it is to fing of mercy, to the higheft praife of mercy, in finding out a ranfom, whereby mercy is magnified, not to the difparagement, but to the higheft praife of infinite juftice ; becaufe judgment was execute upon the Surety to the uttermoft, that the curfe of the law

law, and the vengeance of heaven against sin, could demand. If ever you sang to purpose of mercy and judgment, you have seen and admired the glory that shines in this mutual embracing betwixt mercy and judgment.

12. The last inference I offer, is this. Hence we may see the *duty of all the people of God*, namely, to *sing of mercy and judgment*: As it is the duty of all hearing me, to seek and pray while they are out of heaven, so to sing and praise while they are out of hell. But whatever others do, believer, you in particular are to sing of mercy and judgment: he hath done much for others, but he hath done more for you; he hath given you himself to be your God, his Son to be your shield, his Spirit to be your guide, his covenant to be your charter, and his heaven to be your inheritance: he hath given you his word and oath, that though he *will visit your iniquity with the rod, and your transgression with stripes*, and execute judgment on your lusts, and take vengeance on your inventions, yet *his loving-kindness will he not take away, nor alter the word that hath gone out of his mouth*. Once hath he sworn by his holiness, *That he will not lie unto David*; and therefore you may sing of mercy and judgment: and even at your lowest, when you are crying out, *Behold, I am vile!* O I am black, I am black, I am black; yet even then he is looking upon you in Christ, and saying, *Behold, thou art fair, my love; behold, thou art fair*, not only by imputed righteousness, but even by implanted grace, which makes you look upon sin as the greatest evil, and groan under it as the greatest burden: even at your lowest, there is something about the bottom of your hearts, that says, O! I could be content to live in a coal-pit with Christ, rather than in a palace without him; *A day in his courts are better than a thousand; I had rather be a door-keeper in the house of my God, than to dwell in the tents of wickedness*. O to see his name glorified in the world, and his kingdom coming in me, and in thousands about me! O sing, sing, sing of mercy and judgment! you have both to sing of.

QUEST. *How shall I sing one of the songs of Zion in a strange land?* I offer some general directions, and then I close,

1. See that your song be sung upon a *new harp*; I mean, with a new heart and a new spirit. Ye that are graceless will never sing, till you get a new heart; O go to God, and cry for it: ye that are gracious will never sing aright, unless the new harp get a new set, and the strings be drawn up, and the heart tuned by the hand of the Spirit; and therefore seek the new influence for every song, and the Spirit to dictate the song, and to raise the notes. As the dial in the day-light will not shew the hour without the sun, so your harp of graces will not afford melody without the Spirit; therefore seek the Spirit to help you, when you cannot utter his praise: and when you find your hearts in a praising frame, O continue at the exercise, saying, as David, *My heart is fixt, my heart is fixt, I will sing and give praise.*

2. If you would sing aright of mercy and judgment, then you may sing in your *best robes*; I mean, putting on Christ Jesus, and his righteousness, for your garment; this is the *garment of praise*; and this garment *smells of aloe, myrrh, and cassia*, and is the only thing that can perfume the praises of the saints. If you have Esau's garments, what though you have Jacob's voice; so as you want a tongue, and a heart, and a voice, to praise him as you ought; yet, with your elder Brother's garment, you may get the blessing. Come to God, under a sense of your own unworthiness, and want of righteousness, and yet saying, *Worthy is the Lamb that was slain.* O pray and praise both under the covert of blood.

3. Put a *mark upon mercy*. If you would sing of mercy, though it were never so little, it is more than you deserve. I have heard of a Jewish doctor, that was called *Rabbi THIS TOO*, because he used to say, whatever besel him, *This is good too, and this too, and this too*: you may well say, how little soever you have, *This is more than I am worthy of, and this too, and this too.* He that sees that nothing is his but sin, can-

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not but wonder that any thing is his, but hell: put a mark upon mercy, saying, *O my soul, forget not all his benefits*, Psalm ciii. 2,—5. Mind the visit he gave you at such and such a place, in such and such an ordinance; mind his words of grace, and emanations of love: put up some of the manna in the golden pot.

4. Put a *mark upon judgments*. If you would sing of judgment, as well as mercy, and lay your account with judgment, let not national judgments pass without a remark, that God may get the glory of his holy and just administrations: many judgments are come upon us, and many sad tokens of judgment a-coming, because of our national apostasy from the work of reformation, our covenant-breaking, our perjury, and, O the other rampant abominations of our day. Learn the language of judgment, *Hear the rod*. See Isaiah xxiv. 14. It is matter of singing, that Christ hath a greater concern for his church than you have; for, *the government is upon his shoulders*: God will take care of his own church; and Christ hath more care of it than you can have; and, *upon all the glory there shall be a defence*: but no thanks to a corrupt party, that would set doctrine, discipline, worship, and government, and all, before the wind. God usually brings about church-reformation with a judgment, and then will the remnant sing of judgment, when God scums the pot, and casts the scum into the fire; as you have it, Ezek. xxiv 12. *She hath wearied herself with lies*. O but Scotland hath wearied herself with lies of carnal-policy, with the lies of court-flattery; and there is a great scum that covers and clouds all our reformation-light, a great scum of self-justifying pride, that will rather sacrifice truth, than take with a fault, and rather let truth suffer, than her credit; and yet her credit is cracked, ever since her covenant with God was broken, and burnt, and never a hand put forth to take it out of the fire, and renew it, since that time; but yet the covenant shall be on the field, when the scum shall be in the fire. But, what shall we say? there seems to be nothing but scum among us, nothing but filth

and baggage: must all go to the fire together? Yea, though it be so, yet *a remnant shall sing in the fires*, when the scum will be consumed therein, as you see, Isaiah xxiv. 13, 14, 15. If this shall be done in the *isles of the sea*, surely the isles of Britain and Ireland are not excluded.—Let not personal judgments and strokes pass without a remark, but let God get the glory of his frowning, as well as of his smiling dispensations; and lay your account with judgments, that you may sing of judgment when it comes. Be not surprized, though affliction, temptation, and desertion come upon you, on the back of a communion: God uses to feast his people, to fit them for a trial: days of sweet enlargement are usually like sun-blinks before a shower; as Peter and John were witnesses of Christ's transfiguration on the mount, that they might next be witnesses of his agony in the garden. Lay your account with trials from heaven, earth, and hell, that having laid your account with them before-hand, you may never forget to sing; yea, lay your account that the Philistines will be upon you, Sampson; all your lusts and corruptions will be upon you: therefore, *Watch and pray, that ye enter not into temptation*; and that your iniquity get not such hold upon you, that you shall not be able to sing. And therefore,

5. If you would sing aright of mercy and judgment, let your song be a *practical song*. Here I must tell you, that some take the words, for David's mercy and judgment that he was resolved to exercise in his government, namely, to be merciful and just; the mercy of God shall teach me to be merciful, and his justice and judgment shall teach me to be just: I will praise thee, by exercising mercy and justice in my station, as a king and a magistrate. His resolution here is, that the mercy and justice of God should be extolled in his thoughts, expressed in his words, and exemplified in his actions, according to that command, Hosea xii. 6. *Keep mercy and judgment, and wait on thy God continually*. If you would sing of mercy and judgment, then keep mercy and judgment: have you shared of the mercy of God,  
and

and will you not be merciful, as your heavenly Father is? Do you know the judgment of God, and will you not be just and righteous, and equal in all your dealings with men, and conversation in the world? David's song here is a practical song; and you may see, at your leisure, the several notes of this practical song in the following part of the psalm: and do you the same according to your station. One note of his song is, verse 2. *I will behave myself wisely in a perfect way,* &c. *i. e.* that, through grace, he will act conscientiously and considerately; and in the mean time praying that the Lord would come and dwell with him in his house, *O when wilt thou come to me?* Another note of his song is, verse 3. where he resolves to practise no evil himself, but shuts his eyes from seeing evil. Another note of his song, verses 4, 5. he will not keep bad servants, nor employ these about him that were vicious; that he would have nothing to do with malicious people, these that were slanderers of their neighbours, nor these that are proud and haughty, nor these that were deceitful, and made no conscience of lying and deceit. Another note of his song, verse 6. That he would keep company with them that feared God; that he would keep good company, and honest servants: You do not practically sing to the praise of God, if you do otherwise. Another note of his song is, ver. 8. That he will extend his zeal to the reforming of city and country: we are to study the reformation of manners, and the suppression of vice, in our several stations; being filled with a zeal for the glory of God, the interest of Christ and his truths.—The gospel-church is the city of the Lord; we are to seek the honour of God in the purity of his church.

6. And lastly, In order to your singing aright this practical song, lay the *burden of the song* upon the *back of the chief musician*. Who is the chief Singer? Even Jesus Christ, in whose obedience to the death was raised a song of praise and glory to God in the highest; and by the breathing of whose Spirit alone you can sing and serve the Lord acceptably. He hath said, *Without me ye can do nothing*; and surely without him you can-

not sing; therefore depend upon him, who only can make the tongue of the dumb to sing. If there were more dependence on him, the tongue as well as the life of professors would be more employed in singing his praises, and talking of his name, and speaking of his glory. What a sad matter is it, that a dumb devil hath possessed the generality of professors as to spiritual converse? O the idle worldly talk upon Sabbath days; yea, on communion days! Some will go away even from this communion, talking more of the corn and weather, or any thing else, than upon the word they have heard, or any soul-edifying discourse suitable to the occasion.—What said Christ of the possessed man in the gospel? *Thou dumb and deaf Spirit, I charge thee to come out of him.* O look to him, that he would charge the dumb devil to come out of you, that your tongues may sing his praises, and speak of his glory. How hardening is it to a wicked world, to see professors as carnal and worldly as themselves! O then employ the chief Singer to help you to sing, and plead his promise for this end, *They shall sing in the ways of the Lord, for great is the glory of the Lord,* Psal. cxxxviii. 5. yea, he hath promised to give songs in the night of adversity; that is, a song of mercy in the midst of judgment and affliction; *I will give her the valley of Achor for a door of hope, and she shall sing there,* Hof. ii. 15. O believer, whatever be your discouragement and complaint, while surrounded with judgments and trials, let not the world see you dampt and discouraged, lest they say, You serve a bad master, that does not allow you to sing. Whatever dead weights you have upon your spirit, which God and you know, ye may tell him of it, and tell some godly person that will sympathize with you in it; but let not the world hear of your complaints and discouragements, let them know you serve a good master; and remember how he encourages you to this, saying, *How great is thy loving-kindness thou hast laid up for them that trust in thee before the sons of men!* or, as it may be explained, who carry boldly and courageously, under whatever difficulties and dangers, before the sons of men, and so glorify God before the world: and therefore,

though

though you may weep in secret places before the Lord, and get to little more than a sigh or sob, yet endeavour to sing before the world at least, that they may bring up a good report of religion, and that the world may know you believe what you profess; that yet a little while, and you shall *return to Zion with songs, and everlasting joy upon your heads, and sighing and sorrowing shall for ever fly away*; and that though your body will be laid in the dust within a little time, yet a little while, and the happy joyful morning of a glorious resurrection is hastning on, when the voice will be heard, *Awake and sing, ye that dwell in the dust*, Isa. xxvi. 19. O sing, sing, amidst all your sorrows and sighing; sing of mercy and judgment, in hope of singing there, where *sorrow and sighing shall fly away*. O go away singing, in spite of the devil and corruption; and take Christ the chief Singer along with you, to tune your harp, whensoever the devil puts it out of tune; *Go up from the wilderness: leaning upon him, who hath engaged to work in you both to will and to do*.

And now, when we are parting, alas! is it not a fore matter, that there are many here, that will never learn to sing on earth, nor ever be admitted to the very first note of the spiritual song, which is, to *believe on the Son of God*; for, *without faith it is impossible to please God*, or praise him; and, as they never get to this, so it never cost them an hour's care, or made them lose an hour's sleep, that they could not believe in Christ. O wretched man! are you careless and indifferent, whether you sing in heaven among angels, or roar in hell among devils, to all eternity? Yea, there are some here, that do not believe there is such a person as Christ in heaven; they have had a fancy about him, by their hearing of him in the gospel, but never had the faith of the Son of God, by the Spirit's revealing him in the heart: and yet you are living careless and secure, in the pursuit of your sins and idols: you are going straight to hell, with a cart-load of sermons on your back, and making poor ministers spend their breath and labour in vain, and preach you to the devil, when they would gladly preach you to Christ.

Christ. O! shall we part, and not a soul of you be touched and turned to the Lord, or brought to learn any other song, but to sing yourselves asleep in the arms of the devil and your lusts? Some are sleeping in the arms of a black devil, in the pursuit of gross and abominable lusts, of drunkenness, whoredom, sabbath-breaking, &c. Others are sleeping in the arms of a white devil, going about to establish a righteousness of their own, resting on their legal duties and prayers; having a *form of godliness, but denying the power thereof*; expecting God will have mercy on them, because they observe several duties of the law, which others neglect; and so singing a false song of mercy, or hope of mercy, while they never knew the judgment of God, nor saw the wonders of God's executing all the judgments threatened in the law upon the glorious Surety Christ Jesus, nor ever came under that covert to escape the judgment of God: but, while you are strangers to Christ, all your worship is but hypocrisy, your zeal but madness, your faith but fancy, and your work abominable to God. O! will none of you be prevailed with to cry with your heart to the Lord, saying, Lord, pluck me out of the arms of the devil, and as a brand out of the burning? As you would not despise the riches of his mercy, and incur the fury of his judgment, go to a corner, and cry to him, that he would teach you how to sing of mercy and judgment. It may be the Lord will pity you for his name's sake. O may the Lord himself shew his glory to you, and make you see mercy and judgment meeting and embracing each other, and with joint harmony carrying on your salvation work, in spite of all the opposing legions of hell; and bring you to put in practice the psalmist's sweet resolution here, *I will sing of mercy and judgment; unto thee, O Lord, will I sing.*

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

The HARMONY of the DIVINE ATTRIBUTES  
displayed, in the Redemption and Salvation of Sin-  
ners by JESUS CHRIST.

PSALM LXXXV. 10.

*Mercy and Truth are met together, Righteousness and  
Peace have kissed each other.*

**M**Y friends, at a solemn marriage-supper, there is usually a friendly company that meets together; and when at such an occasion, all things are managed with sobriety and decency, it is very heartsome and pleasant to the parties concerned, to see the members of the meeting with mutual kindness to one another, harmoniously gracing the solemnity: even so at the marriage-supper of the Lamb; I mean, the sacrament of the Lord's supper, which we have been celebrating, there is a heartsome company, not of men and women, for that would make but a poor earthly meeting; nor yet of saints and angels, for that would make but at best a mean creature-meeting; but it is a glorious heartsome company of divine attributes and perfections, in the sweetest concord, meeting together, and embracing one another. This wonderful conjunction of divine excellencies is the friendly company that meets together, to put honour upon this nuptial solemnity: and to see them thus harmoniously embracing one another in the salvation of sinners, is the sweet-

\* This sermon was preached on the Sabbath evening, immediately after the administration of the sacrament of the Lord's supper at Dunfermline, September 29th, 1723. and hath already undergone ten impressions.

est sight, that the bride, the Lamb's wife, shall ever see at the marriage-supper, whether it be at the lower or upper table.

There is a great meeting in this house, but an infinitely greater in this text; a meeting of divine excellencies, to grace the assembly of the marriage-supper of the Lamb: *Mercy and truth are met together, righteousness and peace have kissed each other.* When God made heaven and earth out of nothing, he made them by a word, without any other ceremony; but when he made man, there was some particular solemnity, a grand council, as it were, of the glorious Trinity called; *Come let us make man after our own image.* But now, man having unmade himself, if God hath a mind for the praise of his own glorious grace to make him up again, by a new creation in Christ Jesus, there must be a more glorious solemnity yet; not only a council of the adorable Trinity, but a grand meeting of all the attributes of God, to consult their own glory that was marred, and reconcile their own interests, and seemingly contradictory claims; for the sin of man had brought real confusion among all the creatures of God on earth; yea, and a seeming war among all the attributes of God in heaven, concerning the execution of the sentence of the law upon mankind, the transgressor thereof. Some of these attributes, such as *Mercy*, saying, If the sentence of death be execute upon them, how shall I be glorified? Others, such as *Truth*, saying, If the sentence be not executed, how shall I be glorified? Is it to be expected that such opposites can meet together? Or if they meet, that they will agree together cordially? Yea, though it be beyond the expectation of men and angels, yet, behold, it is here celebrated with a song, *Mercy and truth are met together, righteousness and peace have kissed each other.*

This psalm consists of a prayer of faith, and an answer of peace. *First*, The church's prayer, from the beginning to the 8th verse, where they are praying for the removal of many tokens of God's displeasure they were under, notwithstanding of their return out of the

Babylonish captivity. *Secondly*, The answer of peace that is made to their prayer, from verse 8. and downward. We have here the psalmist listening and waiting for the answer; *I will hear what God the Lord will speak.* The answer itself in general is peace; *He will speak peace to his people, and to his saints.* If he give not outward peace, yet he will suggest inward peace; speaking that to their hearts by his Spirit, which he had spoken to their ears by his word, whatever other sort of peace and prosperity they enjoyed; when at length the children of captivity, after a great deal of toil, had gained a settlement in their own land, yet peace with God and prosperity under the Messiah's kingdom, was the great thing here promised, and prophesied of; and that is a peace that lays the soul under the strongest obligation to stand aback from all sin, which is the greatest folly, and to beware of backsliding thereto; *but let them not return again to folly;* For true peace with God brings in war with sin. But this is further explained in the main leading part thereof, namely, salvation and glory, verse 9. *Surely his salvation is near to them that fear him, that glory may dwell in our land.* Now, whatever other salvation be here imported, Christ is the great salvation intended; when he is near in view, then the believer cries out with old Simeon, *Now mine eyes have seen thy salvation:* and whatever other glory and honour be here imported, Christ is the chief glory intended; when he goes away from a land, then ICHABOD, *the glory is departed;* but where he abides, glory dwells; for he is called, *A light to lighten the Gentiles, and the glory of his people Israel.* But now, if we would know what sort of glory it is that appears when Christ is revealed; why, it is even the glorious harmony of all the divine attributes illustriously shining in him, who is both our salvation and our glory: *Mercy and truth are met together, righteousness and peace have kissed each other.* Now, though these words may be applied to the happy meeting of graces in men, upon the revelation of Christ in the soul, which I may afterwards notice in the sequel, and in which sense some interpreters under-

stand it, yet I take it mainly to import, the happy meeting of perfections in God, to be glorified in the sinner's salvation by Jesus Christ; which is a gloss that no interpreter, I have had occasion to consult, does neglect or omit: and if any of them should miss it, I think they would miss the very ground-work and foundation of all other happy meetings; *Mercy and truth have met together, righteousness and peace have kissed each other.*

In the words you may notice, 1. The *members* of the meeting. 2. The *manner* of the meeting. 3. The *harmony* of the meeting. 4. The *strangeness* of it.

1. Notice, I say, *first*, The *members* of the meeting; *Mercy, Truth, Righteousness, Peace*. I hope, I need not caution some in this assembly, that they beware of imagining these various perfections of God, under the names of *Mercy, Truth, Righteousness, and Peace*, as if they were really distinct and different parties, making a formal consultation, in order to their agreement; for God is one, and cannot be divided; he is one infinite, eternal, and unchangeable Being: there are not distinct and different things in his nature and essence, however his perfections be thus represented to our weak, finite capacities, which cannot understand the perfections of God, but in several parts, as it were. By *Mercy* then here we are to understand God himself, as he is a *merciful and gracious God*. By *Truth* we are to understand the same God, as he is a true and faithful God. By *Righteousness* we may understand his justice, or God himself, as he is a just and righteous God; and by *Peace*, the same God, as he is the God of peace, and *God reconciling the world to himself*. So that the whole comes to this, It is the great and eternal God himself, consulting with himself, in a manner becoming his infinite and adorable perfections, how to glorify himself in all his glorious attributes, in the way of saving sinners, in and by Jesus Christ.

2. The *manner* of the meeting: these excellencies and perfections of God meet together, as it were, in pairs;

pairs; *Mercy* and *Truth*, *Righteousness* and *Peace*, going hand in hand in to the council-chamber, to concert the matters that concerned their highest glory and honour.

3. The *harmony* of the meeting; having met together, they kiss and embrace each other. *Mercy* and *Peace*, as it were, express their complacency in *Truth* and *Righteousness*; and *Truth* and *Righteousness* express their complacency in *Mercy* and *Peace*, and delight in one another's honour: for not one attribute of the divine Majesty can, or will be glorified to the dishonour of any other attribute, but mutually embrace each other in their everlasting arms, for supporting the honour of each other's excellency, with complicated ineffable endearments.

4. The *strangeness* and *remarkableness* of this meeting: for, the agreement of these parties met together is the more remarkable, in regard of their jarring and opposite claims: for, that *Mercy* and *Peace* should meet together, and agree in favour to save us; and that *Truth* and *Righteousness* should meet together, and agree in justice to destroy us, were not so strange and remarkable. And if they had kept such a separate meeting, and remained at variance without meeting together, man had been for ever separate from God, and some darling attributes had never been glorified in man's salvation; our sin and rebellion having in a manner set the attributes of God at such variance, as nothing else than infinite wisdom could provide a sufficient answer to all their contradictory claims and interests, which behoved to be done, ere the proposal concerning the salvation of any sinner could be gone into. Why, says *Mercy*, It is my interest that the sinner live and not perish, that I may be magnified; since I have said, That *I will have mercy on whom I will have mercy*: well, but, says *Truth*, It is my interest as a God of truth, that the sinner die, since I have said, That *the soul that sinneth shall die*: yea, and says *Righteousness*, I must join with *Truth*, and claim the sinner's damnation, for the advancement of my interest and honour; for I have said, and will not gain-  
say

say it, *That I will by no means clear the guilty* : O ! but says Peace, I must join in with Mercy, and claim the sinner's salvation, for advancing my interest, *for I create the fruit of the lips, peace ; peace to him that is afar off, and to him that is near*. So there appears to be a war in heaven among infinitely adorable attributes and perfections, where Mercy and Peace are saying, We must have glory in shewing undeserved pity on the sinner, and yet Truth and Righteousness are saying, We must have glory in executing the deserved vengeance. And now, O men and angels ! will you tell, can these antipodes meet together ? Can these jarring-like attributes of the divine Majesty embrace each other, in the salvation of the sinner, so as to get all their demands answered, and their different interests advanced ?—What say you, children of men ? Can you devise how these differences can be composed for your own safety ? No, no ; human wisdom says, *It is not in me*. What say ye angels ? you that *excel in strength and wisdom* ; can you contrive the reconciliation of these irreconcilable demands ? No, no ; angelical wisdom says, *It is not in me* : well, since creature-wisdom fails, we may address the infinite Wisdom of the Deity, and enquire at a higher hand ? Behold, *now we have taken upon us to speak unto the Lord, who are but dust and ashes*.—What sayest thou ? O infinitely wise JEHOVAH ! can these opposite claims be reconciled to the satisfaction of all parties, and the salvation of the sinner ? yea, it is done, it is done ; it is done in a crucified Christ, whom we have been remembering at this solemnity ; and therefore we may sing this marvellous song upon the back of it, saying, *Glory, glory, glory to God, that mercy and truth are met together, and righteousness and peace have embraced each other*.

OBSERV. *That in the salvation of sinners by Jesus Christ, the glorious attributes and perfections of God do harmoniously conspire and embrace one another ; or thus, That in Christ crucified, for the redemption of sinners, all the glorious attributes of the divine Majesty do harmoniously conspire, and embrace one another.*

When

When God is well-pleased, no perfection of God is displeased; but God is well pleased in Christ, and therefore every perfection of his nature is well-pleased; none of them displeased or dissatisfied, but all pleased and satisfied to the full: see Hof. ii. 19, 20. This is declared by an audible voice from heaven, saying, *This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well-pleased,* Mat. iii. 17. And why, even for the reason you have, Isa. xlii. 21. *The Lord is well-pleased for his righteousness sake, he will magnify the law, and make it honourable.*— We see he hath brought in a righteousness answering the demands of all that stood in the way of our salvation. Did divine Truth and Righteousness say, That the threatening of the law must be execute, so sure as God is true, as well as its precept obtemperate and obeyed? Well, can a Righteousness satisfying both these demands, do the business? Yea, says Justice itself, in concert with Mercy, if there be one righteous man in the Sodom of this earth, that can satisfy my broken and violated law, in its demand of complete satisfaction, then I will spare all the elect world, for the sake of that one righteous man; and *by his knowledge shall my righteous servant justify many.* Well, says Mercy, Here is one whose name is WONDERFUL, and whom they call IMMANUEL, God-man, who hath brought in an everlasting righteousness, both active and passive, suiting the precept and penalty of the law: why then, might one attribute say to another, We are all pleased, and with one consent let it be proclaimed on earth, *That The Lord is well-pleased, for his righteousness sake; he hath magnified the law, and made it honourable.* And now the great affair of man's salvation is so well concerted and contrived, that God may have mercy upon them, and be at peace with poor sinners without any wrong to his Truth and Righteousness. The attributes of God have met and agreed, and sealed their agreements with a kiss of infinite kindness, harmony, and satisfaction; *Mercy and truth are met together, righteousness and peace have kissed each other.*

Now, that I may speak to this purpose a little more fully, the method I propose is,

- I. To touch a little at this question, Who are the *members* of this meeting? or, what are these *attributes of God*, which do thus harmoniously conspire together, proposing their various claims?
- II. I would enquire *when* and *where* it is that they meet together, and embrace one another.
- III. *How*, and after what *manner* it is that they meet together, and embrace one another.
- IV. *Why*, or for what *reason* it is that they have met together, thus harmoniously.
- V. Make some *application* of the subject.

I. I would speak a little of the *members* of this meeting, or the *attributes of God* that thus harmoniously conspire together. We need not ask at whose instance this meeting is called; it is at the instance, and by the order of JEHOVAH, Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, one God; his sovereign will and pleasure resolving, in a manner like himself, to concert with himself; neither need we ask, what is the occasion of the meeting? Why, man had sinned, and all mankind, by their sin was involved under the curse of the law, and wrath of God; and yet God had resolved and decreed, for the glory of his grace and mercy, to save a world of sinners, *elect according to the foreknowledge of God*. And while Grace, Mercy, and Peace are upon this loving plot of saving sinners, it was fit that Justice, Truth, and Righteousness should be called into the same council, to appear for their interest; since the proposal of such a salvation of sinners seems to encroach upon their honour, which required the vengeance due to be executed upon the sinner. Well, the meeting being called, compare these glorious perfections, Mercy, Truth, Righteousness, and Peace; Mercy and Peace, full of pity; Truth and Justice, full of fury; which made a seeming controversy in heaven. We may suppose Adam arraigned in the name of all mankind, and standing as a trembling panel; yea, his very tongue chained up in silence, by reason of sin and guilt, sentenced to eternal death, and ready to have the sentence execute upon him, and all his posterity.

We may suppose next, the several members of the meeting opening the assembly, by putting in their several claims: and we may notice them in the order of the text.

I. MERCY, being full of pity towards the miserable, comes walking along in the cool of the evening, and meekly craving leave to speak, notwithstanding that Truth and Justice be present at the meeting. It is true, says Mercy, that man hath sinned, and just that man should die; but art not thou, O Lord, full of pity and compassion, *The Lord, the Lord God, pardoning iniquity, transgression, and sin?* What though man hath sinned, and is all over besmeared with mire and blood, yet look upon him in love, and destroy not the work of thy own hand: he was made a child after thy own image, though now his garment be rent and all bloody: yet see, is not this thy son's coat? Joseph is gone, and wilt thou lose Benjamin also? Angels are gone, and shall men be lost also? Miriads of angels are fallen, and that irrecoverably, and shall man perish also? O spare him! is he not a little one? and his soul shall live. I see, might Mercy say, that Truth and Righteousness, or Justice, which have the poor sinner in their chains, are here present, ready to speak in this assembly, for their interest and honour, against the criminal: but let it be marked in the minutes of this court, that Mercy craves to be magnified, and must have honour at this meeting. Well, Mercy having spoken her mind.

2. TRUTH comes in, naked and with open mouth, in favours of God's Faithfulness, and in opposition to man's perfidy and treachery, saying, I have heard what Mercy craves in favours of this criminal; but, O thou faithful and true God! the word is gone out of thy mouth, and there is no revoking it: thou hast said to Adam, *In the day thou eatest thou shalt surely die*: and now he hath eaten, he hath sinned, and shall he not die? What? is there yea and nay with God, who *hath faithfulness for the girdle of his loins*? Must not God's word of threatening take effect; *Yea, heaven and earth shall pass away, but a jot of his word shall not fall to the ground.*

ground. And therefore, whatever be the demand of Mercy, let it be marked in the records of this meeting, that Truth craves to be magnified; and that its honour be not infringed in the least, by any claim or plea that Mercy hath brought in. Well, Truth having spoken, gives way to her sister Justice; and thereupon,

3. **RIGHTEOUSNESS, or JUSTICE,** comes in and impleads against the rebel sinner; Righteousness, I say, bringing her scales in her hand, in which she had tried him, and found him lighter than vanity itself; he is weighed in the balances, and found wanting; yea, not only wanting and destitute of all that perfection and obedience that the law required, but full of all that rebellion which the law discharged, having sinned and come short of the glory of God: and so is righteously subjected to the sanction of the law, and sentence of eternal death: and therefore, says Righteousness, O thou infinitely righteous and just Judge, Mercy can have no hearing in this court to the prejudice of thy honour and glory, as a just and righteous God, as Truth hath pronounced the sentence of wrath and vengeance against sin; so, if thou be a just God, the infinite vengeance due to such an infinite evil must be execute to the full. This pannel is my prisoner, and loosed he shall not be till I get full satisfaction, and my soul shall be drunk with blood: for, *vengeance is mine, and I will repay it, saith the Lord: and I will by no means clear the guilty.* And therefore, let it be registrate in this court, that Righteousness craves to be magnified, and Justice to be glorified in a full satisfaction; and this is claimed and demanded in the name of the righteous and just Judge of the universe: and *shall not the Judge of all the earth do right?* Here is the language of Justice. What then? O! shall the demand of Mercy be utterly run down by these powerful opposing pleas of Truth and Righteousness? Is there no friend in this court to take Mercy's part? Yea, there is: and therefore,

4. **PEACE** immediately steps in with an olive branch in her hand, saying, *Fury is not in me;* and may I speak

Speak a word in behalf of forlorn mankind! may I offer a meek answer to the claim of Truth and Righteousness, which they have advanced in opposition to the demand of Mercy? For, *A soft answer turneth away wrath.* Well, Peace being allowed a hearing, proposes a healing overture, saying, O thou God of peace! may not an atonement be made, a reconciliation thought of betwixt thy majesty and thy creature? May' not one be found out to stand in the gap, and bear off this wrath, to become surety for this great debtor, to acquit and liberate this poor miserable prisoner and criminal? May not one be found out, that will make up the breach, by vindicating the honour of Truth, and satisfying the demands of Justice, and so making way for the claim of Mercy? And then all differences may be peaceably composed, so as we may harmoniously agree, and kiss one another. O! may not then a Peace-maker be found out, in whom we may find all our demands satisfied at once, without prejudging one another? Why, if such an one can be found, surely his name shall be called, *Wonderful Counsellor, the Prince of Peace.*

Well, the overture and proposal of Peace being recorded among the rest of the archives of the glorious Court; and it being such a peaceable overture, no member of the meeting could disprove it: but the great question then is, how it could be effectuate; for if one man sin against another, a man might determine it; but if a man sin against Jehovah, who shall intreat for him? for when an infinite Majesty is offended, who among finite creatures is able to satisfy it? or, What can countervail the King's loss? *Wherewith then shall he come before the Lord, or bow himself before the most high God? will thousands of rams do it, or ten thousand rivers of oil, or the fruit of the body for the sin of the soul?* No, no: *Sacrifice and offering thou wouldest not; for it is impossible that the blood of bulls or of goats should take away sin,* Heb. x. 5. What then, will angels become surety for the sin of man? No, no: though they had a will, they have not power;

they have but oil enough in their vessels for their own lamps. What then shall be done? Why, might Peace say, let us not stand in a demur, we have infinite Wisdom here present with us at this meeting, let us hear her judgment concerning this peaceable proposal, if it be possible that such a person can be found, in whom we may harmoniously centre at last.

Then WISDOM sits down upon the privy council-bench, and being full of eyes doth gravely determine this doubtful case with a happy issue. It is expedient, says Wisdom, *That one die for the people, that the whole nation of mankind perish not*; but he must be such a righteous One, that can *justify many*; yea, he that will undertake this, must be finite, that he may die; and infinite, that he may conquer death, and satisfy infinite justice: but lo! there is none such to be found among all the creatures that ever God made; neither can such an one be found, unless the Son of God himself, the second Person of the glorious Trinity, shall be pleased, by an unspeakable mystery, to become flesh, *Made of a woman, made under the law, to redeem them that are under the law, that they may receive the adoption of sons*, Gal. iv. 4. That so when *he who hath no sin, shall become sin for man*; man, who hath no righteousness, *may become the righteousness of God thro' him*, 2 Cor. v. 21. And thus Mercy may be magnified, Truth justified, Righteousness cleared, Justice satisfied, Peace concluded; and all contented.

WISDOM having determined how this proposal of Peace might be effectuate, all parties hearkened, as it were, with pleasure, and willingly subscribed to the happy overture, and then heaven and earth conspired together, in solemn thanksgiving, saying, *Glory to God in the highest, on earth peace and good-will towards men.* — Thus the jarring attributes of God are now reconciled, and behold the members of the meeting, that seemed to be at the greatest variance, are embracing one another in their arms: *Mercy and truth are met together, righteousness and peace have kissed each other.*

II. The *second* thing was, *When* and *where* did these blessed parties meet together? When we speak of a remarkable meeting, it is usual to enquire into the time and place of the meeting. Now, the place where, and the time when as to this wonderful meeting, are two questions, which I put together, for they may both be answered at once, because of their near relation.

*1st*, Then in general, the *meeting-place*, or the place of the meeting, is CHRIST; and the *time* of the meeting, was when Christ put himself in our room, or substitute himself in the place of the sinner, to answer the demands of all the members of the meeting, that had any objection against our salvation, or any thing to lay to our charge: Where then, and *when* did they meet together and kiss each other? Why, it was even in Christ, when he took our law-room to pay our debt, and purchase our liberty in such a manner, as Mercy, and Peace might have their interests advanced, without injury to Truth and Righteousness; that Mercy might vent, to the credit of Truth; and Peace might be proclaimed to the honour of Righteousness; and the sinner saved, to the satisfaction of Justice. They meet together and embrace each other in him, as the Surety, *The Surety of the better testament*, Hebrews vii. 22.

We were debtors to the mandatory and minatory part of the law, arraigned at the instance of divine Justice to pay the debt. Christ substitutes himself in our room, comes under the law to pay the whole debt: it is true, the debt was personal, and Justice had a demand upon the person that sinned, by virtue of the covenant of works; but that covenant never excluded a surety, though it provided none. The law promised life upon our personal obedience, but in case we fail, it revealed no surety to make out an obedience in our room. There behoved, indeed, to be a secret reserve in the covenant of works, whereby the perfect obedience of another was not excluded: for, if the covenant of works, had absolutely excluded a surety in our room, then the covenant of grace had been excluded,

cluded, and our salvation had been impossible after our fall; but though the covenant of works did not exclude a surety, yet that covenant did neither provide, nor reveal a surety. This is done in the covenant of grace, which is Christ as Surety fulfilling for us the covenant of works, in all the articles of it.

Now, is Truth and Faithfulness at any loss here? No: the truth of the promise and threatening both, of the law of works is fulfilled. On the one hand, the promise of eternal life, made to perfect obedience, which, though we forfeited in our own person, yet we recover in the person of Christ; the promise of life upon the ground and condition of perfect obedience, being fulfilled to us in him, who hath yielded that perfect obedience in our room. On the other hand, divine Truth and Faithfulness, in the threatening of the law, which was death is glorified in that it is fulfilled upon the Surety; while we, who came under the sentence of death in the first Adam, undergo that death in the second.

Again, is Righteousness and Justice at any loss by this Surety in our room? No, no: whether we look upon it as vindictive or retributive Justice: vindictive Justice is displayed in its utmost severity against Christ; *Awake, O sword, against my Shepherd, and the man that is my Fellow.* And so the sword is drunk in his blood to infinite satisfaction. Retributive Justice is gloriously displayed also in the sinner's being rewarded, justified, saved, upon this ground. It is true, might Justice say, I could have demanded satisfaction upon the sinner himself, in his own person, but as I can sustain no injury to my honour, by such a Surety as this, whom they call IMMANUEL, God-man; so I find my honour and interest, instead of being impaired, is advanced by this exchange of persons: for, though I should damn the sinner to all eternity, I will never get such full and complete satisfaction upon any finite creature, as I will get by one stroke of my avenging sword upon that Person of infinite dignity; and so *it pleased the Lord to bruise him.*—Why then, they meet together

gether and embrace one another in him, as the *Surety*; and if Truth and Righteousness be both pleased to the full, the parties cannot but all agree, and embrace each other.—Again, they meet together and embrace one another in him, as a *Sacrifice*; *A sacrifice and offering of a sweet-smelling savour unto God*, Eph. v. 2. *Why, He offered up himself by the eternal Spirit.* O great! Even by his eternal Godhead; a valuable sacrifice indeed!—They meet together in him as a *propitiation*; *Whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation, through faith in his blood, to declare his righteousness for the remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God*, Rom. iii. 25. Behold him righteous in shewing Mercy! Here is the atonement, the propitiation: that very word which the Septuagint calls the *mercy-seat*, in the Old Testament; and it is the word that the poor publican made use of, when he was seeking Mercy, *God be merciful to me a sinner*; ὁ Θεὸς ἰλάσθητί μοι, *Be thou PROPITIOUS to me*, Luke xviii. 13.—He hath a mind of this ἰλασίηριον; this *Mercy-seat* and *Propitiation*. It is not *simple mercy* that he sought, but *Mercy through a propitiation*; he looked to the blood of atonement, to the sacrificed Lamb of God, saying, *Give me Mercy for this*; by that solemn propitiation: *Be thou propitious to me.* Here it is that Mercy and Justice meet together.—They meet together in him as a *ransom*: *Deliver his soul from going down to the pit; I have found a ransom*, Job xxxiii. 24.—In a word, they have met together, and kissed one another in a *crucified Christ*; whose death was the payment of our debt, the punishment of our sin, the price of our redemption, and a purchase of our life, liberty, and eternal salvation.—Here is the meeting-place then of these glorious perfections of God: here is the person in whom they centre, that they may be all glorified to the highest. Mercy, Truth, Righteousness, and Peace, all are pleased.—Mercy is gratified, and constitute him to be *the Mercy-seat*: Truth is satisfied, and centres in him as *the way, the truth, and the life*: Righteousness is contented, and declares him to be *the Lord our righteousness*: Peace

is perfected, and proclaims him to be the *Prince of peace*: yea, not only are all the members of the meeting pleased and satisfied for themselves, in the advancement of their own particular interests, but they are infinitely well-pleased in each other; and that the interests of their seemingly opposite parties are advanced, as well as their own particular claims. Mercy is pleased, that Truth hath got all its demands; and Truth is pleased, that Mercy hath got all her desire; and Righteousness is pleased, that Peace is proclaimed; and Peace is pleased, that Righteousness is honoured. Mercy and Peace rejoice that they are magnified, to the infinite glory of Truth and Righteousness; and Truth and Righteousness rejoice, that they are glorified, to the infinite pleasure of Mercy and Peace: and hence they not only *meet together*, but *kiss one another*. Here you see where they meet together.—So much for an answer thereto more generally.

2dly, More particularly, as to the *meeting-time*, you may take these following particulars, for further clearing of it. Although this blessed meeting once taking place, is still continued, and cannot be said properly to adjourn from time to time, and from place to place; for this assembly never dissolves; yet, in a suitableness to our weak capacity, and finite understanding, which cannot rightly conceive of a meeting that never had a time to meet, because they met in eternity, and never shall have time to part, because they meet to eternity; we cannot conceive of it, I say, but by taking it, as it were, into so many parts, or considering it in so many periods; and there are these eight remarkable periods, wherein Mercy and Peace meet with Truth and Righteousness, and kiss each other.

1. The first remarkable period is this, They met together at the *council-table* of the *covenant of redemption* from all eternity; before ever the *foundation of the world was laid*, and ere ever the *morning stars sang together*, Mercy and Truth met together, Righteousness and Peace kissed each other: for the council of peace did then meet, Zech. vi. 13. And all was concerted by infinite Wisdom, how Mercy should be magnified, Truth clear-

ed, Righteousness vindicated, and Peace concluded ; and all in Christ, who, according to the tenor of that covenant (whereof the covenant of grace is but a transcript) was to *give his soul an offering for sin* ; and then was to *see his seed, and the pleasure of the Lord to prosper in his hand.* Then it was that this pleasant meeting was first constitute, as you may see, Prov. viii. 30, 31. He being set up from everlasting, ere ever the earth was, God in all his glorious perfections was delighted in him : and, in him, *His delights were with the sons of men.* This was the grand meeting, at which the time and place of all the subsequent meetings were concerted, and all the other particulars, we are to mention, are by the result of this, and, as it were, emanations therefrom ; for it is a meeting that never dissolves, though in several periods it appears like a new meeting unto us. Therefore,

2. Another remarkable period, is their meeting together in the *garden of Eden*, after man had made himself naked and obnoxious to the flaming sword of divine justice. Mercy comes walking in the garden in the cool of the day, and the guilty pannel being examined in open court, behold Mercy and Truth meet together in the happy sentence that was pronounced, *The seed of the woman shall bruise the head of the serpent,* Gen. iii. 15. Behold Righteousness and Peace kissing one another in the righteous vengeance, that was to be execute upon the devil and his works, in order to effectuate a happy peace betwixt God and man.— This meeting was gradually cleared up under the Old Testament ; and in the legal sacrifices, pointing out the great propitiatory Sacrifice.

3. Another remarkable period, is their meeting together at *Bethlehem Ephratah*, upon Christ's incarnation, Micah v. 2, 4, 5.

4. Another remarkable period, is their meeting together at the *banks of Jordan*, when Christ was bapized, Mat. iii. 13, 16, 17.

5. Another remarkable period, is their meeting together in the *garden of Gethsemane*, when Christ being in an agony did sweat great drops of blood under the

pressure of avenging Justice ; every drop of blood was an ocean of Mercy : and while he was prest in the wine-press of God's wrath, Mercy was expressed. No mercy to Christ ; for, *God spared not his own Son*, even when he cried, Mercy, mercy ; God's mercy, saying, *Father, if it be thy will, remove this cup from me*. No, no ; no mercy was shown to him, otherwise no mercy had been shown to us ; Justice must have its due from him, that mercy might vent towards us ; and so here Mercy and Truth meet together.

6. Another remarkable period, is their meeting on *mount Calvary*, where Christ was crucified. It was upon the cross of Christ that Mercy and Truth met together, that Righteousness and Peace kissed each other ; for there it was that he paid all the elect's debt, to the least farthing that Truth and Righteousness could demand ; until *he cried with a loud voice, and said, It is finished*. Having done all that the law could enjoin, he suffered all that the law could threaten, so as it cannot crave a farthing more : *It is finished* : All that was stipulated for with the Father, in that federal transaction ; all that was promised, in that eternal compact, is finished ; every article agreed to in the council of peace was finished. The bargain that he had signed with his hand, he now sealed with his blood ; and in this appearance upon the cross, or in his obedience to the death, did all the attributes of God meet, as in a centre. And on this account was mount Calvary more glorious than mount Sinai ; for, in mount Sinai, God appeared in his terrible majesty, making the mountain to tremble, and the earth to shake ; but here in mount Calvary, he appeared not only in his terrible majesty, but in his tender mercy, in his terrible fury against sin ; and in his tender favour towards the sinner ; and now, the controversy betwixt Justice and Mercy seems at a crisis ; here was the critical juncture, wherein their different demands behoved to be decided ; and it was done with such a solemnity as made the whole universe, as it were, to tremble and quake : for then did *God shake, not the earth only, but also heaven* ; for when Christ was under the mighty load of this terrible wrath, in the sinner's room,

room, there was a great earthquake, and the heavens grew black, the sun was eclipsed; and, that at a time, contrary to the common rules of nature, which made a heathen philosopher, at a distance, cry out, “That either the frame of nature was on the point of dissolution, or the God of nature was suffering.” And indeed he was suffering unto blood, and unto death. Behold the living and eternal God here, in our nature wounded to death, and bleeding out his life, to be a sacrifice for sin, that justice might be satisfied, and mercy might be magnified, and all the attributes of God glorified to the highest. O wonder! that GOLGOTHA the *place of a skull*, should be such a famous meeting-place for the divine perfections.—It was a place of the greatest shame and ignominy; but, in him who endured the cross, and despised the shame, it was made a place of most resplendent glory; for, in the cross of Christ, Mercy and Truth, Righteousness and Peace met, and embraced each other. God’s attributes did harmoniously join together, so as the one does not blacken, but illustrate the glory of the other, while they shined gloriously in the face of Christ crucified, as a beautiful and bright constellation; for he was set forth to be a propitiation, to declare the Righteousness and Justice of God, together with his other glorious names.

7. Another remarkable period, is their meeting together at the bar of God’s great Justice-court in heaven, within the veil, whither the Fore-runner hath for us entered, even Jesus, Heb. vi. 20. When Christ was upon the cross, *The veil of the temple was rent in twain, from the top to the bottom*; and a way was made for entering into the holy of holies: and as the priests under the law were not only to offer the sacrifice without the camp, but after that were to enter the holiest of all, not without blood, but with the blood of the sacrifice, to sprinkle the mercy-seat, Levit. xvi. 14, 15. Even so, Christ having offered himself a sacrifice, and suffered without the gate, Heb. xiii. 12. He is entered into the holy place by his own blood, Heb. ix. 12. there to appear as our High-priest in the power and virtue

of his blood, to make a full atonement, and sprinkle the mercy-seat. Hence believers are said to *be come to Jesus the Mediator of the new covenant, and to the blood of sprinkling*; and where is this? Even in heaven, as you see in the context, Heb. xii. 23, 24. Now, in this work, Christ carried the price of his blood into the very *presence of God for us*, Heb. ix. 24. and paid it down before him: and in this act, Justice hath its satisfaction brought home; and by this act, Mercy and Justice actually are met; for hereby Christ sprinkled the very mercy-seat with blood, all over, both upon it, and before it, as the forecited, Levit. xvi. represents. For the mercy-seat of old stood so, that it could be seen but two ways, namely, *upon it*, and *before it*, as a table next to the wall; and so this points out, that whatever way we look to mercy by faith, we may see mercy and blood mixed; mercy and justice met together; and all sorts of mercy conveyed through the blood of Christ; top mercies, and side mercies, upper mercies, of a spiritual nature, and lower mercies, of a temporal nature; for the mercy-seat is sprinkled with blood upon it, and before it, and whatever way you look to it. The sacrifice was finished on the cross; and all sacrifices finished therein: but the blood of the sacrifice behoved also to be carried within the vail in order to the full atonement, that what was written in blood upon the cross, might be sealed in the presence of God at the heavenly bar: and we act not our faith far enough for redemption, unless we follow Christ from the cross to the bar of God's justice-court in heaven, to see all sealed and secured there within the vail, where this blood is exposed as it were, and pled at the bar; where *Mercy and Justice meet together, and embrace each other*,

8. Another remarkable period, is their meeting together at the *bar of conscience*, God's lower court, on the day of actual reconciliation betwixt God and the sinner; for then, *The blood of Christ, who, through the eternal Spirit, did offer himself without spot to God, doth purge the conscience*, Heb. ix. 14. And the blood of  
*sprinkling,*

*sprinkling, wherewith the conscience is purged from dead works to serve the living God, doth put forth its purgative power and virtue by a certain internal speech; and what doth it speak to the conscience? It speaks better things than the blood of Abel; that speaks vengeance, but this speaks mercy and peace in conjunction with truth, righteousness, and justice: for wherever justice-satisfying blood cries for mercy and peace, Mercy and Truth, Righteousness and Peace meet, and embrace each other. This blood is the cement whereby they are joined together; before this blood be applied, the conscience of the convinced sinner is all in a flame, like mount Sinai; thunder, and lightening, and smoak, and darkness, and fear of hell and vengeance, compassing the soul about, while it is arraigned at the instance of the fiery law, to pay the double debt to the mandatory and minatory part of the law; that is, perfect obedience upon the pain of eternal death and damnation. The sinner finds himself lost and undone for ever by this law; but then, whenever the blood of sprinkling comes in, and appears at the bar of conscience, it speaks better things, it is a better speaker than the law; and what says it? Why, the language of it is, With your leave, O law, you have nothing to crave; for Christ the Son of God was arraigned at the instance of divine Justice, to pay all this debt, because he was this sinner's Surety and Substitute; and he actually paid it, by obeying the command, and undergoing the penalty of the law; and for this I produce the ancient records of God; In the volume of his book, it is written of Christ, that when sacrifice and offering would not, he said, Lo, I come, I delight to do thy will: and that the Lord hath laid on him the iniquity of us all: That he was made a curse for us; yea, that he was made sin for us, even he who knew no sin, that we might become the righteousness of God in him. And therefore, O law, though thou hast Truth and Righteousness on thy side, yet Truth and Righteousness have met with Mercy and Peace, and they have concerted matters, and agreed harmoniously, and kissed one another, in token of their full agreement in Christ;*

Christ ; so that in Christ all charges are answered.— And thus in the believer's conscience parties meet together.

III. The *third* thing proposed was, *how* and after what *manner* is it, that they meet together, and kiss each other ? We are to conceive of it after the manner of God ; for it is more than a meeting of saints ; it is more than a meeting of angels ; it is a divine meeting of all the glorious attributes of God ; and we may notice these following qualities of it.

1. It is a *wonderful* and *mysterious* meeting : it is above our apprehension and conception. O ! how wonderful a meeting is this ! The very name of the Person, that is made the tristing-place, the meeting-place, is called WONDERFUL, Isaiah ix. 6. Because the meeting is about us, his name is called, IMMANUEL, *God with us*.—O how mysterious is this meeting ! *Great is the mystery of godliness, God manifested in the flesh*, 1 Tim. iii. 16. That is all the attributes of God meeting together, and harmoniously embracing one another in the eternal Son of God, who hath assumed our nature into his own personality : this is the most wonderful mysterious meeting that ever was in heaven or earth.

2. It is a *joyful* meeting : they meet with infinite pleasure and satisfaction in one another ; *Behold my Servant, whom I uphold ; mine Elect, in whom my soul delighteth*, Isaiah xlii. 1. As the perfections of God are glorified in Christ, so they rejoice and are delighted in him ; *For JEHOVAH is well-pleased for his righteousness sake ; and therefore the pleasure of the Lord shall prosper in his hand ; and he shall see the travel of his soul and be satisfied*. Surely, if God hath his pleasure, and Christ his satisfaction, no attribute of the divine Majesty, no member of the meeting is displeas'd, or out of humour ; no, no ; *This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well-pleas'd*. My Justice is pleas'd, my Mercy is pleas'd, and all my other attributes are pleas'd. O it is a heartsome, pleasant, and joyful meeting ! May all that hear me be well-pleas'd to see

it: no joyful meeting, but what hath a respect to this.

3. It is a *holy* meeting: some meetings among men that are called heartsome meetings, yet are very unholy and sinful meetings; but here is an infinitely holy meeting; *holiness to the Lord*, is the motto of it. A meeting of holy saints, and holy angels, is not such a holy meeting as this meeting of the holy attributes of God, to advance the great design of infinite holiness. All the holy meetings that ever were, or ever will be, are the result of this, and the effect of some portion of holiness sent from it; for all holiness issues from it. Here *Mercy and Truth meet together*, in a holy manner; *Righteousness and Peace salute each other*, in a holy way, and *greet one another with a holy kiss*.

4. It is a *happy* meeting; all happiness and blessings flow from this meeting: Christ the meeting-place is the centre of *all spiritual blessings*, Eph. i. 3. Many unhappy meetings have been in the world since sin entered into it; and sinful unholy meetings are always miserable and unhappy meetings: but this holy meeting, must be a happy meeting; and this holy kiss, must be a happy kiss. If Mercy and Truth had not met together, we had never met with God; if Righteousness and Peace had never kissed each other, we had never got a kiss of the fair face of the Son of God, nor ever been taken into the divine embraces.

5. It is a *free* meeting: Mercy and Truth met together freely, without being constrained; Righteousness and Peace kissed each other freely, without being forced; no motive from without could ever take place to move God to call this meeting from eternity; it was according to *his own purpose and grace, which is given us in Christ Jesus, before the world began*, 2 Tim. i. 9. Free sovereign grace is the original of the meeting. It is also such a free assembly, where every member might freely speak, and not one to interrupt another, as is usual in meetings among men, where some cry one thing, and some another, in a confused manner; like that assembly, Acts xix. 32. where it is said,

The assembly was confused, and the greater part knew not wherefore they were met together; and some cried one thing, and some another: no, this meeting is free, in opposition both to all constraint and compulsion from without, and to all confusion and commotion from within: where sovereign free Grace is the master-conveener, there can be no compulsion; and where the God of order is the manager, there could be no confusion; and where the God of peace was all in all, there could be no dissention. Therefore,

6. It is a *harmonious* meeting; whatever different claims and pretensions the members of the meeting may seem to have, yet they harmoniously concur in advancing one another's honour and glory; and hence, as they mutually meet together, so they affectionately embrace one another. There was no discord at this assembly, no proper variance or striving for state; but gloriously conspiring with joint hearts and hands, to glorify each other in the salvation of a company of sinners, by Jesus Christ. The divine essence is undivided; and as *there are three that bear record in heaven, the Father, the Word, and the Spirit; and these three are one*; so the attributes of God, however manifold to our apprehension, yet there is no division among them, they are all one; and their conspiring together in Christ for our redemption, is called *Πολυποίκιλος Σοφία τῶ Θεῷ*, THE MANIFOLD WISDOM OF GOD. The manifold perfections of God meet together in one, with one consent and with one heart. Behold Mercy and Justice in one another's arms; and so close is the embracement, that they are just one. Though it be a full meeting, and all parties present, yet there is no war, no jar, no dissention, no division, but all harmony and concord, all love and affection: it is the most peaceable meeting that ever was. And yet,

7. It is a *bloody* meeting: and never was, and never will there be such a bloody meeting in heaven or earth: the mercy-seat must be sprinkled with blood; Mercy cannot be vented without blood; Truth cannot be cleared, without blood; Righteousness cannot be vindicated, without blood; and Peace cannot be purchas-

ed,

ed, without blood ; *without shedding of blood there is no remission* ; no mercy to be vented, no peace to be proclaimed ; *Christ hath made peace by the blood of his cross*, Col. i. 20. *A bloody husband hath thou been unto me*, said Zipporah ; but, O how much more may Christ say, a bloody meeting hath this been unto me ? *Who is this that cometh from Edom, with dyed garments from Bozra ?* Ifi. lxiii. 1. Why, what is the matter that his garment is dyed with blood ! Why ? when Mercy and Truth met together, they pressed to be so near one another in him, that they pressed the blood out of his veins ; and so it was a bloody meeting : and when Righteousness and Peace kissed each other, it behoved to be in Christ, and so the sword of justice behoved to pierce him through and through ; that so these sacred lips might meet and kiss each other in his heart ; and so it was a bloody kiss : they kissed each other with such good-will, that Christ was, as it were, bruised betwixt their lips, that the blood might cement and glue them together. One would think, such a bloody kiss would be no pleasant kiss ; nay, but *it pleased the Father to bruise him* : they met together on a sea of blood.— Thus it was a bloody meeting. Again,

8. It is an *efficacious* meeting : many meet and assemble together, and yet do nothing for their meeting ; it is to no effect : but here Mercy and Truth meet together efficaciously, co-operatively ; all is done at the meeting, that God proposed to be done, and all is done that concerns the glory of God and salvation of men ; their meeting together, is their working together, and that to perfection ; *For God the Lord is a rock, and his work is perfect*. Their meeting together, is their building together ; Psa. lxxxix. 2, 3. *I have said, Mercy shall be built up for ever : thy faithfulness shalt thou establish in the very heavens*. There is Mercy and Truth both a-building, and the foundation of the building is laid in Christ : *I have made a covenant with my chosen ; I have sworn unto David my servant*.

9. It is an *unexpected* meeting ; it is beyond the expectation of men and angels. If friends and intimates

should meet, and salute one another, it would not be surprizing ; but to see opposites, antipodes and antagonists meet together, and embrace each other, this were surprizing and unexpected ; so to see light and darkness, love, and enmity, life and death meeting, how unexpected were that ? Thus it is here, Mercy and Truth, Righteousness and Peace, these attributes of God, with respect to us, were opposites and antipodes. The language of Truth and Righteousness, is death and damnation to the sinner ; the language of Mercy and Peace, is life and salvation to the sinner ; and when a sinner finds himself pursued to death, at the instance of divine Justice, and the truth and veracity of God engaged against him, according to the threatening of the law, O how unexpected a recounter is it ! when he finds Mercy and Peace meeting with Justice and Truth, and stopping the pursuit, according to the promise of the gospel, to the credit of the opposite parties, saying, *Deliver his soul from going down to the pit ; I have found a ransom*, and so all differences are adjusted ; all opposites reconciled, to the infinite surprize, and beyond the expectation of all created beings. No wonder then, upon this meeting discovered, the poor soul cries, *Is this the manner of man, O Lord ? O, who is like unto thee ! Nay, there is none like unto the God of Jesurun, that rides on the heaven for their help, and in his excellency on the skies.*

10. It is an *everlasting, indissoluble* meeting : other meetings will adjourn their meetings from time to time, and from place to place ; yea, other meetings must part, and when they part, they may never meet again ; and we that are here met, must part, and never all meet again in time ; even as some others that met together with us the last year, are away to eternity.— But O ! this meeting betwixt Mercy and Truth, Righteousness and Peace, it is a meeting where there is no parting ; the meeting is from everlasting to everlasting ; their meeting together, and kissing each other, is an eternal and unchangeable meeting, and an eternal and unchangeable kiss : it is every way like God, with-

without beginning, without ending, and without succession.—Whatever beginning, issue, or increase it hath with respect to its manifestation to us, yet in itself, it is still the same in Christ Jesus, who is *the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever*; *without any variable-ness or shadow of turning*, Heb. xiii. 8. The meeting never breaks up; it is a continued meeting, never to be dissolved; and there they kiss one another to all eternity; *for his mercy endureth for ever, and his righteousness to all generations: and because of truth, meekness, and righteousness, in his majesty he shall ride prosperously: and of the increase of his government and peace there shall be no end. I have said, Mercy shall be built up for ever; and I have said, Truth shall be established in the heavens.* Why, what is the meaning of all these expressions? The language is, as if one glorious attribute of God, should say to another, O! the sin of man set us all, as it were, at variance, and the whole creation knows not how to reconcile God with himself, if he shall save one sinner; but behold we, having met together in Christ the Righteousness, the Ransom, the Atonement, the Propitiation: having embraced one another in behalf of those poor miserable sinners, our arms shall never separate, that are clasped together. Mercy and Truth have met together, saying, You and I shall never part; Righteousness and Peace have kissed each other, saying, You and I shall never sunder, nor suspend the embracement, neither death nor life, nor hell, nor devils, nor sin itself, shall ever separate us. It is a bargain among us, a divine match; they have met together by an everlasting covenant, sealed the bargain with an everlasting kiss, and fastened a knot in an everlasting Righteousness, which is the band of the union, even Christ; *for the covenant does stand fast with him*, Psalm lxxxix. 28. Where you will also see how this everlasting meeting is established in Christ, verse 14. *Justice and judgment are the habitation of thy throne*; or, *the ESTABLISHMENT of thy throne*, as it may be rendered; *And mercy and truth shall go before thy face.* And verse 21.

*With him my hand shall be established; and my faithfulness, and my mercy shall be with him. And verse 28. My mercy will I keep for him for ever.*—Thus it is an everlasting meeting.

IV. The *fourth* thing proposed, was, *Why*, or for what *reasons* they have met together, and kissed each other? Why have the perfections of the glorious God conspired so harmoniously, and met together in such a sweet solemnity? Surely such a meeting as this must have noble designs in view; and I will tell you these four reasons of the meeting, or four things that were to be concerted at this great assembly.

I. They met together, to concert measures for advancing the *glory of God* to the highest. This parliament of heaven met together upon ways and means, for bringing in the greatest revenue of praise and glory to the crown of heaven, to Father, Son, and Holy Ghost; and all the glorious attributes of this great and eternal God. These glorious attributes conspired harmoniously to set forth and glorify themselves most illustriously: they met together, and kissed one another, that they might glorify each other. The glory of God was the first and last end of the meeting. What is the chief end of man, but to glorify God, and enjoy him for ever? and, O! what is the chief end of God! It is even to glory himself in all his perfections, and to enjoy himself for ever. And how does God glorify himself most brightly? It is even in Christ, the meeting-place of these perfections, with a view to our redemption, *to the praise of the glory of his grace, wherein he hath made us accepted in the Beloved*, Eph. i. 6. And how does he enjoy himself most sweetly? It is even in Christ, *Behold mine Elect, in whom my soul delighteth; I was daily his delight*, says Christ, *while my delight was with the sons of men*, Prov. viii. 30. They met together to put a crown of glory and honour upon each other. Adam's sin and rebellion, and your sin, man, woman, and my sin (O that God dishonouring evil sin!) it had pulled off that crown of glory, as it  
were,

were, from the head of the great King, eternal and immortal, and thrown it into the mire, and stained it with filth and pollution: but behold these attributes of God meet together to take up the crown, to rub off the dust and dung that sin had cast upon it, and to add some more sparkling jewels to it than ever, and set it upon the head of their Sovereign, to the highest praises of his Mercy, Justice, Truth, Righteousness, Grace, Love, Holiness, Wisdom, and all his other excellencies; that men and angels might sing and say, *Glory to God in the highest, peace on earth, and goodwill towards men*; that all the saints might sing a consort in praise of the meeting betwixt Mercy and Truth, Justice and Peace, saying, as it is Psal. lxxxix. 14.

*Justice and judgment of thy throne,  
Shall be the dwelling-place;  
Mercy, accompany'd with Truth,  
Shall go before thy face.*

And that every saint might sing the fifty-seventh Psalm, and ninth and tenth verses.

*I'll praise thee 'mong the people, LORD,  
'Mong nations sing will I;  
For great to heav'n thy mercy is,  
Thy truth doth reach the sky.*

They met together, to put a *crown of glory* upon the head of Christ, Heb. ii. 9. in whom they met. This assembly did convene for the coronation of the Son of God: For, *he having humbled himself, and become obedient unto death, even the death of the cross; God hath highly exalted him, and given him a name above every name, that at the name of JESUS every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth, and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is our LORD, to the glory of God the Father,* Phil. ii. 8,—13. Christ hath glorified the Father, and therefore the Father glorified him, *And now is the Son of man glorified, and God is glorified in him;*

and if God be glorified in him, God shall also glorify him in himself, John xiii. 31, 32. Him that honoureth me, I will honour, says God, 1 Sam. ii. 30. And in whom does this take place to perfection? It is in Christ; God is honoured most highly by him; and therefore he is honoured most highly; AMEN, *so let it be, and so shall it be.*—And therefore it is concerted in that meeting, that all the *saints* shall glorify him; hence that royal edict comes forth, *He is thy LORD, worship thou him*, Psalm xlv. 11. And so we find them doing, Rev. v. 9. *Thou art worthy to take the book, and open the seals; for thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God by thy blood.*—It is concerted in that meeting, that all the *angels* should glorify him; hence that edict comes forth, *Let all the angels of God worship him*, Heb. i. 6. And so we find them doing, Rev. v. 11, 12. *I heard the voice of many angels, and the number of them was ten thousand times ten thousand, and thousands of thousands, saying, with a loud voice, Worthy is the LAMB that was slain, to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honour, and glory, and blessings.*—It is concerted in this meeting, *that all the creatures in heaven and earth, sea and land, shall glorify him*, as we see verse 13.—But lest the sinful creatures upon earth, like you and me, should not glorify him, or see his glory, it is concerted in that glorious meeting, that the Holy Ghost, the eternal Spirit, one God, equal in power and glory with the Father and the Son, shall be sent down to the earth to glorify him, *He shall glorify me, for he shall receive of mine, and shew it unto you*, John xvi. 14.—O! hath the Spirit of God been shewing any thing of Christ among you this day! any thing of his grace, fulness, and righteousness, so as to glorify him, and make him glorious above all things to you: why then, we may reckon that you have found something of the saving fruits of this glorious meeting; for the grand design of it was to glorify God in Christ, by the Spirit. They met to concert all things relating to the glory of the Father, in the Son, by the Holy Ghost. They met to consult their

own glory in Christ, that Mercy and Truth might be glorified in him.

2. They met together to concert their *proper work*, in carrying on this great end, of the glory of God, and his perfections. They do not meet together to sit idle, and do nothing; no, they meet together to concert each of them their proper business, as Christ said to his friends, *Wherefore was it that ye sought me? Wist ye not that I must be about my Father's business!* So may I say here, the attributes of God met together, that they may go about God's business: what business? what work belongs to each of them severally? Why, Mercy and Truth meet together, that they may be sent upon an embassy together; *God shall send forth his mercy and his truth*, Psalm lvii. 3.; his Mercy, to give in the promise of the gospel; and his Truth to make out the same. Thus Mercy and Truth met together, that they may be sent forth upon some gracious expedition, particularly both to be leaders and followers; to the remnant whom God appointed unto life. On the one hand, to be leaders; hence the psalmist cries, *O send forth thy light and thy truth; let them lead me, and bring me to thy holy hill, and to thy tabernacle: then will I go to the altar of God, to God my exceeding joy.* Behold the wonderful business of Mercy and Truth, and the work they are set out upon, even mercifully to lead blind souls to God in Christ.—On the other hand, it is to be not only leaders, but followers; *Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life*, Psalm xxiii. 6. If the child of God under any temptation, refuse to be led by Mercy and Truth, and give up with them as his leaders, yet for all that, he shall not hinder them to be his followers: he may run out of God's way, but Mercy will follow and bring him back; and when Mercy follows, it is always in company with Truth. And, O! what think ye of this wonder! Mercy and Truth meet together, that they might go forth together, like two pages, to follow you, believer, through all the steps of your wilderness journey; *Goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life.* Here is a piece of work, that Mercy  
and

and Truth have met together for, even to be sent forth, as leaders and followers of poor elect sinners, till they be out of all hazard, *in IMMANUEL'S land, where glory dwells*: see Psalm lxi. 7. But then, as *Mercy and Truth have met together*, to pursue their proper work; so, *Righteousness and Peace have kissed each other*, for pursuing of theirs. Well, say you, what is the work of Righteousness and Peace? You have a word in the last verse of this psalm, where our text lies, *Righteousness shall go before him, and set us in the way of his steps*. Divine Righteousness displaying itself in Christ Jesus, the *Sun of righteousness*, goes before him to prepare his way, and bring us to God, and to our duty: and, to be sure, when ever Righteousness goes before, Peace will follow after; *for the fruit of righteousness is peace*, whether it be imputed or implanted. Here then the work of Righteousness and Peace kissing each other, is to bring in these blessed effects in their order: we consider them as divine perfections in the text, and in these effects, Righteousness leads the van, and Peace comes up with the rear.

3. These attributes conspire harmoniously, they meet together and kiss each other, for this reason, that by their meeting together, they may concert the *dissolving of some unhappy meetings*. These opposite-like attributes of God meet together, that some intimates may be separate, and sad and sinful agreements may be broken up: there is a sad meeting, and agreement we read of, Isa. xxviii. 15. *We have made a covenant with death, and with hell are we at agreement*. Why, is not this the case of all men by nature? Yea: but how is this sad and miserable meeting dissolved? see verse 16. *Behold, I lay in Zion for a foundation, a stone, a tried stone, a precious corner-stone, a sure foundation.—Judgment also will I lay to the line, and righteousness to the plummet*. Well, when Judgment and Righteousness mercifully meet in Christ, the sure Foundation, what will be the effect? It follows, verse 17, 18. *The hail shall sweep away the refuges of lies, and your covenant with death shall be disannulled, and your agreement with hell shall not stand*. Whatever sad aspect this scrip-

scripture may have to the despisers of Christ, yet it hath a merciful aspect to all the chosen of God, and all that desire to live to the Lord Jesus; yea, there is here a foundation of faith laid, for all that hear the joyful sound, that whatever sinful and miserable meetings and agreements there are betwixt hell and them, betwixt death and them, yet it cannot stand before this glorious meeting, that was designed to break up and dissolve the opposite meetings, that stand in a contrariety thereto.—There are many black unions, which this blessed union doth dissolve; and there is no dissolving of them, but by this blessed meeting.—There is the black union betwixt the sinner and the law, which is the foundation of the black union, betwixt the sinner and his sin: for, when the union betwixt him and the law is dissolved, then the union betwixt him and his sin is dissolved, according to Rom. vi. 14. *Sin shall not have dominion unto you, for ye are not under the law, but under grace.* Now, what is the covenant of grace? Why, Mercy and Truth meeting together, Righteousness and Peace, kissing each other in Christ Jesus, is the substance, the marrow, the kernel of the covenant of grace; and it is this blessed meeting, that dissolves the union betwixt the sinner and the law, and so betwixt the sinner and his sin. O view the glorious design of this meeting? They met together that you might be separated from your sad associates.—By nature you and the *devil* had met together, and you was a slave to him; and it is the virtue of this meeting in Christ, that dissolves that; *The seed of the woman shall bruise the head of the serpent.*—The *world* and you had met together, and you took pleasure in your wicked companions, or else was wholly drowned in worldly affairs; O! it is the faith of this meeting that dissolves that; *This is the victory that overcomes the world, even our faith.*—The *curse of God* and you had met together, and you lie under that curse, till in the faith of this meeting, you shall see, *that Christ hath become a curse for us.*—This meeting is designed for the breaking up of all these, and the like unhappy meetings. They met together in a glorious band, to loose all the knots that the devil had tied.

4. These glorious attributes of God do conspire harmoniously, they meet together and kiss each other, that they might concert and *carry on some happy meetings*, and make up *some blessed matches*. These opposite-like attributes harmoniously meet, that opposites, and irreconcilable things might meet together harmoniously, and kiss each other, whether real or seeming opposites.

1st, There are *real* opposites that meet together harmoniously, by virtue of this glorious meeting; particularly these six.

(1.) These opposite-like attributes meet together harmoniously, that opposite *natures* might meet together, even that God and man might meet together, and embrace each other. And there are these two meetings betwixt God and man, that were concerted at this meeting; the one is the meeting betwixt God and man, in the *hypostatical union* of the two natures of Christ, our IMMANUEL, God-man, in one person: this is the *great mystery of godliness, God manifested in the flesh*; and this is the foundation of all other saving and merciful meetings betwixt God and man.—The other is the meeting between God and man in the *spiritual union* betwixt Christ and his members, in one mystical person by the bond of the Spirit; *for he that is joined to the Lord is one spirit*; and this union is the foundation of all spiritual communion with God. We were not only at an infinite natural distance from God, as we are creatures, but at an infinite moral distance from him, as we are criminals and sinners: but the attributes of God met together, and kissed each other in Christ, that God and man might meet together, in a spiritual union, and embrace each other in a sweet spiritual communion.—Whatever spiritual communion you have with God, believer, this day, it flows from this glorious meeting of the divine attributes in Christ: and this union and communion is indeed a meeting of opposite natures; God became man, and took on our nature, and he makes us partakers of his nature, 2 Pet. i. 4.

(2.) These opposite-like attributes met together and kissed each other, that opposite *wills* might meet, and em-

embrace each other. God's will and ours are opposite ; this is indeed a branch of the former ; but our wills are the great forts of corrupt nature, that stand out against God and his will ; *we are enmity against God, and not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be*. Now, how comes the will to be reconciled to God's will ? It is only by Christ, in whom the perfections of God meet together ; *Thy people shall be willing* [HEB. WILLINGNESSES] *in the day of thy power*, Psal. cx. 4.

(3.) These opposite-like attributes meet and kiss each other, that opposite *persons*, viz. Jews and Gentiles, man and man, that were enemies and haters of one another, might meet together ; that Jews and Gentiles might meet together, and men at variance with men might meet together ; hence it is said of him, in whom the attributes of God do meet, *He is our peace, who hath made both one*, [i. e. Jews and Gentiles] *and hath broken down the middle wall of partition : having abolished in his flesh the enmity, even the law of commandments, contained in ordinances, for to make in himself, of twain, one new man, so making peace : and that he might reconcile both unto God in one body, by the cross, having slain the enmity thereby*, Eph. ii. 14,—16. If any thing slay the enmity to God or man, this is it.

(4.) These opposite-like attributes of God meet and kiss each other, that opposite *climates* might meet together ; I mean, that heaven and earth might meet together ; the church militant, and the church triumphant. Heaven and earth were at variance by our sin ; but now in Christ, saints in heaven, and saints on earth meet together. Hence we are said to be *come to the general assembly, and church of the first-born, that are written in heaven,—to the spirits of just men made perfect*, Heb. xii. 23. All believers are said to be thus *come to mount Zion,—the heavenly Jerusalem*, ver. 22. Yea, in Christ, angels in heaven, and men on earth do meet together : hence also believers are said to be *come to the innumerable company of angels : and the angel of the Lord encamps about them that fear him*, Psal. xxxiv. 7. Yea, all things in heaven and earth do meet together, and

kiss each other in Christ, the meeting place; *Having made peace, by the blood of his cross, by him to reconcile all things to himself; whether things in heaven, or things in earth*, Col. i. 20. Eph. i. 10. See how, upon the back of this meeting in the text, heaven and earth are said to meet together in the following verse, *Truth shall spring out of the earth; and Righteousness shall look down from heaven*; which I insist not upon here.

(5.) These opposite-like attributes of God meet and kiss each other, that opposite *covenants* might meet and embrace each other: even the covenant of works, and the covenant of grace, in Christ the meeting-place of the divine perfections. These two covenants do, as it were, join hands and agree. Did the covenant of works command perfect obedience? and being broken, did it demand complete satisfaction? Behold Christ's obedience to the death answers both; God's covenant of grace dispensed to us, is just Christ fulfilling, for us, the covenant of works; and so in him they meet, and kiss each other; *For he is the end of the law for righteousness, to every one that believeth.* Again.

(6.) These opposite-like attributes of God meet and kiss each other, that opposite *thoughts* might meet together, and embrace each other; even God's thoughts and our thoughts; how opposite these are you may see, Isa. lv. 8. *For my thoughts are not your thoughts; nor your ways my ways; for as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways, and my thoughts than your thoughts.* Some have presumptuous thoughts, while they look only to God's mercy, and so they think certainly God will have mercy on them, though yet they are strangers to Christ: these are opposite to God's thoughts; he hath no thoughts of shewing mercy that way. Others have despairing thoughts, while they look merely or mostly to God's justice, and so their thought is, "O! will God have mercy on the like of me! and, he cannot in justice save the like of me!" These thoughts are also opposite to God's thoughts; my thoughts are not your thoughts met together: why, let a man view the mercy and justice of God met together, and harmoniously kissing

kissing each other in Christ, so as to see *God in Christ reconciling the world to himself*. If your thoughts be spiritualized, to discern mercy venting through the sacrifice, that satisfies divine justice, then God's thoughts and your thoughts meet together and kiss each other.

— Thus the divine attributes meet together harmoniously, that real opposites may meet together harmoniously. This glorious meeting lays a foundation for these happy meetings.

2dly, There are seeming opposites, that meet together harmoniously, by virtue of this glorious meeting; as,

(1.) These opposite-like perfections of God meet together, and kiss each other harmoniously, that opposite-like *providences* might meet together, and kiss each other. There are frowning providences, and smiling providences; crosses and comforts in the believer's lot: here is a providence that favours the promise, and there is a providence that seems to contradict the promise: at one time the believer is exalted, and his mountain standeth strong; at another time he is troubled, depressed, and cast down. Well, how shall these unite and cement together? Why, they meet and embrace each other in Christ, the meeting-place; for *all things work together for good to them that love him, and are so called according to his purpose*. Hence we will find, not only light and darkness in the believer's lot, but sometimes light and darkness meeting together, Zech. xiv. 7. there you read of *a day, that is neither day nor night; yet a day known to the Lord; neither clear nor dark, but at evening time it shall be light*. There evening darkness ushering in the morning light. Hence they have occasion to *sing of mercy and of judgment*; because of their meeting together, and kissing each other, and working together for good. Behold the cross and the crown meeting together.

(2.) These opposite-like perfections of God meet together, and kiss each other, that opposite-like *desires* may meet, and embrace each other, while Mercy desires our life and Justice seems to demand our death; these are reconciled only in Christ, in whom Mercy and Truth, Righteousness and Peace, meet and embrace each other.

other. But look to our desire of God's glory, and our own salvation, men and angels could never have contrived how these two desires could be reconciled, if Mercy and Truth had not met together, and kissed each other; for the glory of God's truth and righteousness, in the threatening of his law, seems to rest satisfied with nothing less than our destruction; and therefore to desire God's glory, would have been to desire our own damnation; and consequently in desiring our own salvation, we must have desired God's dishonour: but now this blessed contrivance of infinite Wisdom, let us see how these two are not only reconciled, but made inseparable; *Having set forth Christ to be the propitiation, through faith in his blood, to declare his righteousness in the remission of sins.*

(3.) These seemingly opposite attributes meet and kiss each other, that seemingly opposite *graces* might meet and embrace each other: for example, *reverence* and *confidence*; how shall *fear* and *reverence* meet together with *faith* and *confidence*? Why, *Truth* and *Righteousness* are at the meeting; and therefore *fear* and *reverence* becomes us; but *Mercy* and *Peace* are also on the bench, therefore *faith* and *holy confidence* may boldly step in; *We have boldness to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus.*

(4.) These opposite-like attributes meet and embrace each other, that opposite-like *duties* may meet together; *prayer* and *praise* seem opposite duties in some cases; prayer supposes our wants to be great, otherwise, why should we pray?—Praise supposes our enjoyments to be great, otherwise, why should we praise?—Well, *Truth* and *Righteousness*, these awful attributes, present at the meeting, say, We have nothing in ourselves, therefore we ought to pray; but *Mercy* and *Peace* say, we have all, we have enough in Christ, and therefore we ought to praise. *Humiliation* and *gloriation* seem opposite duties; but the seemingly opposite attributes of God meeting together, bring also these duties to meet and embrace each other.—Is *Truth* and *Righteousness* in the company with *Mercy* and *Peace*? then *humiliation* is our duty: but is *Mercy*

cy and Peace in company with Truth and Righteousness? Then gloriation is our duty. *Let him that glories, glory in the Lord.*

(5.) These seemingly opposite attributes of God meet and embrace each other, that seemingly opposite *experiences* may meet and embrace each other, and be reconciled, though seemingly irreconcilable. There are sad experiences, and sweet experiences: O! here is the sad experience of a guilty conscience, a powerful corruption, and a conquering temptation: can ever that be reconciled with the experience of holy peace, pardon, and victory? Yea, here is a foundation laid for the reconciliation of these opposites. If Justice and Mercy have met together, then a guilty conscience, and a mercy-seat may meet together; a prevalent corruption, and pardoning, purifying blood may meet together; as they did in the psalmist's case; *Iniquities prevail against me: but as for our transgressions thou shalt purge them away*, Psalm lxxv. 3.—The sad experience of fatherly anger, or of the feeling of divine wrath, may meet with the sweet experience of felt love and favour; for Mercy and Justice are met together, Isa. liv. 7, 8.—The sad experience of perplexing thoughts may meet with the sweet experience of spiritual consolation, and be swallowed up therein; since Truth and Justice have met with Mercy and Peace: Hence it was that these two met together in David; *In the multitude of my thoughts within me, thy comforts delight my soul*, Psalm xcix. 19. O! is such a sad experience consistent with an interest in Christ? Why, both terrible and amiable attributes of God meet together in Christ; and therefore it is not strange, that the saddest and sweetest experiences meet together, so as not to be inconsistent with the state of a believer that is in Christ. To see awful Justice, and lovely Mercy meeting together, in a sweet-smelling sacrifice, is a greater wonder, than to see your saddest and sweetest experiences meeting in Christ, to make up a HALLELUJAH, *Praise ye the Lord*: and the former meeting is the reason of this.

(6.) These irreconcilable-like attributes of God meet

meet and embrace each other, that irreconcilable-like *scriptures* might meet together and embrace each other: How shall Exod. xxxiv. 7. *He will by no means clear the guilty*, (or, justify the sinner,) be reconciled with Rom. iv. 5. where he is said to *justify the ungodly*? O! how can these two opposites meet together?—Why, Mercy and Truth have met together in Christ, to make up a match betwixt them: a *ransom is found*, a *propitiation is set forth*; why then, these opposite-like *scriptures* may meet together, and kiss each other *He will by no means clear the guilty*, without a ransom, a propitiation. Well, is the ransom found, and propitiation set forth? then he will justify the ungodly on that ground: *Deliver his soul from going down to the pit, I have found out a ransom*. Now he can justify the sinner, and be just in so doing, while he draws him in to Christ by faith, Romans iii. 25, 26.—Thus you see the reasons of the meeting. In a word, they meet together upon a design to bring the greatest good out of the greatest evil, and the highest glory out of the deepest misery, to the praise of all God's glorious perfections.

V. The *fifth* thing proposed, was the *application*, in a few *inferences*. Is it so, that in the salvation of sinners by Jesus Christ, the glorious attributes and perfections of God do thus harmoniously conspire, and embrace each other? Then hence we may see,

I. What a *dreadful evil* SIN is, which sets all the attributes of God, as it were, in opposition to one another, and puts all the world into confusion, and every thing out of order; it sets heaven and earth, and all things in them at variance, one against another: to think light of sin, is to think light of this glorious meeting of divine attributes, that met together to break this rebellion, and take order with this horrid insurrection against heaven. O! what a great matter is the salvation of a sinner! ere that can take place, this grand meeting must be called; all the injured attributes of God must have an honourable reparation.—Justice must be satisfied; Truth vindicated; Righteousness

teousness cleared; and in order to all this, a Surety must be provided, even a God in our nature: the guilt must be imputed to him, and the iniquity of us all must be laid upon him; and then a bloody tragedy must be acted upon his soul and body, till he sink to death under the weight of infinite wrath.

2. Hence see, what a *wonderful Person* our LORD JESUS CHRIST is, in whom so many wonders meet together. It is in him, that Mercy and Truth, Righteousness and Peace, do meet together, and kiss each other; here all the illustrious perfections of the divine nature do gloriously conspire; here is the bright constellation of all the divine attributes shining forth in him; and every star performs its revolution in this orb. Behold in him the bright glory and excellency of God's grace and love; a whole Trinity in concert, to perform each Person his own part, and each attribute its own work; and *Christ, the image of the invisible God, set forth to be a GLORIOUS THEATRE*, on which men and angels might see the splendour of the transaction: *He is the brightness of the Father's glory, and the express image of his person*: here is the *great mystery of godliness, God manifested in the flesh*, and all his attributes meeting together and kissing each other in our IMMANUEL, *God-man*. There are two things meet in Christ, which should make him wonderful to us: the one is, all our *sins* meet together on him, that they may be *condemned*, according to that word, Isaiah liii. 6. *The Lord hath laid on him the iniquities of us all*; (or, *made them to MEET on him*.) The other is, all the *attributes of God* meet in him, that they may be *glorified*. And indeed there is no saving or satisfying knowledge of any property of God, but what is to be had in Christ: to see God to be a merciful, just, true, righteous, good, and holy God is neither a saving, nor a satisfying sight; unless we see these attributes meeting in Christ for our salvation; and to see this, is to see the glory of God, in the face of Christ; here see the glory of divine Mercy! What is pardoning mercy? "It is God's free, gracious acceptance of a sinner, upon satisfaction made to his justice, in the blood of Jesus."

Nor is any discovery of mercy, but as relating to the satisfaction of justice, consistent with the glory of God : mercy cannot be seen savingly, but as meeting with justice in Christ. Here also we see the glory of divine truth in the exact accomplishment of all his threatenings and promises : that original threatening and commination, whence all other threatenings flow, Genesis ii. 17. *In the day thou eatest thereof, thou shalt surely die*, backed with a curse, *For cursed is every one that continueth not in all things written in the book of the law to do them*, is in him accomplished fully, and the truth of God therein cleared to our salvation, while *he tasted death for us, and he was made a curse for us* : so that in every threatening his truth is made glorious. And as to the promises, *they are all Yea and Amen in Christ Jesus, to the glory of God by us*, 2 Cor. i. 20. And so of all the other attributes of God, they are made glorious, and exalted in Christ to our salvation. Hence, when Christ desired his Father to glorify his name, John xii. 28. to make his name, that is, his nature, properties, and perfections all glorious in the work of redemption, that he had in hand ; he was instantly answered from heaven, *I have both glorified it, and will glorify it again* : I will give my attributes their utmost glory in thee.

3. Hence see the difference betwixt the *law* and the *gospel* : one great difference betwixt them lies in this, that in the law, the sinner that hath violated the same, may see Truth standing engaged against him, but no Mercy in company with Truth ; and Righteousness in arms against him, but no Peace in company with Righteousness ; *Justice without mercy, and war without peace to the sinner*, is the motto of the law ; for therein Truth and Righteousness meet together, but Mercy and Peace are not at the meeting ; and so the language of the law, to you that are out of Christ, and under the law, is, No mercy, no peace, but the wrath of God, the vengeance of God, the curse of God, upon you ; and that so sure, as God is a God of truth and righteousness. There is the law. But in the gospel, Mercy and Peace come into the meeting, and make up a match betwixt all the oppo-

opposite-parties, to the highest glory of God, and the greatest happiness of the sinner; and they seal the match with a kiss of infinite complacency; so that the sum of the gospel is this, *Mercy and Truth are met together, righteousness and peace have kissed each other.*

4. Hence we may see what is the fountain-head, and foundation of all *true communion* and *fellowship* with God and man. This glorious meeting is the foundation of all other happy meetings: fellowship with God, and an happy meeting with him, is a stream that flows from this fountain. We could never have met with God, or got a kindly kiss, or embrace, in the arms of his favour and love, if this divine meeting and embracement had not made way for it. Fellowship with man, or the communion of saints, is a rivolet that flows from this spring. When saints meet together for prayer or praises, under the influence of the Spirit, and under a gale of heaven, when their hearts are fired with love to God, and to one another in him; what is this? It is just a live coal cast in among them, from the altar, Christ Jesus, where all the attributes of God meet together, and kiss each other; and hence true fellowship with God, and with the saints, are both declared to be in and through Christ Jesus; — *That which we have heard and seen, declare we unto you, that ye may have fellowship with us: and truly our fellowship is with the Father, and with his Son Jesus Christ,* 1 John i. 3. The harmony of the attributes of God in Christ, is the fountain of all the harmony among the saints. The little harmony, that takes place among them in our day, and the rarity of holy fellowship-meetings, flows from the little faith of this heavenly divine meeting: for all the saints, that are under the lively views thereof, cannot but desire to meet together, and embrace each other harmoniously, in the arms of mutual love.

5. Hence see the *malignity* of the sin of *unbelief*, the great employment whereof is, to spoil the harmony of the divine perfections, and to do its utmost to dissolve that glorious meeting, and separate what God hath joined, saying, in effect, they have not met

together nor kissed each other. This we may discern in the unbelief, whether of secure or awakened sinners: See it in the unbelief of the secure sinner, who sets Truth and Righteousness out of the meeting, saying, *God is a merciful God, and I shall have peace, though I walk in the imagination of my own heart, adding drunkenness to thirst.* Thus they hope in God's mercy, and speak peace to themselves, while they never view the truth and righteousness of God, and how the credit thereof shall be saved, or the honour repaired: and hence, as faith is said to *set to the seal that God is true*, or, that he is a *God of truth*; so unbelief is said to make *God a liar*: to fancy that God will have mercy on their souls, without regarding the truth of his threatenings, is to make God a liar, and say, Mercy and Truth have not met together: to think that God will be at peace with them, while his Righteousness and Justice are not satisfied, is to make God a liar, and say, Righteousness and Peace have not met together. Thus the unbelief of the secure sinner puts Truth and Righteousness out of the meeting.—Again, on the other hand, the unbelief of the awakened sinner, puts Mercy and Peace out of the meeting, saying, O! he is a God of truth, and how shall he have mercy on the like of me! He is a God of awful justice and righteousness, and how will he be at peace with me? What is the language of this, but that Mercy and Peace have not met with Truth and Righteousness? Here is a making God a liar also, and separating what God hath in the gospel declared to be joined. Behold, then, the malignity of unbelief; it breaks the glorious meeting, and will not let them kiss one another. The presuming sinner will not let God have the glory of his truth and righteousness.—The despairing sinner will not let God have the glory of his mercy and grace; both are in a concert with the devil to break the harmony of the meeting. But, O! may virtue come from that glorious meeting in Christ, to the poor sinful meeting in this house, for dashing our unbelief to pieces, that we may see Mercy and

and Truth met together, Righteousness and Peace kissing each other.

6. Hence see sure and noble ground, for the boldness and confidence of *faith* in Christ; *In whom we have boldness and access with confidence by the faith of him*, Eph. ii. 12. Here is an answer to all objections of unbelief and diffidence; the chief whereof lies here: O! says unbelief, may I, sinful guilty I, lay hold on the promise of mercy and peace in the gospel, when I see the great ordinance of the divine threatening hard charged with the truth and righteousness of God, and ready to be discharged against me, with thunder and lightning, saying, No mercy, no peace; *He that made thee will not have mercy upon thee: And there is no peace, says my God, to the wicked?* Mercy and peace in the promise then, says unbelief, cannot take place, with respect to me; for truth and righteousness, in the threatening, stand in the way, *like a flaming sword, to keep the way of the tree of life*: Nay, but says faith, Here the promise and the threatening have met together, and kissed each other in Christ; mercy in the promise, and justice in the threatening, have met and agreed in him; *In whom all the promises are Yea and Amen*: and in whom all the threatenings are fully executed, by drawing out his heart-blood. Thus then, *we have boldness to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus, by a new and living way, which he hath consecrated for us through the vail of his flesh: Therefore let us draw near with a true heart, in full assurance of faith*, Heb. x. 19, 20, 22. O! what ground for the boldness and assured confidence of faith, with particular application, notwithstanding of the threatening? The threatening hath nothing to say to me, faith faith, for Christ hath spoken with it already, and spoken it out of breath; he hath left it speechless and breathless, not a breathing of wrath in it towards me. The believer may have a million of doubts, while his unbelief keeps the chair; but let gallant faith come in, and take the room, it will dispel them all: let once unbelief break the harmony of this meeting of divine attributes in Christ, and then nothing but doubts of  
 God's

God's favour and mercy must ensue; but let faith view the harmony, and see them meeting and kissing each other; and then according to the measure of faith, such will be the measure of holy boldness, confidence, and persuasion of the favour, mercy, and good will of God in Christ, with particular application to the person himself. Take away unbelief from faith, and then not a single doubt will remain behind: unbelief creates all the doubts that are in the believer; his faith hath no part in them. The general doubtful faith of the Papists, is not faith, but unbelief; and therefore no wonder that our forefathers abjured it in our National Covenant. Behold the sure ground and firm bottom that faith stands upon, even the mutual meeting, and embracement among the divine perfections in Christ. If you break and separate the meeting by unbelief, then your confidence is broken, and your peace with God marred; but if you keep them together in your view, by faith in Christ, then you have boldness, confidence, and assurance on this ground; yea, then God in Christ, and you meet together, and kiss each other.

7. Hence see what is the *best mark* of a believer in Christ. For your trial and examination, try it just by this, What view have you got of this glory of God, in the face of Jesus Christ, and of the attributes of God meeting and embracing each other in him? Have you seen the glory, and felt the virtue of this happy meeting?

(1.) Have you *seen the glory* of it? When once in a day, you had seen the attributes of God in arms against you, because of your sinful rebellion against God; and when you had seen the truth of God, pronouncing the sentence of the law, and his righteousness and justice ready to inflict the sentence, and execute the same with curses and vengeance, making you despair of mercy, and give up with all hope and expectation of peace with God, by the law of works; have you thereupon got a view of the harmonious meeting of these attributes of God, in Christ Jesus, as the Surety, the Sacrifice, the Ransom, the Propitiation,

tion, in whom the truth and veracity of God is accomplished, and the righteousness and justice of God is satisfied, and so mercy and peace vented gloriously, without detriment to any other excellency or perfection of God? Hath nothing satisfied your conscience, but the view of this meeting betwixt Mercy and Justice, in the death of Christ, and kissing each other in his mediation? Hath God and you met together this way, and made your heart joyfully to kiss and embrace this wonderful device, as worthy of God, and suitable to you? Have you seen this glory at this rate? Then in God's name, I pronounce you a believer in Christ: *For God, who commanded light to shine out of darkness, hath shined into your heart, to give you the light of the knowledge of his glory, in the face of Christ; and Christ and you have met together, and kissed each other; whether it was in the day of first believing, when you fled to him for refuge, or in the day of after manifestation, when, upon the back of dismal hiding on God's part, or grievous backsliding on yours, the Lord drew aside the vail, and gave you a glance of his glory; whether it was by some word of grace, sweetly and powerfully coming in, and opening your understanding to see this harmonious meeting, or by some sweet droppings of the blood of sprinkling upon your conscience, by which blood, the meeting is cemented together.* Have you seen this glory, whether in a secret corner, or public ordinance; whether at the market cross of the gospel, where this glorious meeting is proclaimed, or at a communion-table, where it is sealed? It is all a matter, it was heaven begun.

(2.) Have you *felt the virtue*, as well as seen the glory of this harmonious meeting of the divine attributes in Christ? 2 Cor. iii. 18. *Beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, we are changed into the same image, from glory to glory, as by the Spirit of the Lord.* Surely if you have seen this glory, you have felt something of this virtue by changing you *from glory to glory*. It is true, many that have got a discovery of this glory of the Lord, can never think that they have felt the sanctifying virtue thereof, and this keeps them down in the

pit of discouragement: it is true, they that are not sanctified and made holy, they discover, that they never beheld this glory of the Lord: for this meeting of attributes, makes a meeting of graces, in the person that sees it savingly. But you must remember, That this virtue will never be perfectly felt, till this glory be perfectly beheld in heaven, where *we shall be like him, because we shall see him as he is.* And therefore, since you cannot judge and try yourself by a perfect sanctification, try it by the beginnings of it; this transforming virtue, this sanctifying virtue is present with you, though you cannot discern it. But that you may, through grace, discern something of it, let me ask you what makes you wrestle in secret sometimes against sin, if it be not some sanctifying virtue? What makes the prevalence of sin to humble you to the dust? What makes you lament your own unholiness and impurity? What makes you long and groan for complete victory over, and freedom from sin? What makes you glad of any victory over your corruption, when this glory shines? What makes your heart to rise against sin? and when sin prevails, what makes you find yourself uneasy, and out of your element, always till the Lord return, and until you get a new dip in the Jordan of the blood of the Lamb? You have no mercy on your lusts, and are at no peace with them, but still crying, Vengeance upon them! Why, it is just the sanctifying virtue, that flows from this view of the glory of God in Christ, in whom Mercy and Peace meet with Truth and Righteousness. If you fall and stumble at any time, believer, is it not like the stumbling of a horse, that makes you run the faster? so as you get more good of one fall, than a natural man will get of a hundred duties, while it makes you always the more humble, and watchful, and circumspect, and dependent.—Why, by all this, it appears (whatever be the defect of your sanctification) that having beheld the glory of God, you are *changed into the same image from glory to glory*: you have seen the glory, and felt the virtue of this harmonious meeting of divine attributes in Christ. But then again,

8. Hence, we may see ground of *terror* to all Christians, unbelieving souls, that never have seen the glory, nor felt the virtue of this harmonious meeting, and live careless about either of these. What shall I say? *If our gospel be hid, it is hid to them that are lost, in whom the god of this world hath blinded the minds of them that believe not, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, should shine in to them,* 2 Cor. iv. 3, 4. It may be, you are presuming upon the mercy of God, while yet your eyes are blinded, that you do not see the truth of his threatenings standing against you: and therefore, O blasphemer! do you think, that he will be a God of mercy, and not a God of truth? Nay, his mercy will never be vented, unless the glory of his truth be saved. Perhaps you are speaking peace to yourself, saying, *I shall have peace*, while yet your eyes are blinded, that you do not see how God's being at peace with a sinner is consistent with his righteousness, in taking vengeance upon sin. O then, blasphemer and presumer! do you think, that God will be a God of *peace*, and not a God of *righteousness*? Know it, then, in the Lord's name, O sinful unbelieving wretch, that as there is no mercy for you, to the discredit of God's truth? so no peace, to the dishonour of his righteousness. You expect mercy and peace separate from truth and righteousness; and therefore mercy and truth shall be separate from you; and truth and righteousness will meet with you in fury, and with a vengeance.—Your false hope of mercy and peace, makes you merciful to your lusts, and at peace with your idols: but the truth and righteousness of God, which you exclude from the meeting, will hide mercy and peace for ever from your eyes: Justice instead of mercy, war instead of peace, will ensue; for truth and righteousness will execute judgment upon you, for the abuse of mercy and peace; while through unbelief, you do not see, or approve their meeting together and kissing each other in Christ. While you are in this case, you cannot meet with God, though you may meet with his people at ordinances, or at a communion-table: yet God and you never met together:

nay, you have other company ; the devil and you meet together ; and your lusts and you embrace each other ; the world and you meet together, and its vanities and you do kiss each other ; the law and you have met together, and its curse and you do embrace each other : but because you do not see the terrible curses and threatenings, that you are under, remember, that in a short while, death and you will meet together, and its cold arms and you must embrace each other ; and if this gospel be still hid to you, then after that, hell and you will meet together, and the flames of divine wrath and you will embrace each other to eternity ; and the motto written upon the door of your hell, will be, *The vengeance of Truth and Righteousness, for the abuse of Mercy and Peace.* Let this word of terror sink into your conscience, O graceless, Christless, unbelieving soul, that never saw the glory, nor felt the virtue of this blessed meeting ; and Gallo-like, *care for none of these things.* But on the other hand,

9. Hence, from this doctrine, see ground of *comfort* to all believers in Christ, who have seen the glory, and felt the virtue of this harmonious meeting of divine attributes in Christ. This doctrine is as comfortable to you, as it is terrible to others. Can you say before God, that those two marks are your experiences ? Then I can say, that all the comforts, that issue from that glorious meeting in Christ, belong to you ; and God allows you *strong consolation, who have fled for refuge, to the hope set before you* : for that city of refuge, to which you have fled, is the centre of the meeting, and the tristing-place, where they kiss one another harmoniously. Why, say you, *What concern have I in their meeting, and embracing each other ?* O believer, they met together for your sake, and kissed one another out of kindness to you : for there were no real jarring among them ; but all the apparent jarring was about you ; and how they should be glorified in your salvation : and when infinite wisdom found the ransom, and so the way, how they should all be glorified, in your eternal happiness, then they hugged each other

in their arms, as it were, in a rapture of joy, for your sake; *His delights were with the sons of men*, Prov. viii. 31. It was not *one* attribute only, that had its delight, satisfaction, and glory; it is *delights*, in the plural number; for all the attributes of God had their delights: and whereabouts was it? Why, the council of peace was concerning you; *For his delights were with the sons of men*. And you having seen the glory of this device, and felt something of the virtue thereof, God and you have met together, and Christ and you have kissed each other: he hath embraced you, and you have embraced him; and that embracement is a pledge and earnest, that he and you will meet together in heaven, and embrace each other to eternity. This meeting and embracement is founded upon the harmonious meeting and embracement of the divine attributes in Christ; and therefore, it shall be sure, abiding, and everlasting; and all these attributes are engaged for your comfort and support: and this glory of the Lord, you shall for ever behold; for Christ, in whom all these glorious perfections meet together, hath prayed for it; *Father, I will, that these, whom thou hast given me, be with me where I am, that they may behold my glory which thou hast given me*, John xvii. 24. Here then, believer, is ground of comfort to you, in every case. Comfort against *desertion*; it is long since Christ and you met together, and kissed each other? Behold, here is the reason; *He will never altogether leave you, nor forsake you*; but certainly meet with you, now and then, when he sees it fit; and give you the other kiss of his infinitely blessed lips, and embrace of his arms; till you come to the intimate, immediate embracements of his love in glory: why? because, *Mercy and truth are met together, righteousness and peace have kissed each other*. So sure as Mercy and Truth are met together, as surely will the Lord meet with you.—Here is comfort against the *law*, when it comes in as a covenant upon your conscience; saying, *Pay what thou owest, or otherwise thou art cursed, and must go to hell*: and the law, speaking

in the name of Truth and Righteousness, seems terrible. But you may soon answer by faith, and say,—  
 “ O law, the demand is just indeed, and agreeable to  
 “ Truth and Righteousness; but you mistake the per-  
 “ son; for Truth and Righteousness have already met  
 “ with Mercy and Peace, in the Person of Christ, my  
 “ husband, who endured all my hell, and became a  
 “ curse for me; and therefore, I have no ground to  
 “ fear the hell thou threatenest, nor the curse thou de-  
 “ nounces, nor any liability thereto.”——Here is  
 comfort against *Satan*, and his temptations: for this  
 blessed meeting in Christ did concert his ruin, and the  
 bruising of his head; *The seed of the woman shall bruise  
 the head of the serpent*, Genesis iii. 15. *Satan shall be  
 bruised under your feet shortly*.——Here is comfort a-  
 gainst *church-divisions* and *commotions*; when neither  
 ministers nor private Christians do meet together, or  
 embrace one another with love and amity. Is this sad  
 and afflicting to you? Here is a meeting, that may  
 give you comfort in that case: for no member of that  
 meeting will ever differ among themselves, or cast out  
 with you.——Here is comfort against your *jarring  
 with friends*; what do I know, but there is some here,  
 that cannot get lived in peace with such a friend or  
 relation; nor their Christian liberty enjoyed, because  
 of their frowns; and perhaps, they are as aliens to  
 you, not in speaking terms with you; you cannot meet  
 together with them *cordially*, nor embrace one ano-  
 ther *amicably*; but let this be your comfort, in that  
 case; *Mercy and truth are met together, righteousness  
 and peace have kissed each other*; and you have got a  
 kiss by the bye, and that is better than all the friends  
 in the world.——Here is comfort against *public cala-  
 mities*, that seem to be approaching, or personal trials,  
 that may be coming upon you.——Here is a cordial,  
 though *affliction* and you meet together; though in a  
 little, *death* and you meet together; yet this meeting  
 of divine attributes in Christ, your glorious Head,  
 speaks comfort, and safety to you in every case: tho’  
 you should die distracted, this meeting cannot be dis-  
 solved; and you having seen the glory, and felt the  
 virtue

virtue thereof, shall be sure to enjoy the benefit of it to eternity; *Yea, surely goodness and mercy shall follow you, all the days of your life, and you shall dwell in the house of the Lord for ever.*

10. The last inference is, hence see the *duty* of all that hear and know this joyful sound: Never was there a sweeter sound in heaven, or in earth: and what is the duty of all you that *hear* it? Surely the news of such a glorious and harmonious meeting of the divine perfections, about the salvation of sinners, in and by Christ Jesus, should be joyfully received. Here is *the good tidings of great joy unto all people*, Luke ii. 10. When Elizabeth the mother of John, and Mary the mother of Jesus our Lord, met together and saluted each other, *the babe leapt in Elizabeth's womb for joy.* Behold, here is yet a more wonderful meeting, and salutation among the jarring-like attributes and perfections of God; and surely if the babe of grace be in *your heart*, it will leap for joy, when you perceive such a blessed meeting and salutation. O! may it not bring our heart to our mouth, and make it flutter within us, when we hear of such a salutation as this, *Mercy and truth are met together, righteousness and peace have embraced each other.*——And again, What is your duty, believer, who not only hears, but *knows* this joyful sound? your duty is, not only to rejoice, in this matchless harmonious conjunction of divine attributes in Christ; but to exemplify the same, by an harmonious conjunction of graces and holy virtues in you. Let Mercy and Truth meeting together, as divine attributes, in Christ, be exemplified by Mercy and Truth meeting together, as divine virtues in you: let Righteousness and Peace kissing each other in him, be exemplified by Righteousness and Peace kissing each other in you. Let the meeting of Mercy and Truth engage you to be merciful and true: *Merciful, because your heavenly Father is merciful: and true, because he desires truth in the inward parts.* Let the embraces of Righteousness and Peace engage you, to be righteous and peaceable; that is, to be students of Purity and  
Peace;

Peace ; for *the wisdom that is from above, is first pure, and then peaceable*, James iii. 17. It is declared in the verse following our text, that it is the design of these perfections of God, *looking down harmoniously from heaven, to make suitable graces spring up from the earth : truth shall spring out of the earth, and righteousness shall look down from heaven*. When the Sun of righteousness, in whom all the excellencies of God do shine, looks down ; then as the natural sun shedding its influences, makes fruit to spring up from the earth : so the Sun of righteousness looking down and shedding abroad his influences, makes Truth, and all the rest of the fruits of the Spirit, to spring out of the earth, out of the heart, the soil where they are sown, in regeneration, O ! does Mercy look down from heaven to you, in friendship with Truth ? shall not this Mercy make you merciful to the bodies and and souls of others, by doing them all the temporal and spiritual good that you can ? And shall God manifest his Truth, in conjunction with Mercy towards you ? and will you not be a friend to Truth, even to all the precious truths of his gospel ? Shall not Truth in opposition to hypocrisy, be your study, and Truth in opposition to error, be your concern ? and this Truth, in conjunction with Mercy ; for, when Truth is in any hazard, should not Mercy to your own soul, and the souls of others, make you zealous for it ? and mercy to your children, and the generation that is to come after you, on whom we shew no mercy, if truth be not transmitted purely to them, as it was by our fore-fathers to us, at the expence of their blood ; however now, the waters of the sanctuary are puddled ?—Again, does Righteousness and Peace look down from heaven, kindly embracing each other in your behalf, believer ? And shall not you be a student of Righteousness, in opposition to all unrighteous and unholy ways ; and of Peace, in opposition to contention and discord : *As much as possible, follow peace with all men, and holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord*. Does God glorify his righteousness towards you ? and will you study no righteousness in your conversation towards God and man ? Does God speak peace to you, and will

will you be at war with him; and love to live in war with any of his? Shall that be the disposition of any, with whom God is at peace? *O tell it not in Gath!*—Surely there is none here, that have tasted of this sweet peace of God, but they would desire to live at peace with all men; and particularly with all the saints.—They would desire to see all the honest ministers of Scotland, meeting together more kindly than they do, and embracing each other. Some, indeed, are at this time reproached, as *enemies to peace in the church* \*; but the matter is, Peace must not be studied separately from Righteousness, nor Mercy separately from Truth; but all as meeting, and embracing one another: for Mercy and Peace, without Truth and Righteousness, is a cruel conspiracy against God and man.

Now, certain things have past concerning the Truths of God, and the Righteousness of Christ in our day, which some think will stand infamous till the judgment of the great day; and this Truth and Righteousness, being the great ministerial trust, some chused rather to be reproached by the world, than be challenged by God and their own conscience, as betrayers of the trust. However, O believer, study you through grace, to get a match made up between Mercy and Truth, Righteousness and Peace in you, seeing there can be no merciful Peace to the prejudice of righteous Truth: and study to get all these attributes of God, exemplified in your heart and life; and the seal and impress thereof upon your soul; you being united to Christ, in whom all these glorious excellencies of God do meet together with harmonious embracements. *Out of Christ's fulness, do you receive, and grace for grace:* as the child receives member for member from the father, and

\* See the reason of this assigned, Sermon IV. intitled, *Christ the People's Covenant*, in a foot note.—The hearty friends to the doctrine of grace, in those days, were very unjustly accused with Antinomianism; and the strenuous supporters of the doctrine of free justification, through the impured righteousness of Christ, without the works of the law, were injuriously calumniated as *enemies to holiness*, and as *disturbers of the peace of the church*.—This matter is further cleared up, in a note, about the middle of these Sermons, intitled, *Law-death, and Gospel-life.*

the paper letter for letter from the press: so beholding his glory, be you changed into the same image, by receiving mercy for mercy, truth for truth, righteousness for righteousness, and peace for peace; out of his fulness, do you receive grace for grace, holiness for holiness, and an holy virtue suitable to every holy perfection, that is in him; and all these harmoniously meeting together and kissing each other in you. Let no heavenly grace, or holy duty be excluded out of the meetings: let faith and repentance meet together; let love and new obedience kiss each other; let knowledge and practice meet together, and prayer and praises embrace each other; yea, let opposite-like graces meet harmoniously in you; let humility and boldness meet together; let godly sorrow and holy joy embrace each other. Here is the gospel-holiness we call you to, in a suitability to these harmonious attributes of God in Christ. If the world call you *Antinomians* know it is *the will of God, that by well-doing, you put to silence the ignorance of foolish men, 1 Peter ii. 15.* Let the mouth that reproaches the gospel, be stopt by the power of it in your walk.—The world will surely reckon you the greatest stars that give the greatest light: *Therefore let your light so shine before men, that others seeing your good works, may glorify God; even the works of Mercy and Truth, Righteousness and Peace, hand in hand together; and thus, for the sake of the glory of God, the honour of Christ, and the credit of the gospel, let the world know, that you have seen the glory, and felt the virtue of these perfections of God, harmoniously meeting and embracing each other in Christ.* Here is your duty and work, believer, in the wilderness; and now in all your shortcomings therein, still *look again to God's holy temple, to Christ the meeting-place of these divine perfections.* This is the mercy-seat, of which God says, *Exod. xxv. 22. There will I meet with thee, and commune with thee from between the cherubims:* and every new meeting with God there, will bring in new strength, for all your work and warfare in time, till God and you meet together, and embrace one another, in glory through eternity.

And

And now, believer, I know you would desire, that others should share of the same happiness with you; and therefore, pray, that a short concluding word may be blessed with power, to thousands that hear me.—O ye that are by-standers and hearers only, in whatever corner of this house round about me, whether you be in my view or not, you are in God's view; and I have a word from him to you all: and as I have told you, what a terrible thing it is, to live and die in unbelief, with respect to this glorious device; so now I would tell you your duty, in this matter; and how you may share of the blessings and benefits in time, and for ever, that flow from this glorious meeting and embracement; and it is by kissing the Son of God, in whom all the attributes of God do kiss, and embrace each other; *Kiss the Son, lest he be angry, and ye perish from the way, when his wrath is kindled but a little: blessed are all they that trust in him,* Psal. ii. 12. Blessed are all they that kiss and embrace him. Would you then share of the grace and glory, that issue from this wonderful meeting, and ineffable embracement among the divine perfections, in Christ the Son of God? O then! come and kiss the Son: O down, down with carnal thoughts! carnal kissing, carousing, and cajolling; here, here is an object worthy of the most endeared embraces of the immortal soul.—O come! and *kiss the Son*, by believing in him, and applying the benefits of this glorious transaction, to yourself: and be who you will, if you kiss and embrace the Son, you shall find these glorious attributes of God, kissing and embracing you, and hugging you in their arms, as a darling of heaven, and a favourite in the house of God. Are the attributes of God, embracing one another in Christ? O flee in to their embraces, by fleeing in to Christ: *Say not, Christ is in heaven, how shall I embrace him? For the word is nigh, even in your mouth, and in your heart,* Rom. x. 8. *g. d.* So near is he in this word, that you may kiss him with your mouth, as it were, and embrace him in your heart: and to take in this word of grace, and Christ in it, is to embrace him. What do you say against Christ,

man, woman? Are you afraid, that Truth and Righteousness conspire against you, and hinder Mercy and Peace from ever meeting with you, and embracing you? O no: *Fear not*; only believe, *That Mercy and Truth are met together, and that Righteousness and Peace have kissed each other in Christ.* Truth will not stand in the way of Mercy; for they have kissed each other. He is indeed an infinitely just God, to take vengeance upon sin: but justice will not hinder mercy from coming to you: only believe, that justice and mercy are reconciled in Christ, so as mercy can vent towards you, to the credit of justice. But, O! may such a black-mouth'd sinner as I, as black as hell and the devil, expect a kiss of such an infinitely fair Jesus? Is that to be expected, that such opposites should meet in one another's arms? Yea, man, woman, allow me, a black sinner like yourself, to be the happy messenger, to tell you in God's name, that be ye as black as you will, such a meeting and embracing betwixt Christ and you, is more to be expected, than ever men or angels could have expected, that infinite justice and mercy should have met together, and kissed each other in a God-man: and this unexpected meeting is the very ground, upon which your expectation of a meeting with, and embracement of God in Christ, is to be founded. O then, come and kiss the Son: Why? but I cannot, say you: I think, I would gladly do it; but I cannot get near him, to kiss and embrace him. Indeed this kindness must begin on his side; and therefore, O pray, that he would come, and meet you with a kiss of infinite love. Say with the church, Song i. 2. *Let him kiss me with the kisses of his mouth; for his love is better than wine.* If that be the language of your soul; O! I cannot embrace him; but my heart says, O let him come, and embrace me: and draw me out of the embracements of all my former lovers and lusts, that I may never kiss any idol in the world again; but may live, and die in the arms, and embraces of the Son of God: Is that the language of your soul before the living God? Why, then the embracement betwixt Christ and you is begun, that shall

shall never have an end; for it is a pledge, that he and you shall meet together in heaven, and embrace each other to eternity.

Now, though I hope, that this glorious meeting of divine perfections in Christ, hath put forth some virtue, to draw in some poor soul, to the match: yet I fear, that the most part are but still as idle hearers and spectators, as if they were not concerned. But, O man, woman, young or old, unconcerned soul, be what you will, O yet, will you come, and see this great sight? O come, and see the greatest sight, that ever was, or will be in heaven or earth, *A bush burning, and not consumed*: all the burning and shining attributes of God, meeting with infinite harmony, in the bush of our nature; and yet, the bush able to bear the glory, Zech. vi. 13. O come, and wonder! Here is the wonder of men and angels! For, this is a wonderful meeting to them. And the name of the meeting-place is justly called, WONDERFUL! O come, and partake; for the meeting is concerning your salvation, in Christ; *His delights were with the sons of men*. O come, and sing to the praise and glory of this wonderful harmonious embracement of divine perfections in Christ; especially, you that partake; so as to see the glory, and feel the virtue thereof. O will you sing with your hearts, and lips, and lives, saying, *Glory to God*, that his attributes have met together, and kissed each other in Christ; and that ever the like of me, got a kiss by the bye? *Glory to God*, that there is no breaking of this meeting, nor parting of these embraces, by sin, Satan, earth, or hell; but that they meet and embrace each other to eternity. And though you cannot mind to sing all that hath been said; yet I hope, the weakest memory may mind, to sing the best note of all the sermon, every day, saying, *Glory, glory, glory to God, that Mercy and Truth are met together, Righteousness and Peace have kissed each other*.

## S E R M O N XXI, XXII.

CARNAL CONSULTATION *unfolded*; or, the *Great Evil* of being actuated, by *Carnal Principles*, in the Matters of God, *evinced*, \*

GALATIANS i. 16.

—*Immediately I conferred not with flesh and blood.*

WHEN I considered the great spring of all the motions and actions of the most of people, at this day; and what seems to be the grand counsellors, with whom they generally confer, I thought it was evident, from universal practice, that *flesh and blood* are the great principle that influence the deportment and behaviour of the generation: And when I considered, that not only the *wicked world*, but even the *most eminent professors* of religion, and the *truly godly* seem to discover, by their walk at this day, and their sinful conformity at this day with the world, and compliance with the course of the times, their being led by motives from flesh and blood: I say, when I considered these things, I thought the contrary practice and example of the great apostle would, at least, be suitable for discovering the great evil of living under the conduct and influence of such carnal principles; *Immediately I conferred not with flesh and blood.*

The false teachers, who preached up the ceremonial law, were doing all they could to lessen Paul's reputa-

\* We are not positively certain either when or where this Sermon was preached: but, from the place it hath in the Author's notes, and some passages and references in the discourse itself, it appears to have been delivered in his own church at Dunfermline, sometime towards the latter end of the year 1723. It has now been twice printed.

tion, who preached the pure gospel of Christ to the Gentiles ; and therefore, he is here setting himself to prove the divinity of his mission and doctrine, which he doth several ways in this chapter ; particularly from ver. 11, 12. He evidences it by the *manner* wherein he received the gospel ; that it was not by *information from men*, but by *revelation from God*, and immediate *inspiration of Christ himself*. Here he puts them in mind.

1<sup>st</sup>, Of his *education*, ver. 13, 14. ; that he had been not only a *rejecter* of Christianity, but a *persecutor* of it : this he doth, that they might be assured he was not led to this religion purely by education, since he had been bred up in enmity and opposition to it : and that it behoved to be something extraordinary that had made such a change upon him, and conquered the prejudices of his education : and brought him not only to *profess*, but to *preach* that doctrine which he had before so vehemently opposed.

2<sup>dly</sup>, He puts them in mind of his *conversion*, ver. 15, 16, which is here described four ways.

1. In the *author* of it, *viz.* GOD, the *efficient* cause ; and the *pleasure* of God, the *moving* cause : *It pleased God*. And this God is here described two ways.

(1.) He is described by his *separating* grace ; *He separated me from my mother's womb*. The change that was wrought in Paul was in pursuance of a divine purpose concerning him, whereby he was appointed to be a believer and an apostle.

(2.) God is here described by his *calling* grace ; *He called me by his grace*. Paul was called in an immediate way and manner : there was something very peculiar, and extremely singular in his conversion.— See Acts ix. 1,—8.

2. Paul's conversion is described in the *manner* of it ; *It pleased God to reveal his Son in me*. Christ was not only revealed externally to him, but also in him.

3. It is described in the *end* of it ; *That I might preach him among the heathen*. Paul was both a Christian and an Apostle by revelation.

4. His conversion is described in the *effect* in his carriage ; *Immediately I conferred not with flesh and blood*.

From

From the words we might lay down and prosecute several doctrinal observations; such as,

(1.) That the MERCY of God is *preventing* mercy, towards all whom it takes hold upon; it prevents them; before ever they are born, they are separate.

(2.) That none are CALLED upon the account of any *good work*, or *sanctity*, or *blamelessness* in themselves; no: they are called of grace, and of the good pleasure of God.

(3.) That the DOCTRINE of GRACE is the *revelation of Christ*: God, in the gospel, reveals his Son to us; and, by his Spirit, reveals him in us, when he calls effectually.

(4.) That when the GOSPEL is revealed, it is *God* that doth it; *It pleased God to reveal his Son in me*.

(5.) That to preach the *Gospel*, is to preach CHRIST; it is not a preaching of Moses, but Christ.

(6.) That in matters of RELIGION, there ought to be no consulting or conferring with *flesh and blood*. Here the apostle tells us his own practice, that he did not consult therewith; he did not consult *man*, nor apply himself to any other for their advice and direction; neither, as in the following verse, did he *go up to Jerusalem, to those who were apostles before him*, as if he needed to be approved by them, or receive any farther instructions or authority from them: so that it could not be pretended, that he was indebted to any other for his knowledge of the gospel, or his authority to preach it; but it appeared, that both his *qualifications* for, and his *call* to the apostolic office were extraordinary and divine.

But although these observations are couched in the words, and natively deduced from them, yet I choose to confine myself to the consideration of this text, as it may be taken more generally, and as bearing this proposition, *viz.*

DOCT. *That in the matters of God, there ought to be no consulting with flesh and blood.* IMMEDIATELY I CONFERRED NOT WITH FLESH AND BLOOD.

In prosecuting this subject, through supernatural assistance, we shall observe the following method and order.

- I. We would explain what is to be understood by *flesh* and *blood*; and not *conferring* with it.
- II. We would confirm the *truth* of the doctrine by scripture examples.
- III. Give the *reasons* why we ought not to consult with flesh and blood.
- IV. Make *application* of the whole subject, in several uses.

- I. We would *explain the doctrine*, by enquiring,
  1. What we are to understand by *flesh* and *blood*.
  2. What it is not to *confer* with flesh and blood.

*1st.* We are to enquire what is understood by *flesh* and *blood*. In general, MAN, who is flesh and blood, is here principally intended; men, whether good or bad: the apostle consulted not with men, but gave himself up to God. More particularly, by flesh and blood we may understand carnal ease, carnal reason, carnal friends, and carnal counsels of spiritual friends.

1. By flesh and blood is meant *carnal ease* and *interest*. Master, spare thyself; what need all this toil and trouble? is the language of easy nature. Paul, being now converted, and so in a happy state, having his salvation secured, carnal ease might say, What need you go and essay these travails, and encounter such hardships, in propagating the gospel of Christ, and spreading the knowledge of his name? Nay, but Paul, having got Christ *revealed in him*, he would not consult with carnal ease: he would now *spend and be spent for Christ*.

2. By flesh and blood is understood *carnal reason*. Paul was now divinely taught, as Peter was, of whom Christ says, *Flesh and blood hath not revealed these things unto thee*: So Christ was revealed in Paul, not by *flesh and blood*; that is, not by *carnal reason*, or *natural understanding*: and therefore he would not confer with  
flesh

flesh and blood. We ought not to consult with carnal reason in the matters of religion.

3. By flesh and blood is meant *carnal friends* : and and by these I understand not only *natural relations*, as father, mother, brother, and sister, who, when loved and followed more than Christ, it is a consulting with flesh and blood ; and *graceless relations*, with whom our conference and consultation cannot but be a conferring with flesh and blood ; but also all *ungodly neighbours* and *acquaintances*, whether blood-relations or not : to consult with them, or put any confidence in them is to consult with flesh and blood.

4. By flesh and blood is meant even the *carnal counsels*, and *carnal arguments of spiritual friends* : for godly and pious friends may offer ungodly and impious counsels ; such as Peter to his master, when he would dissuade him from going up to *Jerusalem to suffer* : and Job's wife to her husband, when she said to him, *Curse God and die* ; or, if it may be rendered, *Bless God and die*, it was an impious intention wherewith it was given. They that would not consult with blood, must not rest in the counsel of godly flesh and friends, or trust thereunto.

5. In a word, by flesh and blood we may understand all *carnal confidence* whatsoever, whether from without or from within ; in others, or in ourselves : for, while we have any confidence in the flesh, in our own or others natural wisdom, righteousness, or strength, we so far consult with flesh and blood. But this leads me to consider,

2dly, What is to be understood by not *conferring* with flesh and blood. We shall lay down what we take to be the *import* thereof in the following particulars.

1. Not conferring with flesh and blood, imports a *shunning* their company, in a manner. When we would not confer with a man, then we shun his company ; we refuse to converse with him : so, when we confer not with flesh and blood, we refuse, in a manner, the company of such ill guests. The man that confers not with flesh and blood, in the matters of God, he lets in

to his company the wonderful Counsellor for his guest, to converse withal; and shuts all carnal counsellors to the door. The man that will not confer with flesh and blood, he avoids the salutations thereof, and shuns conversation therewith.

2. Not conferring with flesh and blood, imports a not *giving ear* thereunto. When a person will not confer with one, if he cannot get his company altogether avoided, yet he will stop his ear, that he may not hear what he says: so, if flesh and blood will be in to our company, not to confer therewith is to give a deaf ear to the suggestions of carnal reason, in the matters of God, and religion, and conscience. Shut the door against all carnal counsel.

3. Not conferring with flesh and blood, imports, not *taking their advice*, nor *regarding their solicitations*, but rejecting their motions. If flesh and blood will be in with a word, and that we cannot get our ear stoppt so fast but that we must hear what it says; then, if it will be heard, yet it must not be regarded. It is vastly dangerous to hear, and much more to join with carnal counsellors, as Jacob of Simeon and Levi; *O my soul, come not thou into their secret; unto their assembly, mine honour, be not thou united*, Gen. xlix. 6.

4. Not conferring with flesh and blood, imports, a not *following the dictates* thereof. It may be, that, through the prevalence of corruption, even in the godly, flesh and blood, and carnal counsellors, are let in to their company; and, when once admitted, they are heard; and, when heard, they are too much regarded: but here, at least, they are to stop; in regard they have gone too far; for, there wants nothing, in that case, but a putting the carnal counsel into execution: and therefore, they are to go back all the steps, by which they have gone forward, in this course; and to beware of walking in the counsel of flesh and blood, or practising according to the advice thereof. If we *walk in the counsel of the ungodly*, we are in danger of *standing in the way of sinners*: if we *stand in the way of sinners*, we are next in danger of *sitting in the seat of the scornful*, as you have it, Psal. i. 1. If

flesh and blood will be in with its word, yet it must not be heard; if heard, yet it must not be regarded; if regarded, its advice must not be followed, otherwise we confer with flesh and blood.

5. In a word, not to confer with flesh and blood, is not only to *reject* conference and consultation therewith, but to *receive other counsellors*, and *embrace better counsel* than flesh and blood can give; and particularly, to consult with the oracles of the living God, and follow the conduct of his word and Spirit.

II. We are next to *confirm the truth of the doctrine*, by a few scripture examples, that we are not to consult with flesh and blood, in the matters of God and conscience. You may observe these four excellent examples in this matter.

1. To begin with the example of CHRIST, the great pattern of our imitation, in all his imitable perfections. When Peter came in with his carnal counsel, after Christ had been fortelling his death and sufferings, Peter began, forsooth, to rebuke him, saying, *Be it far from thee, Lord; this shall not be unto thee*, Matthew xvi. 22. What! wilt thou suffer such indignity? There was the language of flesh and blood. But, how doth Christ entertain it? He turneth himself to Peter, saying, *Get thee behind me, Satan; thou art an offence unto me: for thou savourest not the things that be of God, but those that be of men.*—So, when flesh and blood comes in with its solicitations, we ought to banish the same with a *get thee behind me, Satan*.

2. We have the example of *Abraham*, when he *went out of his own country, at the commandment of God, not knowing whither he went*, Heb. xi. 8. and so not consulting with flesh and blood: yea, when God called him to offer up his son, his only son Isaac, flesh and blood might have objected a thousand things: that he was the child of the promise: nay, that his offering Isaac would contradict the *command* of God; *Thou shalt not kill*: And contradict the *promise* of God; *That in Isaac should his seed be called*: that it would contradict the rule of *natura' affection*. Yea, but Abraham consulted

sulted not with flesh and blood; but *by faith offered up Isaac*, as it is said, Heb. xi. 17. As little did he consult with flesh and blood, when he took God's word, and trusted in him, with relation to his having Isaac, when both his body and Sarah's was dead.

3. We have the example of *Moses*, of whom it is said, Heb. xi. 24,—27. *By faith Moses refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter; choosing rather to suffer affliction with the people of God, than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season, &c.* If he had conferred with flesh and blood, he had rather chosen to dwell at ease in Pharaoh's court, and enjoy all the pleasures and treasures thereof: but he had learned, not to confer with flesh and blood.

4. We have the example of *Daniel*, chap. iii. 15, 16, 17. when commanded to worship Nebuchadnezzar's gold image: if Daniel had consulted with flesh and blood, he would easily have complied with the courses of the times, and rather have worshipped the golden image, than have been cast into the fiery furnace: for, flesh and blood would have told him, that it was better to be wise than too precise. Yea, but he and his companions could not be persuaded to a little outward obedience; for, they consulted not with flesh and blood, but consulted with God, saying, *We are not careful to answer thee, O king, in this matter: for, the God whom we serve is able to save us.* Yea, so far from consulting with flesh and blood was he and they, that they would not defile themselves with a portion of the king's meat, Dan. i. 8.; nor with the wine which he drank. Flesh and blood would have told him, that there was no harm in meat; that it was a thing indifferent: but they were under another influence and conduct, than that of flesh and blood. Yea, so obstinate was Daniel from consulting with flesh and blood, that notwithstanding the conspiracy of the nobles against him, because of his devotion towards his God, and their obtaining a decree of casting all into the lion's den that should, for thirty days, worship any other, or ask any petition of another, except of Darius, Daniel went more openly and worshipped his God than

ever, in the view of his very enemies.—Flesh and blood would have told him, that he might have dispensed with a little ceremony of opening windows, and exposing him to danger that way; nay, but he consulted not with flesh and blood.

III. We now proceed to assign the *reasons*, why we must not consult with flesh and blood. We shall only condescend on the four following.

1. Because flesh and blood are utterly *unable* to give advice, in the matters of God. Flesh and blood could not so much as tell how a man might be *born again*; or regenerated, unless he should go into his *mother's womb again*; as you see in the instance of Nicodemus, a learned man, a ruler of the Jews, and a master in Israel, John iii. 1,—4. Yea, when it was explained in part to him, it was impossible for flesh and blood to understand it, as he himself confessed; *How can these things be?* John iii. 9. Flesh and blood are altogether unable to give advice in the matters of God.

2. Because flesh and blood are *unwilling* to give advice in the matters of religion; for, they are in a constant rebellion against God and godliness; *The flesh lusteth against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh; and these two are contrary the one to the other*, Gal. v. 17. Yea, flesh and blood are enmity against God: *Because the carnal mind is enmity against God: and is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be: so then they that are after the flesh cannot please God*, Rom. viii. 7, 8. Hence,

3. Because flesh and blood are *unfit* for giving advice in the matters of God, and conscience, and religion: if they be unable and unwilling, surely they are unfit to be consulted with. It is a folly to consult with them; for, their counsel is like that of Ahithophel, that will be *turned to foolishness*. Flesh and blood will be sure to give us wrong advice, and bad counsel in the matters of God. Is it fit, in the matters of God, to consult the enemies of God? No; for, *What fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness? And what*

*what communion hath light with darknes? What concord hath Christ with Belial? Or what agreement hath the temple of God with idols? 2 Cor. vi. 14, 15, 16.—*

Again,

4. Because it is *dangerous* to consult with flesh and blood. It is very dangerous, in several respects; particularly in the four following ones.

(1.) It is dangerous, because flesh and blood will hinder us from duty, if we confer with them. What hindered those that were bidden to the gospel-feast? Why, one consulted with his *farm*, another with his *merchandise*; and so they made *light of the invitation*, by consulting with flesh and blood, and advising with carnal reason, and carnal ease, Matth. xxii. 5. What hindered the rulers that believed in Christ from confessing him? John xii. 42, 43. Even fear, *lest they should be put out of the synagogue*; for, *they loved the praise of men more than the praise of God*. They consulted with flesh and blood.

(2.) It is dangerous, because if we consult with flesh and blood, it will not only hinder us from entering upon a profession of Christ, and so lead us to the omission of duty, but also will make us *venture* upon those things, which God hath expressly discharged, and commanded that we should not do: so Saul, when he went to destroy the Amalekites, he had an express command to spare nothing, 1 Sam. xv. 3. But Saul consulted with flesh and blood; *he spared Agag, and some of the best of the cattle*. Why might flesh and blood say to Saul, O? I may be in the like case; and he that shews no mercy, shall have no mercy shewn him; so he spared him. And he also consulted with flesh and blood concerning the cattle, and sheep, and oxen: carnal reason told him, they would serve for *burnt-offerings*, ver. 15. But Samuel told Saul afterwards, *That obedience was better than sacrifice; and to hearken, than the fat of rams*, ver. 22. It was consulting with flesh and blood that caused Eve to eat of the forbidden fruit: she saw it was fair to the eye, and meat to be desired, Gen. iii. 6.

(3.) It

(3.) It is dangerous, because if we consult with flesh and blood, it will hinder us from *suffering*, in the cause of God. The apostles rejoiced in this, that *they were counted worthy to suffer shame for his name*, Acts v. 41.; they counted it a great honour: it is a gift of God when it is given, not only to believe, but to suffer for his name. Had Paul consulted with flesh and blood, he would never have been willing to die for Christ's sake, as Acts xxi. 11, 13. *What mean ye to weep, and to break mine heart? I am ready, not only to be bound, but also to die at Jerusalem for the name of the Lord Jesus.* Flesh and blood, instead of suffering for Christ, will tell a man to persecute the cause of Christ, and the followers of Christ, against knowledge and conscience, if he consult his own carnal ease, interest, credit, and honour in the world.

(4.) It is dangerous, because if we consult with flesh and blood, it sends a man at last to consult with the *devil*, and to take advice of hell, as you see in the case of Saul, 1 Sam. xxviii. 7. *Seek me a woman that hath a familiar spirit, that I may go to her, and enquire of her.* Thus he consulted with the witch of Endor. Having so long consulted with flesh and blood, he at last sought to the devil himself to consult with. If we still consult with flesh and blood, who are the devil's friends and favourites, we are in danger of consulting next with the devil himself.

IV. We come now to the *application* of the subject, which we shall essay in an use of information, caution, reprehension, dehortation, and direction.

*1<sup>st</sup>*, Let us then improve the doctrine, in an use of *information*. Hence we may see,

I. What *advice* it is that the *wicked of the world* do follow, and what is the counsel that doth destroy them, and mislead them: why, they are wholly under the conduct and counsel of *flesh and blood*; they have a daily conference stated with carnal ease, carnal reason: and the conference is held in the heart; and at this council Satan presides; *he works in the children of disobedience*. And what can be expected as the result of such

such a black and hellish consultation? For, at this council, iniquity is established by a law; and no acts passed, but acts of rebellion and hostility against heaven. Indeed, the wicked world listen to no solicitations, no arguments, but what are drawn from flesh and blood: and hence, in a suitableness to the dictates of the carnal inclination, some are hotly pursuing their pleasures some their profits, some their honour: the voluptuous man, his pleasure, his cups, and queens; the covetous man, his profit, his worldly gains; the ambitious man, his honour, his credit and grandeur.—Whence is it that all manner of wickedness, profanity, and carnality abound! Why, the world are all busy conferring with flesh and blood: this is the principle that sways them; hence so wearied, in duty, secret, private, and public.

2. See wherein it is, that the *immortal soul*, and its everlasting concerns, are so much slighted and neglected by the world, while the body, and outward things, draw away all the concern after them, why, it is because men consult with *flesh and blood*; they consult their carnal ease and outward conveniency; but do not consult their soul's everlasting welfare. Flesh and blood goes no higher than itself, and takes no notice of the soul; or, if it doth, it provides no better for the soul than for the body, like the fool in the gospel, who thought his soul might be happy with full barns; — *Soul, take thy rest, thou hast goods laid up for many years.* Alas! short-lived happiness for an immortal soul; *Thou fool, this night shall thy soul be required of thee.*

3. Hence see the root of *superstition* and *will-worship*, it flows from conferring with flesh and blood; which hating the spirituality of worship, is most taken up with carnal ordinances and human inventions, and uninstituted ceremonies: *In vain do they worship me, teaching for the doctrines the commandments of men.* It is too remarkable, that the more carnal that the generation is growing, the more is abjured ceremonies creeping in among us, and the less testifying against the same; though yet it be a *burden which neither we nor our fathers were able to bear*, as the apostle says,

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Acts xv. 10. *why tempt ye God to put a yoke?* The apostle there speaks of a yoke of *ceremonies*, once enjoined of God himself, that now being abolished, it was a tempting of God; much more is the yoke of ceremonies that never were enjoined. But while we consult with flesh and blood, we tamely submit to the yoke of *carnal ordinances*, as they are called, Heb. ix. 10.; and while the spirituality of worship is neglected and detested, and the internal glory of ordinances is out of sight.

4. See what is the *spring of all corruption* in the doctrine, worship, discipline, and government of the house of God: it will be found that consulting with flesh and blood, in the matters of religion, is at the bottom thereof.

(1.) Whence is it that the *doctrines* of the gospel have been so much corrupted? It is just from carnal reason, and consulting with that rather than with the word; *We err, not knowing the scriptures*, not conferring with the scriptures: or, if men confer with the scriptures, and consult the word, it is not with the *word* and the *Spirit* together; but it is with the word and their own spirit, their own carnal sentiments:—hence so many carnal interpretations of the scripture, and carnal glosses upon the word, suiting the natural apprehensions of men concerning the *law*, as if it was still standing in force, as a covenant, against believers as well as unbelievers; or, as if personal obedience thereto were the way to eternal life, while yet the scripture testifies of Christ, as the *only way* to life; and our obedience now, when evangelical, as being only the necessary fruit and evidence of union to him. Pride of reason, founds Socinianism; pride of the will, Arminianism; pride of self-righteousness, Neonomianism.—How is the doctrine of *justification* and *sanctification* confounded\*, by mens conferring with flesh and blood? Carnal reason suggesting, that God will not justify us, but upon some worthy consideration,

\* The difference between justification and sanctification, is clearly stated by our Author. See the page in the beginning of Vol. II.

or valuable performance of ours, which intimates gross ignorance of the gospel, concerning free justification by the blood of Christ.—It is from this root, even the conferring with flesh and blood, that many also do abuse the doctrine of the gospel to *licentiousness*, as if it encouraged wickedness, which is blasphemy against Christ, as if he was the minister of sin: nay, those that reproachfully charge the *doctrine of grace*, as a *cover to sin*; and the *preachers* of it, as if they were *enemies to holiness*, do but grossly betray their ignorance of the gospel, and their consulting with flesh and blood, in all their carnal arguments; for, if they consult with the gospel itself duly, in opposition to legal doctrine, they would find, that the more evangelical the doctrine is, the more holy and pure it is and influential upon holiness; for, the more a man is *dead to the law*, the more he *lives unto God*: but this will remain a mystery to many in the world for ever, because of their carnal thoughts and reasonings in favours of the law, as a covenant; for flesh and blood cannot endure gospel-doctrine; nature and carnal reason cannot make the law a rule of obedience, without making it a rule of acceptance\*.

(2.) Whence is it that the *worship* which God hath appointed in his house, is so much abused; What is the rise of all that detestable neutrality in the worship of God, and weariness and lukewarmness in the duties thereof? Why, it is just mens conferring with flesh and blood. Spiritual worship, and a carnal heart, cannot comport, suit, or agree together: *That which is born of the flesh is flesh*. And flesh and blood cannot endure spiritual work and worship: hence *men draw near to God with the mouth, while the heart is removed far from him*. Hence men are careless what way they worship, or what way others worship God; whether it be an idolatrous, superstitious, or instituted way, like Gallio, *they care for none of those things*. Hence

\* The Reader will find these topics handled to excellent purpose by our Author, in Vol. II. Sermon XXIII. intuled, *Law-death, and Gospel-life*.

sabbaths and sermons, are a weariness; praying and praising, are a burden: flesh and blood cannot endure these things, “Take a carnal man, says one, tie him to a post, and you may kill him with praying and preaching.”

(3.) Whence is it that partiality in the exercise of *church discipline*, doth proceed? When men do not confer with flesh and blood, then discipline is powerful and impartial: but when, by consulting with flesh and blood, they connive at sin, over-look it in some, and dare not reprove it in others.—Flesh and blood says, Such a person is a *friend*; we must favour him: such a person is a *great man*, a rich man; we must wink at a fault; we must not meddle with him, lest he make us and the church uneasy.—By these carnal reasonings, the power of discipline is broken. Alas! how far are we, at this day, from the spirit of Ambrose, who excommunicated the emperor of Theodosius, for some rash orders of his; while the emperor humbly submitted to the discipline of the church; and, upon his repentance was received? But now, alas! we must not offend this and that great man, otherwise all will go wrong. Oh! where is powerful and impartial discipline! It is sunk in the mire of sinful conference with flesh and blood.

(4.) Whence again proceeds that disorder and confusion that takes place in the *government* of the church? While men consult not with flesh and blood, the government is beautiful and orderly: but by carnal reasoning, and carnal policy, and carnal wisdom, it is turned out of course: tyranny in church government over the souls and consciences of people; such as, in thrusting pastors upon a Christian flock, without their free consent and election, is rooted in conferring with flesh and blood: Why, says carnal wisdom and policy, such a patron must be gratified; such a great man must be pleased; the church cannot stand without the support of such pillars\*. What is all this, but a conferring with

\* That patronage is a great grievance in the church, contrary to the scripture, and repugnant to the acts of the church in her best times,

with flesh and blood.—In a word, all the degeneracy of our day, is owing to this origin.

5. Hence see what is the root of all the *divisions* of our day, it flows from this consultation with flesh and blood. See James iv. 1. 1 Cor. iii. 3. *Whereas there is among you envying, and strife, and division; are ye not carnal?* Division among ministers and people flows from this carnal bias; proud flesh and blood cannot be controlled, scorns to be corrected: *Who shall be greatest?* is still the question of flesh and blood. Who shall be highest? Proud flesh and blood will put a fair face upon the foulest act, rather than take with a fault, or confess a wrong, or forgive an injury.

6. Hence see what it is, that the people of God hath to *wrestle* against, while here, even all the counsels of flesh and blood. Paul rejects the consultation: there he plainly supposes that flesh and blood was ready to suggest, and sollicit, and give their advice; but Paul rejects the same; *Immediately I conferred not with flesh and blood.* This is a council where Satan presides, and is always at the head of the table. And hence, while they have *flesh and blood* to wrestle against, they have *principalities and powers* also, Eph. vi. 12. Much need have they of the *whole armour of God, that they may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil.*

2dly, This doctrine may be improved for *caution* to prevent mistakes. There are several things that this duty, of not consulting with flesh and blood, doth not prohibit: such as,

1. It doth not exclude the duty of necessary *conversation, traffic, and merchandise* with the carnal men of this world, providing we do not mingle with their vice, and contract no intimate friendship with them; for, *The friendship of this world is enmity against God:* but otherwise, conversation, company, trade, and traf-

times, may be seen evinced, Vol. V. Serm. LXXXII, intitled, *The Law of the House*; Serm. LXXXIII. intitled, *The Church besieged*; and Serm. LXXXV. intitled, *The Stability of Faith.* In notes at the foot of the page.

fic with such may be necessary and allowable. This caution the apostle gives us, 1 Cor. v. 9, 10. *I wrote unto you in an epistle, not to keep company with fornicators. Yet not altogether with the fornicators of this world, or with the covetous, or extortioners, or with idolaters; for then must ye needs go out of the world.*

2. It doth not exclude, impeach, or debar the duty of *charity toward the poor, and honouring the Lord with our worldly substance*, providing it be not done out of ostentation, to be *seen of men*, and to gratify flesh and blood. And as it doth not exclude charitable *deeds*, toward the souls and bodies of all men, doing them all the good services we can; so neither doth it exclude charitable *thoughts* of them: *Charity thinketh no evil*, but puts the best construction upon all the actions of others, that the nature of the thing will bear, 1 Cor. xv. 12.

3. It doth not exclude or debar the duty of *spiritual prudence*. We are to be *wise as serpents*, and not to run upon seen hazard, without a call; nor to neglect the duty of consulting our necessary safety and security in time of danger and persecution; providing we do not fly when God bids us stand; or when the cause of Christ, or glory of God, oblige us to bear witness for him, and for his truth: but abstract from these, or the like cases, Christian prudence is requisite in shunning whatever hazard we may, through imprudence, cast ourselves into: hence saith Solomon, *The prudent man foreseeth the evil, and hideth himself.*

4. It doth not exclude or impeach the duty of *courtesy* and *civility* towards all men; no: religion doth not allow men to be ill-bred or any way uncivil, more than it allows them to be ill-natured toward any: so, to be *courteous*, as the apostle exhorts, 1 Pet. iii. 8. is not to be reckoned a conferring with flesh and blood. There is a way of *becoming all things to all men*, by the duty of courtesy, civility, and hospitality, which may be gaining to all,

5. It doth not exclude the duty of *frugality* and *industry* about our worldly concerns. One is not reckoned a consuler with flesh and blood, because he provides for his family; for, he that doth not so, saith the apostle,

apostle, hath *denied the faith, and is worse than an infidel.* One may be a Mary for piety, and a Martha for industry too ; providing it be managed with moderation, so as not to exclude *the better part.*

6. It doth not exclude the duty of *mercy, pity and compassion* towards the *body*, whether our own, or that of others. It were an abuse of this doctrine, if any, out of a pretence of not consulting with flesh and blood, should shew no mercy to the outward man, no regard to their own health : but should punish the body with immoderate fasting, or penance, or unmercifully macerate their flesh, as many in the popish church, through their superstitious devotion, do. But, in some cases, *mercy is better than sacrifice.*

7. It doth not exclude or debar the duty of *forbearance and tenderness* towards those, that are overtaken in a fault. It were an abuse of this doctrine, of not consulting with flesh and blood, to be thereupon untender of weaklings, who are ready to stumble and fall : for, though this doctrine obligeth us not to bear with sin, where-ever it is, yet it doth not allow us to insult over the infirmities of any ; but we are to take the apostle's rule, Gal. vi. 1, 3. *Brethren, if a 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. Bear ye one another's burdens, and so fulfil the law of Christ.*

8. It doth not exclude the duty of *respect* to every one, in their several stations and relations ; particularly, due regard to parents, magistrates, and ministers ; and subjection to judicatories of God's appointment, providing it be *in the Lord, and in all things lawful*, is not inconsistent with this duty, of not consulting with flesh and blood : nay, it is highly consistent therewith ; yea, and necessary thereunto : for a man may consult with flesh and blood, by refusing to give due subjection ; as many obstinate offenders do, that despise all discipline. Though, indeed, unlawful subjection or obedience, *not in the Lord*, is but a consulting with flesh and blood ; while we follow the dictates  
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of courts or councils, in a way disagreeable to the word of God.

9. If doth not exclude the duty of *advising with neighbours and Christians*, whether about civil or religious matters, wherein any difficulty doth present itself. The doctrine, indeed, excludes the taking of *ill counsel*; but doth not exclude the taking of *good counsel* from man, in an agreeableness to the word of God: nay, many times *in the multitude of counsellors there is safety*, as Solomon saith; who also teacheth us to take advice in matters of weight, saying, *With good advice make war*.

10. If we view this doctrine, of not consulting with flesh and blood, as it stands in opposition to self-righteousness; or seeking to establish our own credit before men, or our own righteousness before God; yet it doth not exclude the duty of desiring and seeking, in a regular way, to have and maintain a *good name*: studying to have a righteousness of profession before men; and a righteousness of sanctification, both of heart and life, before God. Though we are to deny the righteousness of works, and to seek justification and acceptance elsewhere, otherwise we are of those that *put confidence in the flesh*, and are not *the true circumcision*: yet we are not to *forsake the works of righteousness*, but to *maintain good works*: *This is a faithful saying, and these things I will that thou affirm constantly, that they which have believed in God, might be careful to maintain good works: these things are good and profitable unto men*. They are to be maintained before men, in all the duties of righteousness, respecting them; and sobriety, respecting ourselves, and our deportment before them: they are to be maintained before God, in all the parts of holiness; and that both internal, in the exercise of holy graces; and external, in the performance of holy duties. Though we must *deny* this righteousness, in point of *dependence*; yet not in point of *performance*: though we need another righteousness to *trust* to, yet we need this to be *possessed* of; otherwise we would expose the faith of Christ to be evil spoken of. By our *light shining before men*

men, we must endeavour to make others *confess*, that we are illuminate with the beams of the Sun of Righteousness.—A righteousness without us we need, to give us a *title* to heaven; and a righteousness within us, for sanctification of heart and way, we need, to give us a *meetness* for heaven. A right of *merit* we have in justification, by Christ's righteousness; a right of *meetness* we have in sanctification, by Christ's Spirit: which latter right may be the meaning of that word, Rev. xxii. 14. *Blessed are they that do his commandments, that they may have right to the tree of life, and may enter in through the gates into the city:* Or, it may be understood thus, that they may have *evidence* of their right, according to that word, John xv. 14. *Ye are my friends, if ye do whatsoever I command you.*

The *third* use is of *reprehension*. This doctrine reproves many sorts of people, that may be said to confer with flesh and blood: and here, by the bye, you may examine whether or not you be chargeable with this sin, of conferring with flesh and blood: and if we search narrowly, I know few or none will be in case to exculpate themselves, or plead, Not guilty. There are those seven or eight sorts of people, that consult with flesh and blood.

The *first* sort of persons, that confer with flesh and blood, are those, who, not chusing the word of God for their rule, nor his Spirit for their guide, consult with *tradition*; yielding themselves to be ruled and conducted with human tradition, and antient customs of their forefathers: This Paul acknowledges was his sin, before Christ was here revealed in him, ver. 14. *Being more exceedingly zealous of the traditions of my fathers.*—This is the sin of the *Papists*, who reject the scriptures, as sufficient to uphold their religion; no wonder, for it cannot stand upon that foundation; and therefore they build upon corrupt traditions, and study to uphold the same with fire and faggot.—Yea, this is the sin of ignorant *Protestants*, that shape their religion only in a  
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conformity to their ancestors; they will be of their forefathers religion, and maintain the principles of their education, like those, Jer. xlv. 17. What is all this but a consulting with flesh and blood?

The *second* sort of persons, that confer with flesh and blood, are those that consult with *man* in the matters of God; and that either in point of trust or fear.—Some consult with man in point of *trust*, while they put their trust in man, contrary to the command of God, Psal. cxlvi. 3. *Put not your trust in princes, nor in the sons of men, in whom there is no help.* It is dangerous to repose our trust in man: *Cursed is man that trusteth in man, and maketh flesh his arm, whose heart departeth from the Lord,* Jer. xvii. 5. If we trust in armies or allies, parliaments or potentates, friends or favourites, we trust in lying words: *It is better to trust in the Lord, than to put confidence in princes,* Psal. cxviii. 9. *Trust ye not in a friend, put no confidence in a guide,* Micah vii. 5. And Jer. ix. 4. *Take ye heed, every one of his neighbour, and trust ye not in any brother: for every brother will utterly supplant, and every neighbour will walk with slanders.*—That time is come to pass: there is the ordinary character of the men that are the object of our false confidence, when we trust in men like ourselves: yea, *the best of men are like a briar, saith the prophet Micah; and the most upright sharper than a thorn hedge, which will pierce all that lean to it.* If we depend upon human powers, for the preservation of our church or state; or depend upon human policy, for the reformation of religion, we will find ourselves sadly disappointed: *It is better to trust in the Lord, than to put confidence in princes.* If we depend upon human laws, even for the security of our fortune; or upon our compliance with whatever human authority enjoins, for our freedom from outward troubles and trials, we trust but in man, and so confer with flesh and blood.—Again, some consult with man in point of *fear*: If either we trust in them, or be *afraid of man that shall die*, we consult with flesh and blood. It is an awful word to this purpose, Isa. li. 12, 13. *Who art thou that thou shouldst be afraid of a man, that shall die; and of the son of man, which shall*

*shall be made as grass? and forgettest the Lord thy Maker, that hath stretched forth the heavens, and laid the foundations of the earth?* Thus many dare not do their duty for fear of man: they dare not worship God in their families; they dare not abstain from swearing, drinking, tipping, or betake themselves to serious religion, for fear of being scoffed, and scorned, and persecuted; like the Jews, John xii. 42. that *durst not profess Christ, for fear of being cast out of the synagogue.* Thus some even of the godly, perhaps, dare not make public appearances for the cause and truths of the Lord Jesus, for fear of being exposed to the censures of the church, in a time when they are called to appear: but see what the Lord saith, in such a case, to those that fear the reproaches, and revilings of men: *Hearken unto me, ye that know righteousness, the people in whose heart is my law, fear ye not the reproach of men, neither be ye afraid of their revilings: For the moth shall eat them up like a garment, and the worm shall eat them like wool.* It is but the grass of the field that opposeth us; *All flesh is grass.*—Let us not consult with flesh and blood.

The *third* sort of persons, that confer with flesh and blood, are these who consult with *passion* and *resentment*, so as to seek revenge upon every injury, real or conceived. Why, ask a man why he is so hot in the pursuit of revenge, against those that have wronged him: he will answer, How can flesh and blood bear this? If I put up with this wrong, they will wrong me again; therefore, nothing will serve me but their blood, or some suitable retaliation, for the injury done me: while yet we are commanded to *pray for them that persecute us*, and to *love them that hate us*. If we consult with flesh and blood, we will *devour one another*, Gal. v. 15. How often hath it happened, that those who have sought revenge have been the destruction of themselves and others, while both parties have been killed in the field; and while others, meditating revenge, they and their whole families have been undone by law-pleas: yea, many times consulting with flesh and blood, in matters of revenge, causeth men

be their own destruction. Saul killed himself, after he had long hunted David. And Judas, who was so cruel to his Master, sold himself to a halter, hanged himself, and his bowels gushed out. Proud flesh and blood is the cause of revenge; *Only by pride cometh contention*, Proverbs xiii. 10. whereas humility would keep peace. Pliny writes of two ill-natured goats, that met both together, upon a narrow bridge, over a great stream: the bridge was so narrow, that the one could not pass by the other; and if they had striven, and fought it out, it had been present danger of drowning to them both: but at last one of them lying down, and becoming a bridge to the other, both were saved. Indeed, the example of that brute beast may tell us, it is better, to let persons trample upon us sometimes, than by squabbling and discord, to endanger the drowning and destroying of both ourselves and others. A man, meditating revenge, cannot go to God and say, as Christ hath taught him, *Forgive us our sins, as we forgive them that trespass against us*. If you say this petition with a heart full of revenge, you do nothing but imprecate a curse upon yourselves; and that God would deal with you, as you deal with your brother: if you pray not, then God's vengeance is ready to be poured out, Jer. x. 25.; if you do pray, then your prayer is a cart-rope, to pull down vengeance upon you. Why, say you, but should my neighbour abuse me at this rate? No, indeed: but because he hath broken one command, in wronging you, will you break another, in malicious revenge against him?—Why put this last question? That is doctrine for them that have no blood in their nails: I tell you minister, flesh and blood cannot endure the wrong I sustain. I tell you man, flesh and blood cannot enter into the kingdom of God: wherefore, if you come there, flesh and blood must be mortified, and not consulted with. Why, I would be just reckoned a fool, a sot, an idiot, if I should put up with such an affront; it would be a discredit. Why, the wisdom of God, by the mouth of Solomon, saith, *It is the glory of a man to pass by an injury*. And what saith your carnal wisdom, poor fool that

that you are, in opposition to God's wisdom? Let the world judge as they please, it is a greater credit for a man to overcome himself, and his revengeful affections, than to overcome his enemies, either at the bar or in the field. Well, say you, I shall forgive, but I cannot forget. Indeed, it is a wonder what one remarks in Cyprian, that though he had an excellent memory for all things else, yet he could never remember an injury; so ill was his memory on that score, which was his excellency. But we may observe as great a wonder, on the contrary, that men have such ill memories, that they forget all things else almost; yet they have such good memories that they will remember injuries never so long: yea, they will never forget them, but mind to resent and revenge them, after many years. Ask many a person concerning a sermon: Alas! I have the worst memory in the world, I am so forgetful; I would give any thing for a good memory: and yet, perhaps, they will mind an injury twenty years. Oh! if God so forgive our sins, as yet not to forget them, what would become of us!

The *fourth* sort, who confer with flesh and blood, are those that consult with *numbers* and *multitudes*, in the matters of God: they will be the religion that the most are of; they will follow such a principle and opinion, because the greatest multitude and number of great men, or good men do so: thus, like Roman votaries, they bind their faith to the belt of the church; to believe as the church believes. It is not, *Thus saith the Lord*, that binds them; that were to build upon a divine testimony: but, *Thus saith the church*, or thus saith an assembly of divines, or thus saith such and such a great number of men: the greatest multitude of the learned and eminent say so and so; therefore we follow these. Thus they take the gospel upon trust, and have the faith of Christ with respect of persons. Can such a great number be all wrong, and such a small number only right? No; wisdom must dwell with the greatest multitude, saith flesh and blood, without ever *proving all things*, and *holding fast that which is good*: or, like the

noble Bereans, *searching the scriptures, to see whether these things be so*. Perhaps this is as prevailing an evil, as any in the present time, with respect to matters controverted in the Lord's house. It is a carnal argument for one to say, Lord help us, if all others be in the wrong but you; yet, why must we be singular? Yea, but when vice becomes general, singularity becomes a virtue: when error in judgment, or principle, becomes universal, singularity becomes a necessary duty. What though we be called nice, and proud, and singular, affecting a name above others? We must *follow Christ, bearing his reproach*. Though a man should happen to be on the right side of the question, by following the principles of those whom he takes to be the greatest multitude of learned and eminent men; yet his faith is but an human faith, while it is built but upon an human testimony: and a man's embracing only what he thinks the Rabbies of the day maintain, is too like that of the Pharisees, John vii. 48, 49. *Have any of the rulers and Pharisees believed in him? But this people, that know not the law, are accursed*. Even so will flesh and blood argue: The greatest body and number of the great and learned world, if not the whole tribe of those that are reckoned wise and learned, believe so and so; and it is to be supposed that it is but a pack of ignorant fools, that differ from them; and therefore we will believe as the greatest multitude of our church guides direct us: they know things of that nature better than we; and therefore we must trust that they are in the right: thus many times the *blind lead the blind, and both fall into the ditch*: for it may happen, that even those may be blind, whom neither themselves, nor others think to be so: so it was with the opinionative Pharisees, who said, *Are we blind also?* John ix. 40.

The *fifth* sort that confer with flesh and blood, are those who consult with *human wisdom*, in the matters of God, and *whose fear towards God is taught by the wisdom of men*; on which account the Lord threatens, Isa. xxix. 14. *The wisdom of their wise men shall perish; and the understanding of their prudent men shall be hid*.

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Many are taken not with the *truth*, as it is in Jesus, but with the wisdom of fine words, or the wisdom of human literature, and carnal reasonings; both which the apostle cautions against, in the matters of religion; *And this I say, lest any man should beguile you with enticing words*, Col. ii. 4. And the apostle's practice was the very reverse of this, 1 Corinth ii. 1, 2. *Brethren, when I came to you, I came not with excellency of speech, or of wisdom, declaring unto you the testimony of God. For I determined not to know any thing among you, save Jesus Christ, and him crucified.* Inticing words is the bait wherewith the credulous and simple sort of people are taken, as the apostle observes, Rom. xvi. 17, 18. The *simple* are they who are caught with the bait of the *inticing words of men*, who, like merchants, set off slight and corrupt wares with the finest words. Another caution is, Colos. ii. 8. *Beware lest any man spoil you through philosophy and vain deceit, after the tradition of men, after the rudiments of the world, and not after Christ.* The former is a bait for the simple, but here is a bait for the learned world, when human philosophy and natural reasonings, are set in opposition to the truth as it is in Jesus Christ.—People confer with flesh and blood, when they are offended at the *simplicity* of Christ's doctrine, which is a stranger to the ornament of human wisdom, clothed only with the simple attire of a vulgar stile, free from the flourish of lofty eloquence; thus Augustine, before his conversion, owns his contempt of the word, when he began to read it, because he looked upon the stile of the scriptures as very mean, compared with the eloquence of Cicero, to which he had accustomed himself: hence it is said, *The Jews require a sign, and the Greeks seek after wisdom*; i. e. The *Jews*, who were accustomed to live under extraordinary dispensations, they would have nothing but miracles and prodigies from heaven; but the *Greeks*, the *Gentiles*, they sought for the depth of philosophy in the gospel; and when they missed that, they laughed it to scorn; as you may see in Paul's rencounter with the Epicurean philosophers and Stoics, Acts xvii. 18. Great reason then had the apostle to

say as he doth, 1 Cor. ii. 4, 6, 7. *And my speech, and my preaching was not with enticing words of man's wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit, and of power. Howbeit, we speak wisdom among them that are perfect: yet not the wisdom of this world, nor of the princes of this world, that come to nought. But we speak the wisdom of God in a mystery, even the hidden wisdom which God ordained before the world unto our glory. Therefore, though the preaching of the gospel be, to them that perish, foolishness; yet to them that are saved, it is the power of God: For God hath made foolish the wisdom of this world; and by the foolishness of preaching saveth them that believe. We preach Christ crucified; to the Jews a stumbling-block, and to the Greeks foolishness; but to them that are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God, and the wisdom of God: because the foolishness of God is wiser than men, and the weakness of God is stronger than men; so you see the apostle speaking at large, 1 Cor. i. 17,—29. These that are only taken then, with a fine stile of language, and turns of wit, and the flowers of rhetoric, without searching into the mysteries of the gospel, and seeking to have the gospel coming, not in word only, but in power, and in the Holy Ghost, 1 Theff. i. 5. are carnal, and conferring with flesh and blood.—But carnal wisdom, and carnal reason runs some times in another channel, while it not only, upon the one hand, represents the doctrine of the gospel as too mean, and therefore despises it; but, on the other hand, represents the mysteries of the gospel, as too high, and therefore discredits it. Thus the devil plays his game at both hands: sometimes suggesting that the doctrine of the gospel is too coarse and plain; at other times that it is too sublime and mysterious; such as, the mystery of the Trinity, the mystery of the incarnation of Christ, the mystery of the spiritual union between Christ and the believer, the mystery of free justification, without works, by the rightcousness of another.—Hence a generation of atheists, not only call in question, but impudently deny the mysteries of religion, as incomprehensible and impossible, because inconsistent with their carnal reason,*

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however agreeable to right reason.—But flesh and blood are ready to say of gospel-mysteries, as Nicodemus of the wonders of regeneration, *How can these things be?*—We might shew how many errors of the day, whether Arian, Socinian, Arminian, or Pelagian, derive their origin from hence; but I proceed.

The *sixth* sort of persons, who confer with flesh and blood, are those that consult with the the *world* in the matters of religion.—Of this sort are these that follow the ill *example*, and study the carnal *politics* of the world, and join in therewith, especially when it tendeth to advance or secure their worldly interests. Thus many, in point of worldly example, they rule their actions according to the will and example of their superiors; so Israel followed Jeroboam. And some, to please a *great* man, will make bold with light and conscience, directing them another way: or, if they suppose him to be a *good* man, that takes such and such a course, then the example of such will blind the eye of their conscience, and foster the argument of flesh and blood; for, why, saith flesh and blood, may not I do as such a great man, or such a good man doth, that is wiser than I can pretend to be? Yea, but we are to be *followers of none*, but as they are *followers of Christ*; otherwise we consult only with flesh and blood.—Of this sort also are those, that give up themselves to the conduct of worldly *policy*, and study the carnal politics of the world, even in the matters of God and conscience; and hence will yield a blind obedience to the commandments of men, as Israel did to the statutes of Omri, Mic. vi. 16. And Ephraim, who *willingly walked after the commandment*, Hof. v. 11. And perhaps all this, not for conscience sake, but for interest sake: why, saith flesh and blood, it is better to be wise than fool hardy, and expose ourselves to the fury of the government, civil or ecclesiastic: should we not take that course that will most contribute to obtain some worldly advantage, to secure our worldly interest, or to prevent worldly losses, crosses, and inconveniences; and why should we not obey the higher powers? Well, if it be duty you are enjoined; why not obey? We ought to

*obey*

*obey them in the Lord, and for conscience sake* : but tho' a man may be doing what is duty in this case ; yet, if he be swayed thereto, not from conscience, but from such carnal worldly motives, in matters that concern God and religion, then he but consults with flesh and blood ; and *his fear toward God is taught at by the precepts of men*. But, on the other hand, if you truly doubt of its being duty, before God, that you are called to, then, *whatsoever is not faith is sin* ; and if thus it be sin, then, *whether ye ought to obey God or man, judge ye* ? We consult with flesh and blood, if we yield obedience either to civil or ecclesiastical authority, any other way but in the Lord : or, if conscience be merely swayed with interest.—In a word, all sinful shifts to shun the *cross*, and carnal compliances to secure the world, is a consulting with flesh and blood : yea, when human authority is more regarded, for the sake of the world, than the authority of God and Christ.

The *seventh* sort of persons, that conferreth with flesh and blood are those that consult outward *peace* and *tranquility*, in the matters of God, even though they have little regard to gospel-truth and piety : they love to be easy, and to live in peace, though it should be at the rate and expence of making *shipwreck of faith and a good conscience*. But, *the wisdom that is from above is first pure, and then peaceable*, James iii. 17.—First purity and truth, and then tranquility and peace, is the due order of heavenly wisdom : and hence we are commanded to *love the truth and peace* ; first the truth, and then the peace. Peace without truth is but a conspiracy against the God of truth : therefore, in studying to *follow peace with all men*, we are to observe this rule, otherwise it cannot be an holy peace, according to what follows, *And holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord*. The peace of a church can never be maintained with a blessing on it, if truth be not the foundation of that peace ; for, it is a cursed peace that stands not upon that foundation.—But of this sort of people, that confer with flesh and blood, are those also that study their own outward peace and ease,

ease, at any rate; and hence will rather sin than suffer: therefore, when persecution comes, they fall away; flesh and blood cannot endure the cross of Christ. They are content to follow Christ in a fair day; but when foul weather, and a heavy cross comes, by and bye *they are offended*, Matth. xiii. 21. Our Lord hath fairly warned all his disciples what a tempest of trouble and trial, reproach and persecution will blow in their face, saying, *If any man will be my disciple, let him take up his cross, and follow me*: and therefore they are not to promise themselves peace in the world, and a constant flourishing state of outward prosperity; for he hath said, *In the world ye shall have tribulation*: and yet when tribulation comes, hereupon Christ is to manny, a *stone of stumbling and a rock of offence*.—Thus they consult with flesh and blood, who project nothing but peace and ease in the way of duty and religion.

The *eighth* sort of persons, who confer with flesh and blood, are those that consult with *sense* and *self*, in the matters of God, and of faith, and religion: that is, those who in religion put sense, as it were, in the room of faith, and self in the room of God.

[1.] Some put *sense* in the room of *faith*; and hence their faith is governed by sense and feeling: they do not believe the threatning, because they have the sense and feeling of smiling providences: they do not believe the promise, because they have the sense and feeling of adverse and frowning providences: outward providences is made the rule of their faith, not the word of God. Hence, faith flesh and blood, that measures the threatning by sense, *Where is the promise of his coming? For, since the fathers fell asleep, all things continue as they were from the beginning of the creation*: not knowing, *That one day is with God, as a thousand years; and a thousand years, as one day*: and that *the heaven and earth, which are now, are kept in store, reserved unto fire, against the day of judgment, and perdition of ungodly men*, 1 Pet. iii. 4,—8. But because sentence against these is not speedily execute; therefore the hearts of the children of men are fully set in them to do evil, Eccl. viii. 11.: *Despising the riches of the goodness and forbearance of God, and his long-*

*suffering ; not knowing that the goodness of God should lead them to repentance, Rom. ii. 4.* And, on the other hand, hence, faith flesh and blood, that measures the promise by sense, Except I see signs and wonders I will not believe : and like Thomas, *Except I see in his hand the print of the nails, and thrust my hand into his side, I will not believe.* Of this sort are those that distrust all present means of faith, and imagining that extraordinary discoveries, striking upon outward sense, would make such impressions as would do the business, saying, as Luke xix. 30. *If one came from the dead, they would believe ; if they had oracles and miracles ; if God did speak to them from heaven, they would believe.* But Moses and the prophets are a sufficient ground of faith ; *If we do not believe them, neither would we believe, tho' one should rise from the dead.* If we cannot believe the threatening till we feel the execution of it, it is like saying, We will not believe, till we be in hell ; or, till it be in part execute on earth upon us : why, then our belief of it would not be founded on God's word, but our own sense and feeling ; and so it would not be faith properly, but sense. If we will not believe the promise till we feel the accomplishment of it, this is like putting the plow before the oxen : a backward way of going to work : yea, it is impossible to believe this way ; for sense is not faith : believing and feeling are different things. We may believe, without feeling ; but we cannot feel, without first believing.

[2.] Some, again, put *self* in the room of God, and the righteousness of God ; and so evidently consult with flesh and blood, while we consult with our self : and here take a view both of natural or carnal self, and of spiritual and religious self.

1. When we gratify *natural* or *carnal* self, we do but consult with flesh and blood ; when we cannot endure the *mortification* and *self-denial*, which Christ calls his disciples to, and by which they evidence themselves to be his disciples. We are called to *mortify our members that are upon the earth ; to renounce the devil, the world, and the flesh ; to be denied to all the sinful pleasures of time, and carnal company in the world :*

this

this grates hard upon flesh and blood, which is ready to cry out with the Jews, *This is a hard saying, who can bear it?* Flesh and blood think it strange that God should plant desires in them, which he will not allow them to satisfy: but as these carnal desires of men, are of themselves, so it is the natural craving of flesh and blood, that makes people desire to live as they list, and not as they ought: hence arises a secret dislike at the purity of the gospel. But beside this gross consultation with flesh and blood, in gratifying natural or carnal self.

2. When we gratify *spiritual* and *religious* self, we do but consult with flesh and blood. And there are two special ways wherein men gratify their religious self, namely, when they seek to establish their *own credit before men*, and when they seek to establish their *own righteousness before God*, in all their religious performances.

(1.) When they seek to establish their *own credit before men*, and to have a name, reputation, and applause, without having a single eye to the glory of God: these carnal ends and designs, in men's spiritual-like performances and religious duties, are a consulting with flesh and blood, while they *love the praise of men, more than the praise of God*, John xii. 43. This is a piece of self and carnal consultation, which, as it reigns over hypocrites, who yield themselves to the power and government of it; so it may prevail over true believers, who, many times, may find themselves under the tyranny and bondage of it. This is a thief that will steal into the ministers study and pulpit, to rob God of his glory there, that self may get what belongs to God. This is a robber that follows people from the chamber to the church, and spoils all their duties of hearing, praying, and praising; that, instead of giving praise to God, they may get praise to themselves:—Hence flesh and blood makes the man have no pleasure in duty, which hath brought in no applause to the man; and makes him take pleasure in that performance, that brings in most reputation and renown to the performer.—From

this principle a minister will *preach Christ out of envy*, that he may be thought as evangelical as the best: and from this principle also, some people will be as throng about religious duties, as any can be; that they may be thought as religious as the best. Thus, *for a pretence, the Pharisees made long prayers, and did many things to be seen of men.* This is an attempt, as it were, to swear by the Lord, and swear by Malcham; to serve Christ and Belial, God and self both. See how our Lord speaks of this, Luke xvi. 15. *Ye are they which justify yourselves before men; but God knoweth your hearts: for that which is highly esteemed among men, is abomination in the sight of God.*—Thus, I say, men consult with flesh and blood, when, in the matters of God, their great design is to establish their own credit before men.

(2.) When they seek to establish their *own righteousness before God*, as the Jews did, Rom. x. 3. These two parts of self do effectually oppose all true religion: for, as in the former respect, those that establish their own credit put self in the room of God and his glory, which is the ultimate end; so, in the latter respect, those that establish their own righteousness, they put self in the room of Christ, and his righteousness, which is the mean to that end. And now, while we seek a righteousness in ourselves, and in our own duties, for justification and acceptance with God, we do, in effect, bring down Christ, and set up flesh and blood in his room, and consult therewith. Men naturally seek after a righteousness in themselves, or salvation by their own personal obedience, according to the tenor of the covenant of works. Man's righteousness was once in himself, when he remained in his primitive integrity: but, since the fall, the Lord has removed our righteousness from ourselves to Christ, who has become the *Lord our righteousness*; yet how few are prevailed upon to relinquish self and self-righteousness\*! Many seek to establish their own righteousness that will not take with the charge.

\* See this point of doctrine more fully illustrated, Vol. III. Serm. XL. near the beginning.

1. These do seek to establish their own righteousness who can hardly be brought, either doctrinally or practically, to own, *That believers are wholly, and altogether, delivered from the law, as a covenant of works*; but still are for *seeking righteousness, as it were, by the works of the law*, Rom. ix. 32.—This was the stumbling stone over which the Jewish nation stumbled and fell headlong into ruin.

2. Of this sort are those that only cover their *legal sentiments* with a *gospel varnish*, while they bring in faith and repentance, and the like, as proper conditions of the covenant of grace, in room of the perfect obedience required in the covenant of works; which is a razing of the foundation of the gospel, and an establishing of a righteousness in our own person, for justification before God.

3. Of this sort are these also that bring in *gospel repentance*, and the like, as necessary conditions and qualifications, in order to our justification before and acceptance with God\*. Again,

4. Of this sort are those who, in principle or practice, contend that it is the *believer's duty* to be influenced, in his obedience, either by the *slavish fears of hell*, or the *legal hopes of heaven*. To obey from a *legal hope of heaven*, as if we were to obtain heaven by our obedience, as it is contrary to the apostle's doctrine, 1 Thess. v. 9. where he says, *That God hath appointed us to obtain salvation by our Lord Jesus Christ, who died for us that we should live with him*; so it affronts the obedience of Christ, whereby alone our title to heaven is secured. To obey from a *slavish fear of hell*, as if our obedience and duty would secure us therefrom, is like opposition to, and denial of the virtue of Christ's death, whereby alone our freedom from hell is secured.

5. Of this sort are those who bring the believer, upon every new sin, under a *liableness to everlasting death and damnation*, which is the penalty of the covenant of

\* See a refutation of this and several other doctrinal errors, in Vol. III. Use 2, for *Reproof*.

works, and which, though his sins deserved, yet the righteousness of Christ imputed to him, not only secures him from it, but from ever being liable to it. Those who thus will make the believer liable to that law-sentence, because of his sin, must of consequence suppose him not liable because of his obedience; and so they make him to be justified by his obedience, and condemned by his disobedience to the law; contrary to our received principles, in our Standards, declaring, "That the believer is not under the law, as a covenant, either to be justified or condemned \*." The believer is neither justified by his obedience to the law, nor condemned for his disobedience: but if he disobeys, his God and Father hath other ways of chastising him in a fatherly manner, according to Psal. lxxxix. 30,—33. In all these ways men do but establish their own righteousness, and so consult with flesh and blood.

In a word, Of this sort are all these that suspect the *doctrine of the gospel* as if it were an *enemy to the law and holiness*. Such is the propensity of nature towards the law, as a covenant of works, whenever awakened to any thoughtfulness about religion, that when the gospel declares that there is no justification by the deeds of the law; and that we are justified by faith, without the works of the law; and that righteousness is accounted to, or justification conferred upon them that *worketh not*, but *believeth on him that justifieth the ungodly*, Rom. iv. 4, 5.: Why, when this evangelical doctrine is opened, presently the legal disposition of men suspect this gospel doctrine, and say of the publishers of it, as the Jews did of Paul, Acts xviii. 13. *This fellow persuades men to worship God, contrary to the law*. Yea, not only contrary to the ceremonial law, but even to the moral law: for, must not men do as well as they can, in obedience to God's law; and then expect to be justified and accepted. Thus gospel doctrine comes to be challenged for Antinomianism; as if it allowed men a carnal liberty for sin, and freedom to break the law, or dis-

\* Confession of Faith, Chap. xix. Sect. 6.

couraged the practice of holiness; which is one of the greatest calumnies that can be raised against the gospel of Christ; and betrays dreadful ignorance of the gospel of grace: which shews plainly, that a man never *lives unto God*, in point of *holiness*, till he be *dead to the law* in point of *righteousness*, Galatians ii. 9.: nor ever brings forth *fruit unto God*, till he be *dead to the law*, and *married to Christ*, Rom. vii. 4. \*. But we need not think strange of this suspicion, nor the calumnies that issue from thence; for Christ Jesus, our glorious Lord himself, was obliged to defend himself against such calumnies as these; and therefore saith, *Think not that I am come to destroy the law*: I see, might he say, that is your thought, that is your suspicion; you suspect my doctrine as if it was an enemy to the law and to holiness; *I am not come to destroy, but to fulfil*. And the apostles had themselves to defend from this charge, *Do we make void the law thro' faith? God forbid; we establish the law* †.—Thus you see in how many respects people may be said to confer with flesh and blood.

\* This point of doctrine is very copiously handled by our Author, in the following Sermon, intitled, *Law-death, and Gospel-life*. See also Vol. III. Sermon XXXVIII. Use 2. for *Reproof*.

† About the time, when this Sermon was preached, the contest about the *Marrow* doctrine was upon the field, and the supporters thereof, were accused as Antinomians. See the affair accounted for, Vol. I. page 238. See also Sermon XXIII. and XXVIII. in a note at the foot on the first particular of the *Application*, in both Sermons.

## S E R M O N XXII.

GALATIANS i. 16.

—*Immediately I conferred not with flesh and blood.*

[The second Sermon on this Text]

**H**AVING finished what we intended upon the doctrinal part of the subject, by explaining what is to be understood by flesh and blood; confirmed the truth of the doctrine, by shewing that we are not to confer therewith in the matters of God; assigned the reasons therefore; entered upon the application of the subject, and have applied it in an use of information, caution, and reprehension: this doctrine may next be applied for *dehortation* and *direction*. And,

The *dehortation* is, O Sirs, *consult not with flesh and blood.*—And for *motives*, consider the *reasons* of the doctrine, formerly assigned. Flesh and blood are *unable* to give advice in the matters of God; and as *unable*, so they are *unwilling*, and consequently *unfit* to consult with: yea, to consult with flesh and blood is *dangerous*; for, if we consult therewith, flesh and blood will *binder* us from duty; flesh and blood will *lead us to sin*; flesh and blood will *impede* our suffering for Christ and his cause: yea, if we consult with flesh and blood, we will consult with the *devil*, as Saul did; and so to consult with flesh and blood, is to consult with our own ruin: yea, the dishonour of God, and the discredit of the gospel. But these I pass, having formerly insisted upon them.

But for *direction* in this matter, it may be asked,  
1. *What* are we to consult with, if we may not consult

sult with flesh and blood. 2. What are the most proper *means*, for preventing our conferring with flesh and blood.

I. *Whom* or *what* are we to consult with, if we may not consult with flesh and blood? How are we to consult? To this we reply; in the general, we ought to consult with *God*: with God, in Christ, by the Spirit; or, with the Father, in the Son, by the Holy Ghost: I mean, we ought under the conduct of the Spirit, to consult with God, as he is the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, and that in all the duties of religion, and ordinances of his appointment, whether public or private; especially in prayer, saying, with David, Psalm cxliiii. 10. *Thy Spirit is good; lead me to the land of uprightness.*—We ought to seek, that he would *guide by his counsel*, till he bring unto glory; and give his Spirit for our guide: for he hath given us the greatest encouragement so to do; *If ye, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto our children; how much more shall your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to them that ask him?* Luke xi. 13. Every good gift cometh from him; and therefore, to whom should we go, for counsel and direction, but to the *Father of lights*, and to Christ, the *wonderful counsellor*: and to the *Spirit of truth*, who is promised to *lead his people into all truth*? If we do not acknowledge the Lord in all our ways, and consult with him, we will certainly consult with flesh and blood.

But more particularly, because God hath given us counsellors under him, we are to consult such things, or persons, as he allows us to consult with, in a subordination to himself. If we would know then, more particularly, how we are to consult with God, we may do it by consulting, 1. The oracles of God. 2. The children of God. 3. The messengers of God. 4. The glory of God. 5. The analogy of faith. 6. The conscience, God's deputy in our breast.

1. We are to consult *the oracles of God*; I mean, the *scriptures of truth*, in the matters of faith, in the matters of God and conscience; *Search the scriptures,*

for in them ye think ye have eternal life; and those are they which testify of me, John v. 39. The scripture is the judge of controversy.—General assemblies and counsels may err; so cannot the scripture: for, it is *the more sure word of prophecy, to which we do well to take heed, as to a light shining in a dark place, &c.* 2 Peter i. 19, 20, 21. We are therefore exhorted to *let the word of God dwell in us rightly, in all wisdom; and to receive with meekness the ingrafted word, which is able to save our souls; being doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving our own souls,* James. i. 21, 22. See how Timothy is commended for his consulting with the scripture, *from his youth,* 2 Timothy iii. 15, 16, 17. Thus we are to consult with God in the scripture.

2. We are to consult the *children of God*, the saints of God; especially such of them as are most tender, and live nearest unto God, and have most of the mind of God; and especially at such times when they and their God are in good terms together. Though we are not to consult with carnal friends, in the matters of God; nor yet to follow the carnal counsel of godly friends; yet, we do not consult with flesh and blood, when we follow the godly counsel of godly friends, and the spiritual advice of spiritual friends: the word encourages us to confer with such, Mal. iii. 16. Then they *that feared the Lord, spake often one to another, and the Lord hearkened and heard it, and a book of remembrance was written, for them that feared the Lord, and thought upon his name.* And again, *He that walketh with the wise, shall be wise.* It is good consulting with those, whom God is communicating his secrets unto; and now, *the secret of the Lord is with them that fear him,* Psalm xxv. 14.

3. We are to consult the *messengers of God*; for so we are warranted to do, Mal. ii. 7. *The priest's lips should keep knowledge, and they should seek the law at his mouth; for he is the messenger of the Lord of hosts.* 2 Chron. xx. 20. *Believe in the Lord your God, and so ye shall be established: believe his prophets, so shall ye prosper.*

But

But what if the prophets be deceived? what if the minister be mistaken? Or, the priest's lips do not keep knowledge, or hold by the truth? Why, we are to receive nothing indeed from men, by an implicate faith without laying it to the rule, Isaiah viii. 20. *To the law and to the testimony, if they speak not according to this word, it is because there is no light in them.* We must *prove all things, and hold fast that which is good:* and like the noble Bereans, *search the scriptures daily whether these things be so,* Acts xvii. 11. And if they were commended for not crediting the apostles themselves, that were immediately inspired from heaven, without comparing their doctrine with the scripture: how much more commendable is it for people to compare the doctrine of ordinary teachers with the word, and the analogy of faith; Neglect in this particular makes many grossly ignorant; and hence to be carried about with every wind of doctrine, not knowing whom to trust, or what to believe: *They err, not knowing the scriptures.*—Well, but those that know the scriptures better than we do, explain it so and so, in a different manner from others. It may be so; but the scripture is the best explainer of itself: if we searched it dependently upon the Lord, light would arise out of darkness; such light as would darken and confound all the false glosses as the devil put upon it in his debating with Christ; but our Lord Jesus did, with other scripture, refute the devil's corrupt glosses which he put upon the scriptures that he cited. However, I say, *the priest's lips should preserve knowledge, and we should seek the law from his mouth:* he ought to be a good counsellor, a faithful guide; and we ought to consult and confer with him, in the matters of God; and we ought to take the counsel that is agreeable to the word of God, and to be followers of such, as far as they are followers of Christ, and no further.

4. We are to consult the *glory of God* in all. If we consult our own ends, it is but flesh and blood: but if, in all things, we consult the glory of God, as our ultimate end, then we consult not with flesh and blood.

*Whether we eat or drink, or whatever we do, we ought to do all to the glory of God:* and in all the matters of God and conscience, it is always safest to consult what is most for advancing this great end, *the glory of God in Christ*; the glory of his sovereign grace; the glory of his infinite holiness and other perfections. Whatever tendeth to the dishonour of God, and of his name, comes of flesh and blood; and of devilish carnal consultation. The world are set upon pleasing of flesh and blood, though it should be never so displeasing to God; they are set upon the exalting of self and the debasing of Christ; the enthroning of self, and the dethroning of God. But, O Sirs, if the glory of God was consulted, how remote would people be from consulting with flesh and blood? God's glory would lead people up to the hill of God: but flesh and blood takes them down the stream of the world. Why are so many carried down with the stream of the times? Why, they do not consult God's glory.

5. We are to consult the *analogy of faith*, and *purest antiquities*: Thus saith the Lord, *Stand ye in the ways and see, and ask for the old paths, where is the good way, and walk therein, and ye shall find rest for your souls*, Jer. vi. 16. And, indeed, in order to the right use of the oracles of God, or the unerring rule of the scripture, that rule is to be used in an agreeableness to the analogy of faith, *i. e.* There are some fundamental truths that are as first principles, founded upon the clearest testimony of the word; and whatever is not agreeable in principle or practice to that analogy of faith, we may be sure is not agreeable to the word of God, and consequently favours not of God, but of flesh and blood. If you ask, what these fundamental truths or first principles are? Why, they are such, with respect whereunto all, that know any thing experimentally about religion, are beyond doubt: such as, that there is a God: that he is an eternal, immutable, and independent Being; hath ordained all things, executing his decrees in the works of creation and providence: that he created man after his own image: that man fell from his happiness, and brought himself into

into a state of sin and misery : that God sent his Son to take on our nature, that therein he might suffer and satisfy divine justice, pay the price of redemption ; and that there is no remedy for us but in him and by him ; that to all the elect he applies this redemption, enlightning their minds in the knowledge of himself, subduing their wills ; and that whom he thus regenerates and converts, he justifies, adopts, and sanctifies, giving them his Spirit to quicken them, and guide them from step to step, till he land them in glory, and they be eternally blessed in and with himself : and that all others, being left in their sins, shall be eternally damned, and destroyed with *everlasting destruction, from the presence of God.* These, and the like, are fundamental truths, founded upon the clearest and strongest grounds of scripture, and linked together inseparably : and whatever doctrine or principle runs in a direct opposition to any of these, favours not of God, but of flesh and blood. And therefore, we ought, I say, carefully to consult the analogy of faith.

6. We are to consult with the *deputy of God* in our breast ; I mean, *conscience*, when it is under the government and regulation of the word and Spirit of God : for, if it be not thus regulate and governed, I dare not say it is fit to be consulted with ; nay, I am not for conscience being consulted with, and regarded in this matter, unless it be guided by the word and Spirit of God : for many may pretend they act according to the light of their conscience, while yet they are but under the conduct of a blind and misled conscience ; and if *the blind lead the blind, both will fall into the ditch.* Paul pretended conscience when a Pharisee ; yea, when he was persecuting the church of Christ ; *He verily thought with himself, that he ought to do many things contrary to the name of Jesus of Nazareth,* Acts xxvi. 9. Yea, Christ hath told us, that many persecutors of his members will think, that *they do God good service* : and so, following a blind conscience, they may be but consulting with flesh and blood. But conscience, guided by the word and Spirit of God, is to be consulted with ; and then is the man's walk

a conscientious walk, living in *all good conscience before God*: and studying to have a *conscience void of offence toward God and toward man*: and herein should we exercise ourselves: for, conscience reaches all relative duties between magistrate and subject, minister and people, parent and child, master and servant: yea, all religious duties toward God and man; and so far as we cross the light of conscience, and go over the belly thereof, we do but consult with flesh and blood, and cast an affront upon God's deputy.

II. What are the most proper *means* for preventing our conferring with flesh and blood? I shall observe two things in the text, which were the notable means for preventing Paul's conferring with flesh and blood.—The first was his getting a *saving revelation* of Christ in him; *He revealed his Son in me*. The next was his *speedy rejecting* the counsel of flesh and blood; *Immediately I conferred not with flesh and blood*.

1<sup>st</sup>, The first was, his getting a *saving revelation* of Christ in him; *It pleased God to reveal his Son in me*. Here is the best antidote in the world against carnal consultation. It is true, some that have Christ savingly revealed in them, may yet consult too much with flesh and blood; for true believers may miscarry far, through unbelief: but surely, the more that Christ is revealed in a man, the less will he consult with flesh and blood, in the various ways condescended upon in the doctrinal part of the subject. Here two things may be enquired into, 1. What is the *nature* of this revelation of Christ; 2. What *influence* it hath to prevent and hinder our consulting with flesh and blood?

[1.] What is this *revelation* of Christ? For understanding this, you would know, that the revelation of Christ is twofold, *viz.* external and internal.

(1.) The *external* revelation of Christ by the word. The light of *nature* and *reason* cannot reveal Christ: that light hath its own use to guide us in the things of nature, but not in the things of God; *The natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God*, 2 Cor. ii. 14. It is by the *word* that Christ is revealed, and  
the

the gospel notified and made known to us; and yet, where there is no more but this external revelation, there is no saving change. Therefore,

(2.) There is the *internal* revelation of Christ, by the Spirit; when Christ is not only revealed to us, but in us: *He revealed his Son in me.* Now, the question is, *What is this internal, saving revelation of Christ?* I think the best way to understand it, is, under the conduct of the Spirit of God, to consider every word of this emphatic description of the matter; *He revealed his Son in me.* And every word will afford a thought for opening up the nature of this saving work of divine illumination, in the knowledge of Christ: and, by the nature of this light wherein Paul was here enlightened, we may try, whether *the God who commanded light to shine out of darkness, hath ever shined into our hearts, to give us the light of the knowledge of his glory, in the face of Jesus Christ:* for,

1. It is a *clear and manifest* light: this is imported in the very word REVELATION; *He REVEALED his Son in me.* Revelation speaks out clearness and evidence. As God, in *creation*, and making the world, began with light, saying *Let there be light, and there was light;* so in *conversion*, he begins with illumination: *They that know thy name will put their trust in thee.* None will believe till they clearly and plainly take up the object, though they cannot know it fully and perfectly: *He that seeth the Son, and believeth in him, hath everlasting life,* John vi. 40. The revelation of Christ doth effectually dispel the massy clouds of spiritual darkness and ignorance, that sits hard and heavy upon the eyes of the understanding: for by nature we are as ignorant and brutish, in the things of God, as the beasts that perish, till the Spirit be sent, as a *Spirit of wisdom and revelation, in the knowledge of Christ,* and then the man sees clearly; not like the man that saw with his eyes, half open, *men like trees walking;* but, in *God's light, he sees light clearly,* and gets some suitable uptakings of God's testimony concerning his Son, testifying, that he is a well-qualified Saviour, able to save to the uttermost: testifying that salvation is to be  
had

had no other way; *That there is no other name given under heaven, whereby we can be saved*; testifying that he is ready to save all comers; and that whoever will is welcome: yea, testifying that every one who hears of him, hath a warrant to come to him, and accept of him; and that it is not presumption in poor sinners to come. This revelation, I say, imports a clear light opening up the object of faith, and giving the soul some distant uptaking of God's testimony concerning Christ; for, *whatsoever maketh manifest is light*. Again,

2. It is a *supernatural* light; *He revealed his SON in me*: *It pleased GOD to do it*, saith Paul: this light was from above, from the *Father of lights*: flesh and blood revealed not this to Paul; but his Father which is in heaven: this is given from heaven; *To you it is given to know the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven, to others it is not given*, Mat. xiii. 11. Human parts and literature could not give Paul this insight and discerning; he wanted not his share of all the learning of that age: but *the natural man*, let him be never so learned, and have never such a stock of natural parts, and acquired literature, yet he *receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him; neither can he know them, for they are spiritually discerned*: the man must be, Θεοδιδάκτος, *taught of God*. True saving light is, spiritual and supernatural: *He that hath heard and learned of the Father, cometh to the Son*: and the Father revealeth the Son in a sovereign way and manner; not from any regard to some good qualifications in the sinner, but from his own sovereign good-will and pleasure: *It pleased God to reveal his Son in me*.

3. It is an *evangelical* light; *He revealed his SON in me*. HIS SON: it is not an absolute God, a God out of Christ, as he is revealed to the sinner by the law, as a covenant of works; but God, in his Son Jesus Christ, according to the gospel, which discovers him as a *God in Christ reconciling the world to himself*. He revealed his Son; the Son of his love, *in whom he is well-pleased*. His Son, who is the *Sent and Sealed of the Father*: his

his Son, who is the *brightness of his glory*, and the *express image of his person* : his Son, in whom it pleased the Father that all fulness should dwell ; and in whom dwells all the fulness of the Godhead : and so it is a revelation of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ ; He revealed his Son in me. The law, as a covenant of life and works, doth not reveal Christ : when God reveals himself, according to that dispensation, he is a consuming fire out of Christ to the sinner ; and at best is revealed as a commanding God, and a wrathful threatening God : but when God reveals himself in his Son, then he is known as a promising God, a gracious God, a reconciled God. And this gospel revelation, this evangelical light, brings in peace and quiet to the whole soul : hence Christ says to his disciples, when it seems their views of God were more dark and legal, apprehending God in the law, without apprehending Christ in the gospel, John xiv. 1. *Let not your heart be troubled ; ye believe in God, believe also in me.* And there he shews them, ver. 6. that he is *the way to the Father* ; and that *no man cometh to the Father but by him.* Hence, lest any should imagine, that a view of the Son would lead them off from a view of the Father, he adds, ver. 9. *He that hath seen me hath seen the Father* : and so, when the Father reveals his Son, he reveals himself in him. How sweet is it then to consider, that first the Father reveals the Son, according to John vi. 45. ; and then the Son reveals the Father, according to John i. 17, 18. Where, after it is said, that *the law was given by Moses, but grace and truth came by Jesus Christ*, it follows, *No man hath seen God at any time ; the only begotten Son, which is in the bosom of the Father, he hath declared him.* And thus he revealed his Son in me ; i. e. he shewed me his own glory, in the face of his Son. Here is the saving gospel-revelation.

4. It is an *internal light* ; this is evident from the particle *IN*, *He revealed his Son IN me* : not only *to me*, by an external objective revelation ; but *in me*, by an internal subjective revelation. It is not light without, presented to the bodily eye, shining outwardly, like that wherewith some poor ignorant creatures are deceiv-

ed, who speak of their having seen about them, or in such a part of the room, or of the bed, a strange light, or a pleasant representation; while yet they may be brutishly ignorant of Christ: for, though I shall not disprove all external manifestation, as if God, in extraordinary cases, might not, by the ministry of angels, make some outward glorious appearance to his own; yet, as Christ himself is not now to be seen any other way, than by the eye of faith, in the light of internal saving manifestation, by the Spirit, so these external manifestations are evidently delusive, especially where there is nothing but gross darkness and ignorance in the mind. It is not light without, I say, but light within; and that not *enthusiastical*, like the Quakers light, but spiritual and scriptural, suitable to the objective revelation of Christ in the word and in the gospel: nor is it *notional* internal light, making impression upon the fancy, like a strong imagination: but it is light *irradiating* the whole soul; *For God who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined in our hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God, in the face of Jesus Christ, 2 Corinth. iv. 6. In our hearts; and hence cometh that heart-melting, when this Sun of righteousness ariseth, with his warm beams. And hence also cometh heart-persuasion; a full persuasion of the truth of God's testimony concerning Christ; the man believes, and is sure; knoweth, and is persuaded upon the testimony of God. Hence also heart-approbation of Christ, and the device of salvation, in him and through him. O! says the soul, this way of salvation is worthy of all acceptation. Hence also heart-satisfaction: it is sweeter than honey or the honey-comb.—*There is a favour in the name of Christ; it is *as ointment poured forth*: the heart and soul acquiesces in Christ, as fully answering all its necessities, and all its desires. Hence *heart-purification*: the more the man sees him, the more he is like him; for it is a begun heaven; and in heaven the saints are *like him, for they see him as he is*; so here in proportion to the sight.—And, in a word, hence *heart-experience*: there is a feeling

feeling of power and virtue in the revelation of Christ ; a taste of his sweetness and excellency. Other knowledge and learning is merely speculative ; and hence the pavement of hell is laid with the skulls of many great scholars, who have had their heads freighted with notions of God and Christ, but never their hearts irradiated with the light of life, so as to have experience of the soul-quickning and sin-killing efficacy of divine light. Thus it makes much heart-work, being internal light.

5. It is a *close appropriating* light ; this I draw from the *me*, in the words ; *He revealed his Son in me*. The saving knowledge of Christ is appropriating ; therefore Paul calls it, *the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord*, Phillip. iii. 8. The devils have some knowledge of Christ ; but cannot say he is their Saviour ; Nebuchadnezzar could say, *There is a God of power* ; but he is the God of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-nego : Darius calls him the *God of Daniel*. But this saving revelation comes close home to the man himself ; and natively tends to the man's participation of the good that he seeth ; if Christ be revealed savingly as a Prophet, it is for teaching me ; if as a Priest, it is for atoning for me ; if as a King, it is for conquering me to himself, and subduing my foes under him ; if as a Saviour, it is for saving me. There is a particular application of Christ for wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, and redemption to the man's self. It is not a general speculation, saying, Here is a full, suitable, glorious Saviour for sinners : but it is like a marriage-application and appropriation, saying, Here is a match for me ; I apprehend him and take him as given to me : *He revealed his Son in me*. According to the measure of illumination and faith, accordingly it comes to this particular me ; *He loved me, and gave himself for me*.

6. It is a *glorious and manifest* light, as may be gathered from the whole context of this verse ; which shews, at least, four things that contribute to make it very glorious.

(1.) It is glorious in the *spring* and *origin* of it, *viz.* the good-will and pleasure of God; *It pleased God to reveal his Son in me: even so Father, for so it seemed good in thy sight.* Proud flesh and blood may dispute the sovereignty of grace: but it is beyond dispute with all the children of grace, when in their right wits, that all saving blessings are owing to, and resolve in this origin, the good pleasure of God.

(2.) It is glorious in the *method* and *manner* of it; *He revealed his Son in me:* here is a glorious Trinity all at work; He, namely, the Father, did reveal his Son, by the Holy Ghost, in me. For this is the work of the Spirit, as a *Spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of Christ*, Ephes. i. 7.; *given* of the Father for this end, as that verse doth shew us: and *promised* of the Son for this end, John xv. 26. *When the Comforter is come, whom I will send unto you, from the Father, even the Spirit of truth, which proceedeth from the Father, he shall testify of me.* And again, John xvi. 14. *He shall glorify me; for he shall receive of mine, and shall shew it unto you.* This is what is here made out in Paul: so it is also made out in all that are savingly illuminated in the knowledge of Christ; the Father reveals the Son by the Holy Ghost. This is the glory of saving light and knowledge: it is God the Father that enlightens the mind, in the knowledge of Christ, by the powerful irradiation and operation of the Spirit.

(3.) It is glorious in the *end* and *design* of it; *That I might PREACH him among the Gentiles.* It is true, indeed, every real Christian is not enlightened for this end, to preach Christ among the Gentiles, as Paul was: but all that have Christ revealed in them, are enlightened for some such glorious end, namely, that they may commend Christ unto the world, both by their words and by their walk: that they may serve and honour him on earth; and that they may praise and glorify him for ever in heaven; yea, that they may preach him forth unto others, according to their call and station: if not in a ministerial and authoritative way; yet in a practical and charitable way. And hence,

hence, all that are savingly enlightened, according to the measure of illumination, in the knowledge of Christ, will find a sweet disposition to proclaim him in the world, and to do all that they can to recommend him to others, like the psalmist, Psalm li. 12, 13. *Restore to me the joy of thy salvation, and uphold me with thy free Spirit; then will I teach transgressors thy ways, and sinners shall be converted unto thee.*

(4.) It is glorious in the immediate effect of it, as the words of the text declare; IMMEDIATELY I conferred not with flesh and blood: instantly a change is wrought upon the man, so soon as Christ is revealed in him; for, *beholding the glory of the Lord, we are changed.* It is a fair owning and confession, that before this time he had been all along consulting with flesh and blood; and under the conduct of carnal reason, self, and self-righteousness: but now he is made to *rejoice in Christ Jesus*, and hath *no confidence in the flesh.* The conference with flesh and blood is so far broken up, as Christ is revealed: *Immediately I conferred not with flesh and blood.*—Thus much of the nature of this revelation of Christ. And now I am led to the other question, namely,

[2.] What influence this revelation of Christ hath upon preventing our consulting with flesh and blood? This question is of great moment, as being the hinge of the doctrine, stating the connexion between the revelation of Christ, and not consulting with flesh and blood in the matters of God. For the doctrine may be thus framed.

*That as there ought to be no consulting with flesh and blood, in divine matters; so the best preservative against this evil is, a saving internal revelation of Christ: Or thus, That freedom from carnal consultation, is a fruit of saving illumination.*

Now, to give answer to this question, you would know, that the influence which the revelation of Christ hath, to prevent our consulting with flesh and blood, is twofold,

1. Moral and argumentative.
2. Physical and operative.

(1.) The saving revelation of Christ influenceth this not consulting with flesh and blood, in a *moral and argumentative* way, while it affords the most powerful arguments and strong persuasions, not to consult with flesh and blood. For the revelation of Christ natively leads the soul to reason, and argues thus: “O! hath God revealed his Son in me? Is it God himself that hath revealed Christ savingly to and in me? And shall I fight against this God, with these carnal weapons of flesh and blood? Did it please him to do so to me? Was it his good pleasure to reveal Christ? And shall I follow my carnal pleasure, to the displeasure of this God? Hath he revealed such an one as his Son in me? And shall I hug self in me?—Flesh and blood hath not revealed Christ in me; and shall I follow the carnal conduct of flesh and blood?”

But more particularly, this *moral influence* it hath to prevent consulting with flesh and blood will further appear, if we consider, that when Christ is revealed, there is such a display made of the glory of God in him, as tendeth mightily to reason the man out of all his carnal reason. For instance,

1. The revelation of Christ displayeth the *wisdom* of God; for, *In him are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge*: yea, herein the man sees *the manifold wisdom of God*; and *the wisdom of God in a mystery*: and when this is discovered, surely it spoils all carnal politics; yea, and makes carnal wisdom to hide its face with blushing: yea, *God makes foolish the wisdom of this world*.

2. The revelation of Christ displays the *power* of God: for, he is *Christ the power of God*, as well as *the wisdom of God*, 1 Cor. i. 24. And now, says the enlightened soul, when Christ the wisdom of God, and the power of God is displayed, “O! what need I trust to the policy of men? Or, what need I fear the power of men, that are against me? Or trust in the power and policy of men, even when they seem to be for me? Here is almighty power that I am called to confide in; even the power of a God in Christ:

“Trust

“Trust ye in the Lord for ever; for in the Lord Jehovah is everlasting strength: he is able to save to the uttermost.”

3. The revelation of Christ displays the *holiness* of God: and so this makes the unholiness and sinfulness of all carnal consultation to appear so: it shames the man out of his carnal counsels. “O! is he such an infinitely holy God, that he hated sin as much as he loved his eternal Son? And shall I take any unholy course? Is this conferring with flesh and blood agreeable to the infinite holiness of God, in the face of Christ, which I have seen.”

4. The revelation of Christ displays the *justice* of God; both his *vindictive* justice, in punishing sin to the utmost, upon the Surety, when it was imputed to him; and *retributive* justice, in giving all good things to Christ and his seed, as a reward of his obedience to the death: and in all this God hath given the most noble indication; that, as he will not let sin go unpunished, wherever it is, whether it be in his own, by fatherly chastisement; or in others, by wrathful resentment: so he will not let gospel-obedience and holiness, where-ever it is, want its reward of grace in Christ; and therefore saith the enlightened soul, “Oh! this consulting with flesh and blood, is altogether disagreeable to that revelation of divine justice in Christ, whether vindictive or remunerative, that I have got. Shall I run upon the thick bosses of his buckler, and provoke him to anger? Or, shall I take a course, that hath nothing of that promise of the sweet reward of grace in Jesus? Alas! this I must not do.”

5. The revelation of Christ displays the *faithfulness* and *truth* of God: for so he is the truth, as he hath sealed the truth of all the words of God, and all the promises of the covenant. “Now, saith the enlightened soul, is God so true to me, and shall I be so false to him? Is his veracity engaged in the promise, and his promise sealed with the blood of Christ? And shall I not take his word for my support? And take his word, as a sufficient security for my protection, provision, and direction? And what need I take  
“any

“ any sinful shift, by consulting with flesh and blood ?  
 “ *Faithful is he that hath promised, saying, I will never*  
 “ *leave thee, nor forsake thee,*” Heb. xiii. 5.

6. The revelation of Christ displays the *mercy, grace,* and *love* of God : for, when Christ is seen, then the soul sees God in Christ, reconciling the world to himself ; and he is seen to be well-pleas'd in Christ : when he appears, then the *kindness and love of God, towards men, appears,* Titus iii. 4. And now, this kindness and love of God, is a most powerful argument, against the consulting with flesh and blood. “ What ! saith  
 “ the soul, under the discovery of this love, *Shall I thus*  
 “ *requite the Lord ? Is this my kindness to my friend ?*  
 “ Shall I fight against infinite love ? And spurn against  
 “ the bowels of divine pity and compassion, yearning to-  
 “ wards me ? Shall he consult my welfare, and I con-  
 “ sult his dishonour ? *O ? tell it not in Gath.* Shall I  
 “ harbour his enemies within me, when in loving-kind-  
 “ nefs he hath revealed his Son in me ? Shall I wear  
 “ arms of flesh and blood to fight against him ? And  
 “ entertain such a devil of enmity against such a God  
 “ of love ? ” These are the reasonings of faith : and this is the moral argumentative influence, that the revelation of Christ hath, for preventing carnal consultation.

(2.) The saving revelation of Christ hath a *physical operative* influence upon the prevention of this consultation with flesh and blood : for the revelation of Christ doth not only strenuously urge and press, but powerfully conquer and overcome the soul, so as to deliver it from consulting with flesh and blood : according to the measure of the saving revelation of Christ, accordingly is the soul transformed ; *Beholding as in a glass, the glory of the Lord, we are changed into the same image,* 2 Cor. iii. 18. And surely, the more of God's image any hath, the less consulting with God's enemies.

Now, that this *physical operative* influence may the more evidently appear, consider a little, in some particulars, what it is that this internal revelation of Christ doth powerfully work and effectuate ; for, the Spirit  
 of

of power reveals Christ in the soul, and you will see how it cannot but natively work out all carnal consultation.

1. This revelation of Christ works *faith*; for they that know his name, cannot but put their trust in him: they that see the Son, they believe in him: *He manifested forth his glory, and the disciples believed in him.* And this *faith purifies the heart*; and consequently, according to the measure thereof, cleanseth from carnality: and now the man walks by faith, and so cannot walk by carnal reason, which is faith's greatest opposite and antipode. The revelation of Christ dashes unbelief quite out of countenance. Now, this unbelief is the main root of carnal consultation, the main cause of consulting with flesh and blood. This revelation of Christ then strikes at the root of the disease: for the man's eyes are opened to *see the King in his beauty*; and so the power of this fatal plague is checked.— While unbelief prevails, flesh and blood prevails, saying, *Except I see the print of the nails, and thrust my hand into his side, I cannot believe*: but whenever Christ appears, unbelief is put to the blush; and faith cries out, *My Lord, and my God.*

2. This revelation of Christ works *love*: they that see him cannot but love him, though they see him not with the bodily eye; *Whom having not seen we love.*— Yea, this revelation of Christ fills the soul with ardent love to Christ, and such as many waters cannot quench: and this *love is strong as death*; it is stronger than flesh and blood. The revelation of Christ breaks the power of natural enmity; *The carnal mind is enmity against God.* Paul goes to Damascus, full freighted with prejudice and enmity against Christ: but getting a sight of Christ, a revelation of Christ in him, the arms of rebellion dropt out of his hand; and he is made to cry out, *Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?* Yea, it will raise the affections to such a pitch, as will make Christ preferable to all the glory of heaven and earth; *Whom have I in heaven but thee? and there is none in all the earth that I desire besides thee.* A saving sight of Christ doth lay him open to our view, as one in whom is all

*the fulness of the Godhead* ; and *out of whose fulness we may receive grace for grace* : and this breaks up the conference with flesh and blood ; for true love will admit no rival, no competitor.

3. This revelation of Christ works *humility* : when the soul sees him, then, with Job, the man *abhors himself, and repents in dust and in ashes*. A sight of Christ doth sink the soul into the lowest pit of self-annihilation, self-abhorrence, and self-detestation : and when once the power of self-confidence is broken, in as much as the man hath no confidence in the flesh, in his own self-sufficiency, self-righteousness, self-wisdom, self-will, then one of the strongest holds of flesh and blood is broken down. The day of the revelation of Christ, is the day wherein self is sentenced to death, that Christ may live and reign by faith in the soul ; like that, 2 Cor. i. 9. *We had the sentence of death in ourselves, that we should not trust in ourselves, but in God, which raiseth the dead* : intimating, that when, by whatever mean, self-confidence is broken, then the man is brought to confidence in the Lord. Now, when by the revelation of Christ, self is abased, then consulting with flesh and blood, is turned to confidence in the Lord alone.

4. This revelation of Christ works *zeal* ; true zeal for God and his glory, for Christ and his honour ; and true zeal against every false way. Many have a *zeal for God*, but not *according to knowledge* : but this revelation of Christ, bringing in the saving knowledge of him, makes zeal regular and right, being according to knowledge : and this zeal will lead the soul to do and suffer for Christ, maugre all the arguments of flesh and blood to the contrary. Where there is no revelation of Christ, there is no true zeal for him : where faint revelation, faint zeal ; where clear and full revelation, great zeal : and where great zeal takes place, flesh and blood are burnt in the flame thereof ; for then the *man takes joyfully the spoiling of his goods*. None of these things move him ; neither *counts he his life dear unto himself*, so that he may *finish his course with joy*. Hence,

5. This

5. This revelation of Christ works joy in the heart ; *In whom believing we rejoice, with joy unspeakable, and full of glory.* The revelation of Christ brings gladness into the soul ; *Then were the disciples glad, when they saw the Lord.* O but a sight of Christ is a gladden- ing joyful sight : *Abraham rejoiced to see my day afar off, and he saw it, and was glad. I will see you again,* saith Christ, John xvi. 22. *and your heart shall rejoice, and your joy no man taketh from you.* Now, this joy of the Lord is their strength, Neh. viii. 10. And surely the more strong in the Lord that they are, the less confidence in flesh and blood will take place.—A sight of Christ is a heart-strengthening, grace-strengthening thing : and the stronger that the new man is, the weaker is the old man. The Dagon of flesh and blood falls before the Ark of God.

6. This revelation of Christ creates *contempt of the world*, and of all that is in the world ; *The lusts of the flesh, the lusts of the eye, and the pride of life* ; and this prevents all consultation with flesh and blood. The internal revelation of Christ, will eclipse and darken the beauty and glory of the world, and all things therein. Love of the world makes men to consult with flesh and blood ; and Demas-like to forsake Christ, even after a considerable time's profession of him openly : but now, when Christ appeareth, the glory of the world disappears ; and the man is content to forsake all, and follow the Lamb ; counting all but loss and dung for him ; yea, selling his all to buy the pearl. The internal revelation of Christ doth effectually loose the heart from all lusts and idols : see Isaiah xlix. 29. and xlii. 1. compared.—It makes the man cry out, with Ephraim, *What have I any more to do with idols ?* As the stars vanish upon the appearance of the sun ; so doth the world, and the lusts thereof, upon the rising of the Sun of righteousness, and our beholding thereof : and as it disengages from idols, so it effectually engages the heart to himself ; yea, the man is content to engage ten thousand hearts, if he had them, to the Lord :—and thus he is delivered from consulting with flesh and blood.

7. In a word, The revelation of Christ doth effectually dispel the massy clouds of *spiritual darkness* and *ignorance*, that sit hard and heavy upon the eyes of our understanding, whereby a man is buried under the mud of flesh and blood, and prejudices against Christ are fomented. It is said of the Jews, *If they had known, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory*: even so, if we knew Christ, we would not consult with his enemies, or confer with flesh and blood. When Christ is revealed, then the man is in the light, and sees about him: the revelation of Christ discovers the subtilty of Satan, the deceitfulness of the heart, and the sophistry of carnal reason; and dashes down Satan's strong holds; *For Christ is manifested to destroy the works of the devil*.—Thus you see what influence, both moral and physical, both argumentative and operative, this revelation of Christ hath, for preventing this sin of conferring with flesh and blood; and how necessary a saving sight of Christ is, for attaining this end.

2dly, The *second* mean was, his speedy *rejecting* the counsel of flesh and blood; *Immediately I conferred not with flesh and blood*. And this *immediately* seems to import these four things.

1. That before this time the *set* and *disposition* of his heart was carnal: why, *That which is born of the flesh is flesh*. While he was in a state of unregeneracy, he was wholly under the conduct of flesh and blood: even when he was *touching the righteousness of the law, blameless*: and *profiting in the Jews religion above many his equals, in his own nation*; yet for all that time, he now sees that he was but a proud Pharisee: yea, he put himself among the number of these that were *foolish, disobedient, deceived, serving divers lusts and pleasures, hateful, and hating one another*, Titus iii. 3. When converting grace took hold of him, then he understood what a fool he had been before conversion; and how much he had been under the conduct of carnal sense and reason: but now when Christ was revealed in him, immediately he conferred not with flesh and blood, as he had always done before.

2. It imports, that, upon the revelation of Christ, a *change* was instantly wrought, from a carnal to a spiritual disposition; *Beholding the glory of the Lord, he was changed* immediately.—No sooner doth the sun shine upon a man, than light and heat is conveyed with the beams thereof: and thus, no sooner is Christ savingly revealed, than the soul is enlightened, warmed, transformed, and spiritualized: the new light and saving sight brings in a new quality and disposition, at the same time.—In order of nature, the revelation of Christ is first; but in order of time, no sooner is the revelation given, but the spiritual disposition is wrought; for, *the Spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of Christ*, doth enter into the man, and brings grace with him.

3. It imports, that this spiritual disposition was instantly put in *exercise*: *Immediately I conferred not with flesh and blood.* He got not a new disposition to ly dormant, like a sleeping habit, without any vigour and activity: but whenever he got grace implanted, he stirred up the same to a holy exercise. True holiness is not only passive, in the principle and habit, but active; and that both internally, in the exercise of grace; and externally, in the performance of duty. The apostle was *in haste*, like David; in that holy haste, mentioned Psalm cxix. 60. *I made haste and delayed not, to keep thy commandments*; thus did the apostle, upon his first illumination: *Immediately I conferred not with flesh and blood.*

4. It imports, that now he was in the straight way of duty; whereas formerly he was in a crooked way.—For the word here in the original *εὐθείως* rendered *immediately*, comes from another that signifies *straight*; and is so rendered, Mat. iii. 3. *Make his paths straight.* And the adverb of the same nature, is rendered *straightway*, Mat. iii. 16. *He went up straightway out of the water*: and now, compare the noun, which signifies *straight*, and the adverb, which signifies *immediately* or *straightway*; comparing them, I say, together, we may turn the adverb into the sense of the noun, and see this lesson in it, namely, that to do what is *right straightway*,

way, is to take the *straight way* of doing it; whereas, to delay what is right, and what ought to be done instantly, and not to do it straightway, is so far a going out of the straight way. He that delays to do good, and to do what the Lord calls him to, and doth it not straightway, he is not walking in the straight way of duty: but Paul delayed not at this rate; *Immediately I conferred not with flesh and blood*; he instantly and speedily rejected the counsel of flesh and blood. They that would not consult with flesh and blood, had need to take care that they do not stand to parley with the temptation: for, when a man enters upon speaking terms with carnal reason, and doth not immediately reject its solicitations, he is in danger to be drawn aside therewith. Eve parlied with the temptation; and so was overcome: so did Samson; and was conquered; so did David; and he was vanquished. Peter's fall also discovered the danger of parlying with the temptation; he entered upon the consultation with flesh and blood, when he expressed his confidence in himself, saying, *Though all men forsake thee, yet will not I*: next he entered into the judgment-hall; and upon his being first attacked, flesh and blood suggested fears of death, from one step he goes on to another, in conferring with flesh and blood: and then he is overcome so far, as to sway with the time, in cursing and swearing, and denying his Master. The suggestions of carnal reason, of flesh and blood, are to be rejected at their first appearance: the cockatrice must be crushed in the shell; and the first motions of flesh and blood must be abhorred, otherwise danger is at hand: thus did Paul here; *Immediately I conferred not with flesh and blood*.——Thus much for the import of this, *immediately*.

Now I would offer some corollaries from the doctrine, in this complex view, *That the revelation of Christ is the best preservative, against consulting with flesh and blood*. Hence see,

- I. Whence it is, that a *world of mankind* are living wholly under the conduct of flesh and blood, and corrupt

rupt carnal reason ; even because they are strangers to Christ : Christ was never revealed in them. Ignorance of Christ is at the root of all that profanity and ungodliness, that bears such a sway in the world : why doth the drunkard continue in his drunkenness ? the whoremonger in his whoredom ? the hypocrite in his hypocrisy ? and every wicked man in his wickedness ? And what is the reason of all the laxness, looseness, and lasciviousness of our day ? Why, it is ignorance of Christ : Christ, in his person, and offices, hath never been revealed in them ; they are destroyed for lack of knowledge ; the god of this world hath blinded their eyes. As Christ said to the Sadducees, *Ie err, not knowing the scriptures* : so say I of such, they err in principle and practice, not knowing Christ, nor the glory of God in him ; for, if they beheld his glory they would be changed.

2. See whence it is that people, who enjoy a clear gospel-revelation, may yet be under the *conduct* of flesh and blood ; why, Christ is revealed *to* them, but not *in* them : while people have only the external objective revelation of Christ to them, without the internal subjective revelation of Christ in them, all their knowledge and common illumination, hath not so much power and virtue, as to deliver them from their carnal biases : the gospel comes to them in word only, not in power, and in the Holy Ghost. Hence many live under the gospel, and have attained a measure of the knowledge of Christ ; and perhaps have, through the knowledge of Christ, escaped many pollutions of the world's lusts ; and yet are never delivered from the power and dominion of this evil, of consulting with flesh and blood ; carnal ease, carnal reason, carnal interest, carnal pleasure reigns over them, and leads all the faculties of their soul into subjection : why, Christ, who is revealed to them by the word, was never revealed in them by the Spirit : they rest satisfied without the saving knowledge of Christ.

3. See whence it is, that so many of the *truly godly*, do so much consult with flesh and blood, at this day ; and give so much way to carnal reason, in the matters  
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of God ; it flows from this, even on the one hand, *partial ignorance* of Christ, or the *small measure* of the knowledge of him : though Christ be revealed in them, yet it is but very darkly ; and perhaps the impresson that the first revelation of Christ made upon them, much obliterated by their defection, in leaving their first love, and little growth in grace, and in the knowledge of the Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ : whereas growth therein, and clearer views of his glory, would advance their mortification of flesh and blood. It flows also from this, on the other hand, their not taking Paul's course, in rejecting speedily the suggestions of flesh and blood ; upon the back of the manifestation of Christ, immediately he rejects the conference with them. Whereas, if this course be not followed, tho' a man should get a saving manifestation of Christ, if upon the back of it, he stand parlying with the tempter, and dallying with the temptation, he is in danger, as in the case of Peter, who instantly after a manifestation, ran into the camp of flesh and blood ; yea, the camp of Satan, Matth. xvi. 17. compared with ver. 22, 23. Though manifestations are of a transforming nature ; yet if a child of God give up his watch, and turn secure, after Christ is revealed to him and in him, flesh and blood may trip up his heels very quickly.

4. Hence see, what is God's method of *sanctifying* an elect soul, and carrying on the work of sanctification in the believing soul : his method is first to reveal Christ, and so, by discovering his glory, to change and transform the soul : having convinced the man of his sin and misery, he then enlightens his mind in the knowledge of Christ : and this saving illumination carries the will and affections towards the Lord ; and the man, being renewed after the image of God, is enabled, by the means of more and more illumination, in the knowledge of Christ, to die unto sin, to mortify the deeds of the body, and to live unto God ; consulting with him, and not with flesh and blood.— Many, at this day, discover their ignorance of God's method of converting souls, and sanctifying of sinners,  
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by magnifying the maxims of morality ; and supposing, as if the mere preaching of moral duty was enough to make men holy : but to reveal Christ for that end, and harp upon this theme, they cannot think this is adapted for such a purpose. But my text and doctrine shews, that it is the revelation of Christ that works true sanctification : *He revealed his Son in me :* and then, *immediately I conferred not with flesh and blood.* The knowledge of the law will not do it ; the knowledge of all moral systems will not do it : but the internal knowledge of Christ will effectuate it.

5. Hence see, the *excellency* and *necessity* of the *knowledge* of Christ, and of the gospel : when once Paul came to this knowledge, he counted all but *loss and dung, in comparison of the excellency* of it. And how necessary it is, is evident in this, that there is no sanctification without it ; no freedom from carnal courses and consultations without it. The gospel is the revelation of Christ and his righteousness ; and, as such, it is the *power of God to salvation ; and the power of God to sanctification*, Rom. i. 16, 17. It is the organical power of God unto salvation from sin ; because therein is revealed the *righteousness of God*, even Christ, who is the Lord our righteousness, *from faith to faith.* No wonder that flesh and blood, or men that are in the flesh, think the gospel needless, and cannot endure that Christ should be the minister's habitual theme : for the revelation of Christ is the greatest enemy to, and the strongest battering-ram, to bring down the walls of it ; *The weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but mighty, through God, to the pulling down of strong holds ; casting down imaginations, and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God, and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ*, 2 Cor. x. 4, 5. Flesh and blood opposes the gospel and the revelation of Christ, because when Christ is once revealed, immediately the man conferreth not with flesh and blood.

6. Hence see, how *ignorantly* men suspect the *gospel of God's grace*, as a *nurse of licentiousness*, and an *enemy to the holiness* required in the law : for the quite con-

trary is the truth. That ignorance of Christ, and his gospel, is the root of all carnality : and the knowledge of Christ, and the gospel, in a saving way, is the root upon which true holiness and piety doth grow. The preaching of Christ was Paul's work, as you see in the bosom of this text ; *He revealed his Son in me, that I might preach him among the Gentiles* : he was revealed to me, that I might reveal him unto others ; and might be the instrument of their conversion and sanctification thereby ; as I myself was sanctified by this mean.— To preach duty, without Christ, is the way to make moralists : to preach duty, before Christ, and more than Christ, or in order to Christ, and to make men Christians, is the way to make them legalists ; and to make the world think they can be religious without Christ, and that a good moral life will bring them to heaven : but true gospel preaching lies in preaching Christ in order to duty ; it is to preach Christ in order to holiness, and so to preach duty in preaching Christ : for, till Christ be revealed in us, there is no true holiness, no freedom from consulting with flesh and blood.

7. Hence see what it is, that contributes to make a *corrupt ministry* in a church : why, Christ is not revealed in all that profess to preach him among the Gentiles ; and therefore they never stand to consult with flesh and blood. What is it that qualifies a man for the ministerial work ? Here is the best qualification, when Christ is revealed in him, for this end, that he may *preach him among the Gentiles* : whom God sends, he thus qualifies, according to the measure of the gift of Christ. But many run without being sent ; and, as the Athenians worshipped an unknown God, so they preach an unknown Christ ; which is very melancholy work, and can have little success : yea, the want of the saving knowledge of Christ in such, lays a foundation for doctrinal error and practical error both, while they want the main preservative, against the consulting with flesh and blood. Some are wholly corrupt, because wholly destitute of the saving knowledge of Christ ; and so the doctrine, worship, discipline, and government of Christ's house cannot be long safe and free from

from corruption among their hands ; especially if they, by reason of their gifts, parts, and authority in the church, bear a considerable sway therein. Others are tainted with corruption, though truly gracious, and carried down with the stream of carnal consultation, while any saving knowledge of Christ that they have is so small, that flesh and blood hath the ascendant ; or, if their knowledge of Christ be great in one respect, yet it is defective in other respects. So Peter, for example, he was greatly enlightened in the knowledge of Christ, as the *Son* of the living God ; a most glorious fundamental article of faith, Matth. xvi. 16. ; but yet his knowledge of Christ was defective, and exceeding dark concerning Christ as a *sacrifice*, a ransom : and hence he takes upon him, forsooth, to reprove Christ, when he spoke of his suffering at Jerusalem, ver. 22. saying, *Be it far from thee, Lord ; this shall not be done unto thee :* for which Christ calls him a devil, saying, *Get thee behind me, Satan : for thou savourest not the things that be of God, but those that be of men.* Though he was extraordinarily enlightened in the knowledge of Christ, in one respect ; yet he was extremely ignorant of Christ, in another respect : and hence in that matter favoured of flesh and blood, and consulted with carnal ease, and carnal reason, under colour of zeal for his Master's safety and honour. Hence we will find such corruptions creeping into the church of Christ, both among good and bad : so that we may see personal credit, acting under the colour of zeal for God. Men will pretend zeal for God's honour, the credit of the ministry, the honour of ordinances ; and vent themselves hotly and tenaciously, under this view, while yet it is personal credit, reputation, and applause that is acting under that covert, and hiding under that mask.— Thus the disciples sought to be avenged on the place, that would not receive Christ, by fire from heaven : why, it seemed to be zeal for their Master's honour that swayed them ; but personal credit was their motive ; and they were not under the conduct of God's Spirit, but of their own flesh and blood : therefore saith

Christ, *Ye know not what Spirit ye are of*, Luke ix. 54. See also ver. 59.

8. Hence see, what is the *best antidote against corruption*, both in ministers and people; and the best antidote against the power of corruption, in any particular person: it is even a transforming revelation of Christ. A day of power is necessary for this end, making a display of God's power and glory in the sanctuary.—When *God builds up Zion*, he will *appear in his glory*: and there is no hopes of getting evil amended, till the Spirit of wisdom and revelation, in the knowledge of Christ, be poured out. And therefore we should be at no rest; yea, should give God no rest till he send the Spirit, Isaiah lxii. 6, 7. O cry with the psalmist, saying, *O send forth thy light and thy truth*.—And with Moses, *I beseech thee shew me thy glory*: that so, *beholding the glory of the Lord*, we may be *changed into the same image*: and that each of us, for our own part, may have it to say with Paul here, *It pleased God to reveal his Son in me; and immediately I conferred not with flesh and blood*.

## S E R M O N XXIII,---XXVII.

LAW-DEATH, GOSPEL-LIFE ; or, the Death of  
*Legal Righteousness, the Life of Gospel Holiness\**.

GALATIANS ii. 19.

*I through the law am dead to the law, that I might  
live unto God.*

**A** GODLY life is what we are all obliged to live, especially if we have been at the Lord's table ; but it is a mystery that very few understand in their experience, if they will judge their experiences, by comparing them with this of Paul in our text, *I through the law am dead to the law, that I might live unto God.*

Our apostle, in this epistle, is vindicating himself from the base aspersions cast upon him by the false apostles ; with respect to his *calling*, as if he had been no apostle ; and with respect to his *doctrine*, as if it had been false and erroneous. From the beginning of this chapter, to ver. 11. he tells us what he did at Jerusalem ; how strenuously he opposed the false brethren, that he might maintain the truth of the gospel, which they sought to overturn. From the 11th ver. to the 17th, the apostle tells us what he did at Antioch ; how

\* This was the substance of four Discourses, the first two whereof were delivered upon the administration of the sacrament of the Lord's supper, at Carnock ; the other two were an enlargement upon the same subject, on an occasion of the same nature, at Orwel. — The precise time when these discourses were delivered, cannot be positively ascertained ; however, from some passages in the discourses themselves, it is probable they were preached some time in the year 1724. and the first edition being printed that year, seems to determine it. — They have now undergone four impressions.

zealously he opposed and reprov'd even Peter himself, for his dissimulation, in compelling the Gentiles to Judaize; giving thereby such offence, that the Jews were confirm'd in their Judaism, ver. 12th. *Other Jews disssembled with him, and Barnabas also was carried away with their dissimulation;* and hereby occasion was given both to Jews and Gentiles, to desert Christ, to deny grace, to return to the law, and seek justification by the works thereof. So that we may see here, that great and good men may disssemble, and do much hurt by their dissimulation, both among ministers and people. We have here a wonderful example of it in the greatest of men, and such as were pillars of the church; but it would seem that Peter and Barnabas, and other Jews here, did not see their fault and sin, but thought they did right enough; but Paul saw it, verse 14. *When I saw that they walked not uprightly according to the truth of the gospel, &c.* This might seem a very bold and impudent attempt, for Paul, the youngest of all the apostles, (I mean, of whom Christ was last seen, as of one born out of due time) for him to take upon him to accuse and condemn Peter as well as Barnabas, and the Jews for their practical error, not walking according to the truth of the gospel. But we see, that as people may have the gospel, but not the truth of the gospel; so these that have the truth of the gospel, may be guilty of not walking according to the truth of it, even as Peter, Barnabas, and others here, whose dissimulation did not consist with the *truth of the gospel*, which they preached, but tended to *establish the law*, and so to overturn the gospel. But God hath sometimes very few witnesses to stand up for the truth of the gospel: here Paul was alone, Peter was against him; and Barnabas, his own intimate associate, was drawn away with the dissimulation; Jews and Gentiles were infected, and therefore Paul alone must fight against them all, for the cause of Christ, and the doctrine of the gospel, which was endangered. *I said unto Peter before them all, &c.* Not by teaching of any *erroneous doctrine* did Peter err, for that is a principle we maintain, that the apostles never erred in teaching,

or in their doctrine delivered to the church; but his error was in *practice*, compelling the Gentiles to Judaize; whereby he gave them occasion to think, that the observation of the law was necessary to justification: whereas he adds, *We that are Jews by nature*, ver. 15, 16. We apostles, might he say, though Jews by nature, yet we seek not justification by the works of the law; and therefore we ought not to drive the Gentiles to the observation of the law, that they may seek righteousness and justification thereby. Why? because, 1. We know that a man cannot be justified by the *works of the law*, but by the *faith of Christ*. 2. Because therefore having renounced the law, in point of justification, we have embraced Christ by faith; that through him we may be justified. 3. Because *by the deeds of the law no flesh can be justified*.

Now, from verse 17. and downward, the apostle returns to the Galatians; having told how he reproved Peter, and what he said to him concerning justification without the works of the law, he now comes to shew this doctrine to be no wise opposite to the doctrine of sanctification, but of absolute necessity to true holiness, ver. 17, 18. *q. d.* If we Jews, who lived formerly under the law, and now seek righteousness in Christ alone, are thus accounted as sinners, when we followed the law, it would seem that Christ did disapprove the law, and approve sin: *God forbid*, says the apostle; this he denies and rejects with abhorrence.—To object thus, might he say, against the doctrine of free justification, were egregious blasphemy against the Son of God, as if he were the minister of sin, who came to destroy sin, and to destroy the works of the devil; and by this gospel which I preach, might he say, Christ is held out as the *Lamb of God, that taketh away the sins of the world*; not to take away righteousness, truly so called, unless it be that false vizard of legal self-righteousness, with which we formerly covered and masked ourselves: nay, he came to bring in *everlasting righteousness*, a true and perfect righteousness for justification; he came to make an *end of sin*,  
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by the sacrifice of himself, and thereby to purchase the Spirit, as a Spirit of holiness and sanctification, to destroy the power of sin and corruption; and therefore it is a base calumny to say, that this gospel-doctrine does open the door to sin and licentiousness: this he proves by two arguments; 1. Because the faith of Christ does not destroy *itself*, verse 18. *I through the law am dead to the law, that I might live unto God.* Sin is like an old house, which I have razed and destroyed, by my doctrine of free justification by faith, and not by works of the law; for by this doctrine I preached freedom from sin through Christ; and therefore, if I should build up these old wastes of sin again, it is not Christ, but I that would be the sinner, or minister of sin; nay, I would be a madman, to build with one hand what I destroyed with the other. 2. Because liberty to sin is contrary to the very *scope of the gospel*, and to the design of this doctrine of justification by faith without the works of the law: *For, I through the law am dead to the law, that I might live unto God*, verse 19.

This is a very strange and wonderful text, that flesh and blood can hardly hear, without suspecting, that it favours too much of a *new scheme* of doctrine: and if it were not the divinely inspired words of the apostle, it would hardly escape being taxed as an Antinomian paradox. I remember, Luther upon the text, says, “The false apostles taught, unless you live to the law, you cannot live to God;” and therefore Paul here must be the most heretical of all heretics; his heresy is unheard-of heresy, reason and human wisdom cannot receive it, that if we will live to God, we must be dead wholly to the law: yet so it is here, he declares it of himself, and in the name of all believers in Christ, yea, as the very doctrine of faith, *I through the law am dead to the law, that I might live unto God.*

In which words you may notice two remarkably different things, *death* and *life*; mortification and vivification. 1. A wonderful DEATH; *I through the law am DEAD to the law.* 2. A remarkable LIFE, proceeding out of that death: *That I might LIVE unto God.*

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1<sup>st</sup>, You have a wonderful DEATH, or Paul's strange mortification; *I through the law am DEAD to the law*: and of this mortification we have here three things; 1. The general nature of it, it is called a death; *I am dead.* 2. The object of it, *the law.* 3. The means of it, *the law*; *I through the law am dead to the law*, all very odd things to carnal reason.

1. The general nature of it, it is called a DEATH; *I am DEAD.* There are several sorts of death commonly spoken of, *viz.* temporal, spiritual, and eternal; but this is none of them. Temporal death is a separation betwixt soul and body; but this death takes place where there is no such separation: Paul was thus alive, when he said here, *I am dead.* Spiritual death is a separation betwixt God and the soul; but this death is a mean of joining God and the soul together. Eternal death, is an eternal separation betwixt God and the soul; but the death here spoken of, makes way for eternal communion with God.—This is a strange death, a strange mortification; especially if you consider,

2. The object of it, the LAW; *I am dead to the law*: not only the ceremonial law, but even the moral law itself, as under the form of a covenant of works, and as a condition of life. I renounce, might he say, the righteousness of the law, seeking no salvation in the works thereof; nay, in this respect it is dead to me, and I to it; it cannot save me, and I cannot expect salvation by it; nay, *I am dead to the law.* To be *dead to sin*, is a mortification that people may think they can easily understand; but the mystery of it, in being dead to sin, by this mean of being dead to the law, is what cannot be so well understood; for one would think, that to die to the law, were to live in sin: nay, says the apostle, it is quite otherwise; that I may die to sin, *I am dead to the law.*

3. You have the means of this death, which is as strange, namely, *the law*; *I through the law am dead to the law.* As to this mean of death to the law, *viz.* THE LAW, I find some divines understand it a different law from the other; as if the apostle should say,

“ I by the law of Christ, am freed from the law of Moses ; or, I by the law of faith am freed from the law of works.” But I incline to join with the current of sound divines, who understand both of the same law, *q. d.* *I am dead to the law, THROUGH the law* : the law hath taught me that I am a sinner, that cannot be justified by the law, which curses and condemns sinners : *By the law is the knowledge of sin* ; and having thus by the law known myself to be a guilty wretch, I am dead to all expectation of righteousness by the law. The law then, having thus killed me, and all my hope of life by it, hath been a blest mean of drawing me out of myself, and all my legal righteousness, to seek life and justification in Christ, and his righteousness received by faith. Thus you have a wonderful death here spoken of.

2dly, You have a remarkable LIFE proceeding out of that *death* : you may call it Paul’s vivification, which was not peculiar to him, but is common to all believers : *That I might live unto God.* Where again you may notice three things.

1. The *general nature* of this vivification, it is called by the name of *life* : while a man is alive to the law, he continues dead ; but whenever he is dead to the law, then he is alive ; the breath of life is breathed into his nostrils, and he becomes a living soul : for the Spirit of God, the spirit of life enters into him.

2. The *object* of this life, or vivification, it is *God* ; a living unto God, that is, a new life, a holy life, a divine life ; a living to God, to God’s honour, to God’s glory. Before this, the man lived *to himself* as his *end*, as well as *from himself* as his *principle* ; but now he lives from God as his principle, and to God as his end, which only is a holy life, and wherein true sanctification lies.

3. You have the *influence* that this death hath upon this life, or this mortification hath upon this vivification ; or, the influence that justification by faith alone, and not by the deeds of the law, hath upon sanctification of heart and life, or living to God, in the particle *that* : *I am dead to the law, THAT I might live unto*

unto God. Now, might the apostle say, How falsely do you charge my doctrine, as opening a window to licentiousness, while I in the name of all believers declare, that this doctrine of justification by faith alone, or our being dead to the law in point of justification, does open the door to true holiness; for none can live unto God, till they be dead to the law. *I through the law am dead to the law, that I might live unto God.*

But I shall endeavour further to explain the words upon the following observation.

DOCT. *That to be dead to the law, in the point of justification, is necessary in order to our living unto God in point of sanctification. I through the law am dead to the law, that I might live unto God.*

Now, upon this doctrine, I shall endeavour, through grace, to explain the several branches of the text; and the general method shall be.

- I. To clear and confirm the doctrine.
- II. To speak of the *believer's* DEATH, or *mortification*, here intended; *I through the law am dead to the law.*
- III. To speak of the *believer's* LIFE, or *vivification*; his living unto God.
- IV. Of the *necessity* of this death in order to this life; or the *influence* that our being dead to the law hath upon our living unto God.
- V. Make some *application* of the subject in sundry *uses*.

I. To clear and confirm the doctrine; *At the mouth of two or three witnesses, every word shall be established.* But, to shew that we are not straitened to find out witnesses to attest the truth of this doctrine, I shall produce more than two or three.

The *first* witness that I cite, is that, Rom. vii. 5, 6. where you see, that to be *dead to the law*, and *married to Christ*, is necessary in order to *living unto God*,

*bringing forth fruit to him, and serving him in newness of spirit.*

The *second* witness I cite, is very like to this, Isa. liv. 1, 5. compared, *Sing, O barren, that did not bear.*—*For more are the children of the desolate, [Gentiles,] than the children of the married wife: Why? ver. 5. Thy Maker is thy husband.* Being dead to the law, and divorced from it, and married to Christ, the barren woman becomes a fruitful bride. And, lest you should think I put a wrong gloss upon this text, and mistake the meaning of it, you may compare it with,

A *third* witness that I cite, whereby this very gloss that I give it is confirmed, Gal. iv. 27, *For it is written, Rejoice thou barren that bearest not; break forth and cry, thou that travailest not: for the desolate hath many more children than she which hath an husband.* Now, we would consider what is the subject here spoken of: the apostle is setting forth believers freedom from the law by the gospel, or their justification by faith without the works of the law; and he confirms it by an allegory, shewing, that our liberty from the law was prefigured in the family of Abraham, that we are not *children of the bond-woman*, or bond-men to the law, but *children of the promise, as Isaac*; And the apostle explains the prophet, and shews his allegory to be founded, not only on the former historical, but also on this prophetic scripture. The gospel-church, including all believers among Jews and Gentiles, is called the *bride, the Lamb's wife*: and as this bride in general, being divorced from the law and married to Christ, is a fruitful bride, bearing many children, many sons and daughters to Christ, and more under the new dispensation of the covenant of grace, than under the old legal administration thereof before Christ's coming; so every particular believer, being dead to the law, and married to Christ, is, by this means, fruitful in bringing forth the *fruit of holiness and righteousness*, to the glory of God; as the apostle in prosecuting this discourse, further shews, ver. 30. *Cast out the bond-woman and her son.* Strange! that the law should be called a *bond-woman*; and then, *Cast out the bond-woman*; this was

was strange language; nay, but in the case of justification, "Moses and his tables must give place to "Christ," as Luther says: yea, he adds in this sense, "I will say to thee, O law, be gone; and if it will not "be gone, thrust it out by force; *Cast out the bond-woman.*" Further, the apostle adds, chap. v. 1. *Stand fast, therefore, in the liberty wherewith Christ hath made us free, and be not entangled again with the yoke of bondage.* Read also, ver. 4, 5, 6. where you see, that the believer, being free from the law, and having the spirit of life, and the spirit of faith, bringing forth fruit to God; of which fruits of the Spirit of Christ, in opposition to the fruits of the flesh, you read, ver. 16, 17. and downward.

The *fourth* witness that I cite, is, Colos. ii. 13, 14. *You being dead in your sins,—hath he quickened.* Now, by what means does this quickening, or being made alive to God, come about? It is by the *blotting out of the hand-writing—nailing it to his cross*; intimating, that there is no living unto God, without being dead to the law, and having the law dead to us, by viewing it crucified with Christ, and nailed to his cross.

The *fifth* witness is, Colos. iii. 3, 4, 5. *For ye are dead,* [that is, dead to the law, as he had cleared before, and so dead to sin, self, and the world,] *and your life is hid with Christ in God; and when Christ, who is our life, shall appear, then shall ye also appear with him in glory.* *Mortify therefore your members which are upon the earth.* The believer is said to be *dead with Christ*, ver. 20. of the preceeding chapter, and so dead to the law, which was *nailed to the cross of Christ*. And ver. 1. of this chapter, the believer is said to be *risen with Christ*, and so he sits together with Christ in heavenly places: but though his best part is above, even his glorious Head, whom he will follow; yet he hath members on earth, which he is called to mortify; which mortification of sin is, you see, the native fruit of his being *dead with Christ*, and *risen with him*.

The *sixth* witness that I cite, is, Rom. iii. 28, 31. *We conclude that a man is justified by faith, without the deeds of the law, and so he is dead to the law.* Now, does

does this doctrine destroy our living to God? Nay, *Do we make void the law, through faith? God forbid; yea, we establish the law*: we establish it as a *covenant of works*, while we believe in Christ for righteousness, to be imputed for our justification; and we establish it as a *rule of life*, and holiness, while we believe in Christ for strength, to be imparted for our sanctification; and so being dead to the law in point of justification, we live unto God in sanctification.

The *seventh* witness that I cite, is, Rom. vi. 14. *Sin shall have no dominion over you; for you are not under the law, but under grace.* Where you see, that a man's being *under grace*, and not *under the law*, is the very means by which he comes to be delivered, and freed from the *dominion of sin*, and so lives unto God.— Here is the privilege, deliverance from the dominion of sin; and the means of it is, by the grace of God in Christ Jesus, by which we are delivered from the law: for, as *the motions of sin*, Rom. vii. 5. are said to be *by the law*, so the law being dead to us, and we by grace, being married to another husband, we bring forth fruit unto God; *The grace of God, that bringeth salvation, teaching us to deny ungodliness*, Titus ii. 11. While the law hath power over a man, he cannot but be bringing forth *fruit unto death*, Rom. vii. 5.— There was never yet an effectual course taken for the mortifying of sin, but by the gospel, and the grace of Christ, which yet some ignorantly think leads to licentiousness, as they thought in Paul's days, Rom. vi. 15. Nay, while we are under the law, we are the servants of sin; *But now being made free from sin, and become servants to God, ye have your fruit unto holiness, and the end everlasting life*, verſe 22.

The *eighth* witness that I cite, is, Rom. viii. 2, 3. *For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus, hath made me free from the law of sin and death.* Why? how comes that about? verſe 3. *For what the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin condemned sin in the flesh.* Where ye see the quality of every

every believer ; he is one that lives to God, and *walks not after the flesh, but after the Spirit* : and now, what is the foundation of this ? even freedom from the law, which through our weakness could not justify us ; but our help was laid upon *One that is mighty*, who having come under the law, did, by a sacrifice for sin, *condemn sin in the flesh, that the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us*, both in point of justification and sanctification.

The *ninth* witness that I cite, is, 2 Cor. v. 14, 15. *For the love of Christ constrains us,—that he died for all, that they which live should not henceforth live to themselves, but to him that died for them.* There is true sanctification, and living unto God ; but how came it about ? The means thereof is the death of Christ, which we have been celebrating in the sacrament of the supper ; this is both the means and the motive thereof. What stronger motive than this, to *live to him that died for us* ; and by his death, *redeemed us from the law* ? For we are *dead to the law by the body of Christ*, Rom. vii. 4. ; that is, by the death of Christ, the sacrifice of his human nature : and hence comes true spiritual life, or living to him.

The *tenth* witness that I cite, is, 1 Cor. xv. 56, 57. *The sting of death is sin, the strength of sin is the law* : where the law is called the *strength of sin*, not only because *by the law is the knowledge of sin*, and sin would not have power to condemn us, but by virtue of the law which discharges sin ; but also because sin gets strength from the law : *Sin taking occasion by the commandment, wrought in me all manner of concupiscence ; for without the law sin was dead*, Rom. vii. 8. Sin and corruption is so irritated by the law, that thereby the sinner becomes to be more sinful : which is not the fault of the law, for it prohibites, reproveth, and condemns sin : but the fault of corrupt nature, which is so intent in perpetrating evil, that the more any thing is forbidden, the more impetuously it follows after it ; like a mad horse, the more he is checked with the bridle, the more mad and furious is he. Now, *The strength of sin is the law ; but thanks be to God, which*  
gives

*gives us the victory, through Jesus Christ our Lord:—* Victory over the law, which is the strength of sin; and so, being freed from the law, or dead to it, in this way I am freed from sin, and put in case to live unto God.—These are ten witnesses, instead of twenty that might be adduced for the confirmation of this doctrine, *That to be dead to the law in point of justification, is necessary in order to our living unto God in point of sanctification.*—Receive this truth then in the love of it.

II. The *second* thing proposed was, to speak of this strange DEATH of the believer; *I through the law am dead to the law.* Now here four things are to be touched at, 1. What the *law is*, that the believer is dead to. 2. What it is *in the law*, that he is dead to. 3. What it is to be *dead* to the law. 4. The *means* of this, that through the law he is dead to the law.

*1st*, What the *law is*, that the believer is dead to. I know, I have need to be cautious what I say in this captious age, especially upon such a subject as this; but it is in the fear of God, to whom I am accountable, and without regard to any man, that I desire to deliver the truths of the gospel.—What is the law, to which Paul said he was dead? I shall not trouble you with the several acceptations of the *law*, nor the distinctions of it into *judicial*, *ceremonial*, and *moral*. But here though the apostle speaks sometimes of the *ceremonial*, and sometimes of the *moral* law in this epistle; yet in this text, I suppose, with the current of sound divines, that he understands especially the *moral* law, or the law of the ten commandments, considered under the form of a covenant of works. The law is to be taken two ways. 1. *Materially*, for its mere preceptive and directive part. Or, 2. The law may be taken *formally*, as it is a covenant, whether of works or grace. Now, the law, *materially* taken, is still the same, whatever form it be cast into, and it is the transcript of the divine image, after which man was created at first; so that, long before the law was written in tables of stone, it was written in the tables of man's heart; and

man was obliged to give obedience to this law, as a creature to his Creator, though there never had been any covenant made with him; and this obligation to obedience is eternal, everlasting, and unchangeable.—But this law was afterwards cast into two different forms, namely, that of the *covenant of works*, and afterwards that of the *covenant of grace*.—Now here, I say, it is meant of the law, or covenant of works; in which law there were three things, a *precept*, a *promise*, and a *penalty*. 1. The *precept*, which is perfect and personal obedience, by our own strength, and in the old covenant-form; *Do*; 2. The *promise*, which is life eternal; *Do* and *Live*. 3. The *penalty*, which is death temporal, spiritual, and eternal; if you *Do* not, you shall *Die*, Genesis ii. 17. The covenant of works commands good, and forbids evil, with a promise of life in case of obedience, and a threatening of death in case of disobedience: and so this law of works hath a twofold power; a power to justify, and a power to condemn; to justify, if we obey; and to condemn, if we disobey. The command of the law, abstractly and materially considered, is, as I said, eternally binding upon all rational creatures, so long as they continue to be creatures, and God the Creator: but the command of the law, formally considered, or under the form of a covenant of works particularly, binds no longer than the form continues. Now, the commanding power of the law, as a covenant of works, is a power calling us to obey, (or injoining us to do) by our own strength; to obey, as a condition of life; and to obey, under pain of damnation.

2dly, As to the *second* thing here, what it is *in the law*, the believer is dead to. Here it must be observed, That it is only the *believer* that is dead to the law, all others are alive to it; and the believer's being dead to the law, imports, that he is *wholly set free* from it; or, as the words of our *Confession* bear, “They are “not under the law as a covenant of works, to be “thereby either justified or condemned.” Thus they are dead to the law. The law is compared, in our text, to a hard and cruel master, and we compared to

slaves, and bond-men, who, as long as they are alive, are under dominion, and at the command of their masters; but when they are dead, they are free from that bondage, and their masters have no more to do with them. Here then, to be dead to the law, is to be free from the *dominion* and *power* of the law. Now, I think the power of the law may be considered, either as accidental or essential. It hath an *accidental* power or strength; for example, by reason of our sinful, corrupt, and depraved state, even an irritating power, whereby, as an occasion, it provokes, and stirs up the corruption of the heart in the unregenerate, Romans vii. 8. From this the believer is free, so far as he is dead to the law.—But next, There is a power that the law hath, that may be called *essential* to it, as a covenant of works; and that is, a justifying and condemning power, as I said before; a power to justify the obedient, and a power to condemn the disobedient: now, believers are dead to the law, so as they are not under it, to be justified or condemned thereby; they are wholly, and altogether free from the law, as it is a covenant of life and death, upon doing, or not doing.

But, for the further clearing of this, I told you upon that question, What law is here meant? That in the law, as a covenant of works, there are three things.

1. The *precept* of obedience.
2. The *promise* of life.
3. The *threatening* or *penalty* of death; all which the believer is dead to.

1. The *precept* of obedience, as a condition of life, is one part of the covenant of works; *Do and live*; or, *If thou wilt enter into life, keep the commandments*: this the believer is delivered from, and so dead to the precepts of the law, as a covenant or condition of life. Take heed to what I say here; I say not, that the believer is delivered from the precept of the law *simply*, but as a *condition of life*: for the *command* of perfect obedience, is not the covenant of works; nay, man was obliged to perfect obedience, and is eternally bound to obey the law, though there had never been

a covenant: but the *form* of the precept, or command in the covenant of works, is perfect obedience as a condition of life. Now, it is the *commanding power* of the law, as a covenant of works, that the believer is free from; and it hath no commanding power, but in this strain, namely, to command perfect obedience as the condition of life; and, under pain of the curse, Obey, and thou shalt live; otherwise thou shalt die. Now, the *ground* of the believer's freedom from the precept of the law, as a covenant of works, or condition of life, is just *Christ's perfect obedience* to the law, in his room, in his stead, which is the true and proper condition of our eternal life and happiness: *By the obedience of one, shall many be made righteous:—that as sin hath reigned unto death, even so grace might reign thro' righteousness, unto eternal life, by Jesus Christ our Lord,* Rom. v. 19, 20. There is an eternal truth in this, that life is not to be obtained, unless all be done that the law requires, *Do this and live*; and that is still true, *If thou wilt enter into life, keep the commandments.* They must be kept by us, or our Surety: now the Surety's obedience being imputed to the believer, as the condition of eternal life, the believer is not obliged to obedience to the law as a condition of life: the precept of the law properly is, *Do*; but the precept of the law as a covenant of works, is under this conditional form, *Do, and Live.* Now, if any say then, the believer is delivered from obligation to do, or to obey the law, I deny that: for this *Do* is eternally binding; but the precept of the law, as a covenant of works, is not simply *Do*, but *Do, and Live*: and this conditional form, which is properly the precept and command of the covenant of works, he is indeed delivered from; for Christ, as Surety, came under the law, as a covenant of works, or as it stood in this conditional *Do, and Live*: for he yielded perfect obedience to it, to procure life by it; and so the believer is wholly delivered from obedience to it; that is, to obtain life by it, or to procure everlasting life by his obedience. The precept, thus formed as the condition of life, by virtue of the annexation of the promise

of life to the obedience of it, is the precept of the covenant of works; and from this precept he is freed, and so is dead to the law in respect of the precept of it, in and through Jesus Christ his Surety.

2. The *promise* of life is another thing in the covenant of works; and this runs in the same line with the former, being so connected with it. The promise of life in the law, or covenant of works, was just the promise of eternal life, upon condition of perfect obedience: now, the believer's freedom from the law, in this respect, flows from his freedom from it in the former respect: for, if he be freed from the *Do*, or obedience, as required in that old covenant-form, then he is not to expect eternal life, as it is promised in that covenant: nay, the law is divested of its promise of life to the believer: that is to say, his obedience to the law hath not the promise of eternal life, as the legal ground and title upon which he is to obtain it: he holds this title to eternal life in Jesus Christ, his Surety, in whom he hath a perfect obedience, to which eternal life is promised; and which is now the alone sure ground upon which it is to be procured. The believer's own obedience to the law, or his gospel-obedience, and conformity to the law, wrought in him, and done by him, through the help of the Spirit of grace; even this obedience of his, I say, hath not the legal promise of eternal life, as if it were the legal condition of his obtaining eternal life: no, his gospel-obedience hath indeed a gospel-promise, connecting it with eternal life, as it is an evidence of his union to Christ, *in whom all the promises are Yea and Amen*; and as it is a walking in the way to heaven, without which none shall ever come to the end; *For without holiness it is impossible to see God.*—But the legal promise of eternal life made to obedience, and which makes our personal obedience to be the cause and matter of our justification, and as the proper condition of salvation and eternal life, this is the promise of the law, or covenant of works; and this promise it is now wholly divested of, as to the believer in Jesus Christ, who hath taken his law-room, and yielded that perfect obedience, to which the promise of eternal life

is now made : and the reason why I say, the promise of eternal life is *now* made to Christ's perfect obedience in our room and stead, is, Because the law, or covenant of works, made no promise of life properly, but to man's own personal obedience : it made no mention of a surety : but now, in sovereign mercy, this law-rigour is abated, and the Surety is accepted, to whose obedience life is promised.

3. The *threatening* of death, in case of disobedience, is another thing in the covenant of works ; death, and wrath, and the curse, is the penalty of the law : death is the reward of sin and disobedience to the law ; *In the day thou sinnest thou shalt die* ; and this the believer is also freed from by the death of Christ, who died for our sins : the law saith, *Cursed is every one that continueth not in all things written in the book of the law, to do them* ; but the gospel saith, *Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us*, Gal. iii. 10, 13. As the law then to the believer is divested of its promise of life, so as it cannot justify him for his obedience ; so it is divested of its threatening of death, and cannot condemn him for his disobedience to it as a covenant, that covenant-form of it being done away in Christ Jesus, with respect to the believer. I think some will, perhaps object, saying, That the believer is delivered from the *curse* of the law, we understand ; but still we cannot fathom how he is dead to the *command* of the law : that he is dead to the *condemning* power of the law, is plain ; but, how is he dead to the *preceptive, mandatory, commanding* power of the law ? To which it might be replied, He is dead to, and delivered from the *preceptive* part of the law, not *materially*, but *formally* ; for the command of it *materially*, is, *Do*, or yield obedience : this he can never be delivered from, so long as he is a creature, and God his Creator : but the command of it *formally*, or under the form of the covenant of works, is, *Do, and Live* ; *Do*, by your own strength ; *Do*, as the condition of your eternal life ; and *Do*, under the pain of eternal death and damnation : this, I say, which

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is the commanding part of the law, *formally* considered, as it is a covenant of works, he is wholly and altogether delivered from. To preach the mandatory part of the law, as a *covenant of works*, is to preach the moral law, not merely as a *rule* of life, but as the *condition* of life eternal; in which sense the believer is not at all bound to acknowledge it: and to say, that the believer is delivered from the law, that is, only from the *curse* of the law, would make some very strange glosses upon many scriptures: for example, Gal. iii. 10. *As many as are of the works of the law, are under the curse*; the meaning of it then would be, As many as are under the curse, are under the curse. It must therefore be meant of the *precept* of the law; As many as are under the precept, are under the penalty thereof. The believer then is dead to, and delivered from the law in its commanding and condemning power, and that in, and through Christ. And I am not afraid, nor ashamed to say it, in the words of the famous Dr. Owen, “That the whole power “ and sanction of the first covenant was conferred upon Christ, and in him fulfilled and ended.” And I think I say no more than what the apostle, a greater than he, saith, Romans x. 4. *Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth.*—Thus you see what it is in the law, the believer died to, more generally.

3dly, The *third* thing here proposed was, What it is to be *dead* to the law, more particularly as it comes under the notion of death. And here, 1. I shall shew the *import* of this death. 2. Some of the *qualities* of it.

(1.) To shew the *import* of this death. The notion of death may here help us to the import; for,

1. As in death there is no *relation* takes place; it dissolves the relation betwixt master and servant, husband and wife, Job iii. 16. *The servant is freed from his master*, so here, the man being dead to the law, the relation betwixt him and it is dissolved, Rom. vii. 1,—4. He is now married to Christ, and divorced from the law: while the man is alive to the law, the relation stands;

stands ; *For I testify to every one that is uncircumcised, that he is a debtor to do the whole law, Gal. v. 3.*

2. In death there is no *care* or *thoughtfulness*, Eccl. ix. 10. *There is no work, nor device, nor knowledge, nor wisdom in the grave, whither thou goest ;* intimating to us, that in death there is no care nor thoughtfulness, nor concern about doing any thing : so the man that is dead to the law, he hath no more care, nor concern about the works of the law in point of JUSTIFICATION, than a dead corps about the work in which it was occupied while living : while the man is alive to the law, all his care and concern is about the works of the law ; *Do, and Live.*

3. In death there is no *hope* ; *The land of the living is the land of hope, Eccl. ix. 4. :* Even so the man that is dead to the law, he hath no hope nor expectation from the law, or from his obedience thereto.—The man that is alive to the law, he hath hope, that God will pardon him, and pity him ; why ? because he does so and so ; he is a good neighbour, he wrongs no-body, he is just in his dealings, and careful in his duties, and *touching the righteousness of the law, he is blameless* : he hath a good heart towards God, and he hath a good life too ; and therefore he hopes to be justified and saved of God, for Christ's sake : for he hath learned, it may be, to make so much use of Christ, as to think he cannot be saved without him ; but still his hope and expectation is founded upon the law. But now, the man dead to the law, he hath no hope from the law ; nay, he despairs of salvation by the deeds of the law : as he sees he cannot do any thing, without grace and strength from above, so even when he does any thing by the help of grace, he sees it so lame and imperfect, that God cannot justify or save him, to the honour and credit of his justice, unless he hath a perfect righteousness. He hath no hope by the law.

4. In death there is no *toil*, no turbulent passion nor affection : natural death puts an end to natural affections, which take place in man's life-time ; such as the weary pursuit of what we love, and the wearisome flight from what we hate, or fear : there is no  
such

such thing in the grave ; *There the weary are at rest*, Job iii. 19. They that are alive to the law, and *find the life of their hands, they weary themselves in the greatness of their way*, as it is expressed, Isa. lvii. 10.—Many a weary night and day they may have in pursuing after their lovers, in establishing their darling self-righteousness. The law gives them a wearisome talk, to make brick without affording straw ; and leads them with heavy burdens of curses, in case the task be not performed.—But when a man is dead to the law, then *the weary are at rest* : Christ is the rest ; *Come to me, all ye that are weary and heavy laden, and I will give you rest*. Then the man gets rest to his conscience, in the blood and righteousness of Christ, the end of the law : rest to his passions and affections ; he rests from his fears, legal fears of hell, and wrath threatened in the law : the believer indeed may be filled with them, but so far as he is dead to the law, so far is he at rest from these legal slavish fears. He rests from his love and delight ; the law affords its votaries much pleasure, sometimes in the performance of their duty in a legal way : but now the believer takes no delight in that way of justification ; he is out of conceit with himself, and his duties, because they are vile ; yea, though they were not so vile as they are, but perfect, yet he is out of conceit with that way of life, and beholding the glory of the new covenant and way of salvation, joins issue with Job, chap. ix. 15, 21. *Whom, though I were righteous, yet would not I answer, but I would make supplication to my judge ; tho' I were perfect, yet would I not know my soul, I would despise my life*. In a word, he rests from his legal griefs and sorrows, because he rests from his legal labours. As it is said of the dead in Christ, in another sense, Rev. xiv. 13. *Blessed are the dead that die in the Lord, they rest from their labours, and their works follow them* : so I may say in this case, *Blessed are the dead which die to the law, they rest from their labours, their toil-some, troublesome, wearisome, legal works, and yet their works do follow them* : they are now *created in Christ Jesus unto good works*. But,

5. In death there is no *sense*: a dead man does not see, nor hear, nor taste, nor smell, nor exert any natural sense; so that they are dead to it, they do not now see the lightnings of Sinai all in a flame, as formerly they did; they do not *hear* the thunders thereof; they do not *smell* the sulphure of the burning mountain; they do not *feel* the terror of vindictive vengeance, the tempest that surrounded the mount; they do not *taste* the gall, the bitterness of the wrath threatened in the law; the bitterness of death is over with them, so far as they see that Christ drank the gall for them; yea, so far they are dead to the law, they are dead to all Sinai wrath: *They are not come to the mount that might be touched, and that burned with fire, nor unto blackness and darkness, and tempest, and the sound of the trumpet, and the voice of words,—but they are come to mount Sion, and unto the city of the living God,* Heb. xii. 18,—24. But what? Have the godly no sense of law-wrath? Yea, so far as they are legal, and under the law (for they are never wholly freed from a legal temper while here) the dead ghost of the law may rise up and fright them; but so far as they are dead to the law, it is not law-wrath, but fatherly-wrath that affects them. Indeed, through unbelief, they may fear hell; but they cannot do so by faith, seeing there is no foundation for either that faith or fear, in the Bible, that a believer shall be cast into hell since *there is no condemnation to them that are in Christ Jesus*.

6. In death there is no *motion*; vital motion ceases when death takes place: thus, so far as a man is dead to the law, so far the motions of sin are killed; for, *the motions of sin are by the law*, Rom. vii. 5. By the law occasionally and accidentally men running the more into sin, by how much the more they are forbidden to commit sin. Hence Musculus compares the law, in this respect, to a chaste matron in a brothel-house, which by her good advice does prove an occasion to some impudent whores to be more bold, and impudent in their impiety; *Sin taking occasion by the law*, or commandment, saith the apostle, *wrought in me all manner of concupiscence*. But now, so far as a

man is dead to the law, so far are the motions of sin killed, and his soul quickened to live unto God. Of which more afterwards.

(2.) To shew some of the *qualities* of this death to the law.

1. It is an *universal* death: I do not mean that it is common to all the children of men, though it be a common death to the children of God, and to every one of them; yet it is a rare death among the children of men: *The whole world lies in wickedness, and are dead in sins and trespasses*; few are dead in this sense: but what I mean by its being *universal*, is, that the man that is dead to the law in point of *justification*; he is dead to *every part* of the law in its old covenant-form, to the *precept* of it, to the *penalty* of it, so as he is not to be justified by the one, nor condemned by the other. He is dead to *every legal form* of the law; his gospel obedience thereto, is no part of his righteousness for justification before God; if he should endeavour to make his gospel-obedience to the law, as a rule of life, in the hand of a Mediator, any part of his righteousness for justification, he so far turns the covenant of grace, and the duties required therein, into a covenant of works, and he seeks to live unto that, to which he is, and should be dead. It is true, the form of the law in the gospel-covenant does not require obedience for justification; but yet this corrupt nature is prone to turn to the old byass, and abuse the proper form of it, by turning of the rule of *obedience* into a rule of *acceptance*.—If a man make faith itself an act, or any act or fruit of it, the matter of his justification, he turns it to a covenant of works: the believer is dead to faith itself in this respect; yea, faith renounces itself, and all things else, but the righteousness of Christ for justification. In this sense, he is dead to repentance, love, and other graces; he is dead to every obedience to the law, as a covenant of works; to his natural legal obedience before his conversion; and to his spiritual gospel obedience after conversion: which, though it be a righteousness that  
God

God works, and is the Author of; yet, because it is the believer that is the subject, and made the actor thereof, it is called his own righteousness, or conformity to the law: all which he renounced in the matter of justification, desiring *to be found in Christ, not having his own righteousness, that is after the law, but the righteousness which is of God by faith*, Phil. iii. 9.— So that I say, it is an *universal* death.

2. It is a *lingering* death. It is not easy to get the law killed: something of a legal disposition remains even in the believer while he is in this world: many a stroak does self, and self-righteousness get, but still it revives again. If he were wholly dead to the law, he would be wholly dead to sin; but so far as the law lives, so far sin lives. They that think they know the gospel well enough, bewray their ignorance; no man can be too evangelical; it will take all his life-time to get a legal temper destroyed. Though the believer be delivered wholly from the law, in its commanding and condemning power and authority, or in its rightful power that it hath over all that are under it; yet he is not delivered wholly from its usurped power, which takes place many times upon him, while here, through remaining unbelief.

3. It is a *painful* death; it is like the cutting off the right hand, and plucking out the right-eye: The man hath no inclination to part with the law. It is as natural for him to expect God's favour upon his *doing* so and so, and to expect life and salvation by his own obedience, or doing as well as he can, as it is natural for him to draw his breath; *If we do our best, God will accept of us*, that is the natural language of every one, who is wedded to the *Do and Live* of the first covenant. And, O what a pain is it to be brought off from that way! To die to the law, is most unnatural, strange doctrine; and legal pangs, and pains of conviction, and humiliation must be borne, before a right thought about dying to the law can be brought forth.

4. It is a *pleasant* death; it is *painful* at first, but pleasant at last: O how pleasant is it, to see self abased,

and grace exalted; self-righteousness cried down, and Christ's righteousness cried up in the soul! *Wisdom's ways are pleasantness*: and this way particularly, where-  
*in no flesh does glory in his presence; but he that glorieth, glorieth in the Lord: he rejoiceth in Christ Jesus, and hath no confidence in the flesh: he doth joy in God, thro' Jesus Christ, by whom he receives the atonement; and grace reigning through righteousness, to eternal life by Jesus Christ our Lord,* Rom. v. 11, 21. This death is a pleasant parting, when the man is brought to a parting with all his own rags for a glorious robe, *Isaiah* lxiv. 6. and lxi. 12. and xlv. 24.

5. It is an *honourable* death: to be dead to the law, is a death that brings honour to God, to Christ, to the law, and to the believer. It brings honour to God's *holiness*, which is now satisfied by Christ's doing; and honour to God's *justice*, which is now satisfied by Christ's dying.—It brings honour to *Christ*; for now the man values the righteousness of Christ, as being indeed *the righteousness of God*, and a full, sufficient, perfect righteousness.—It brings honour to the *law*, when, instead of our imperfect obedience, we bring it to an obedience better than men or angels in their best estate could give it, even the Lawgiver's obedience; which indeed doth *magnify the law, and make it honourable*.—It brings honour also to the *believer* himself: he is honoured and beautified with a law-biding righteousness, truly meritorious, and every way glorious: *This is the honour of all the saints*.

6. It is a *profitable* death: it is a happy death, and a holy death; profitable both for happiness and holiness; profitable both for justification and sanctification. Our legal righteousness is unprofitable; *I will declare thy righteousness, and thy works; for they shall not profit thee,* *Isaiah* lvii. 12. It is unprofitable for justification; for, *by the deeds of the law shall no flesh living be justified*: it is unprofitable for sanctification; for his filthy rags do rather pollute him than purify him.—But the righteousness of Christ is profitable every way: they are *happy* that have it; for, they are *justified from all things, from which they could not be justified*

tified by the law of Moses : they are *holy* that have it ; as will appear in the sequel of our discourse. Being dead to the law, is the way to live unto God.

4thly, The *fourth* thing here proposed, is the *means* of this death ; I THROUGH the LAW am dead to the law : the mean of death to the law, is the law. But then a *question* may be moved, How can this be, seeing the law is the *cause* of no good thing in us, and is the *ministration* of death and condemnation ? 2 Cor. iii. 7, 8, 9.—In answer to which, we may observe, That though the law is not the *cause* of this death to the law, and so death to sin ; yet it is an *occasion* thereof, for it accuses, terrifies, and condemns us, and therefore occasions and urgeth us to flee to Christ, who is the true cause that we die to the law, and to sin : as the needle goes before, and draws the thread which sews the cloth ; so the needle of the law goes before, and makes way for the grace of the gospel, that it may follow after, and take place in the heart. To be dead to the law, and married to Christ, is all one in scripture sense. Now, to be DEAD to the law, by the LAW, is by means of the law, to be led to Christ for justification, by faith in him, without the deeds of the law ; The law was our schoolmaster to lead us to Christ, that we might be justified by faith, Gal. iii. 24. ; where the law may be taken either for the *ceremonial* or *moral* law. If we take it for the *ceremonial* law, then it is true that the *ceremonial* law pointed out Christ to us truly : but then the ceremonial law was gospel, in the substance of it, though veiled over with types and shadows, which were to continue till the body was come : but if we take it for the *moral* law, then it brings us to Christ only occasionally ; for to bring us to Christ, is no proper work of the law, only it is the occasion thereof, insomuch as it forces us from itself, and makes us to see that by it there is no hope of life ; so it curses all sinners, and gives hope of life to none : it is the gospel only that shews us the salvation to be had in Christ. Now, the law, by the severity of it, is an occasion to us of seeking life, where it is to be found : like  
a child

a child, knowing the tenderness of his father's love, and finding the school-master to be very severe and sharp, he runs from the severity of the master, to hide himself under his father's wings: yet not by his master's teaching, but his severity is the occasion of it: even so it is through the law, and its severity, that the believer is dead to the law: it is then by a law-work, in some measure, a work of legal conviction and humiliation, that a man comes to be dead to the law.

Here I will name to you a few pieces of *law-work*, which are the occasion of the man's being *dead to the law*, when the Spirit of God makes use of the law for that end.

1. Through the law a man gets the conviction of the *holiness of God*, and of the holiness, spirituality, and extent of the law itself; the Spirit of God enlightens the mind, to see the conformity of the command unto the will of God, and to the holy nature of God; this is called the *coming of the commandment*, Rom. vii. 9.—*For I was alive without the law once: I thought I was holy enough, I found the life of my hand, while I was touching the righteousness of the law, blameless; but when the commandment came, sin revived, and I died.* When I saw the holiness and spirituality of God's law, sin revived, and I died; I saw that I was a sinner indeed, and I died to the law, and to all conceit of my own works, and obedience to the law. This conviction makes a man have a doctrinal approbation of the law as *holy, just, and good*: holy, in its precepts; just, in its threatenings; and good, in its promises; I consent to the law, that it is good. By this conviction, a man sees not only the holiness and spirituality, but the *extent* of the law; *Thy commandment is exceeding broad*; it is extended to all my thoughts, words, and actions; to all my affections, designs, desires, and inclinations. Now, when a man sees this, it kills his confidence, and makes him see he hath no righteousness conformable to the law.

2. Through the law, the man gets the conviction of sin; *By the law is the knowledge of sin,* Rom. iii. 20.

Conviction of sin is the consciouſneſs of our tranſgreſſing of this holy law. This conviction makes a man ſee ſin in its *nature*, that it is *the tranſgreſſion of the law*, 1 John iii. 4. and ſo a contrariety to the whole nature and will of God. This conviction makes a man ſee the *kinds* of ſin: it may be, the Spirit of God begins with ſome actual, grievous ſin; *actual* ſin is the ſwerving of our actions, either in thought, word, or deed, from the law of God, either by omiſſion or commiſſion. From thence the conviction goes to *original* ſin, letting the man ſee, that not only is his nature deſtitute of all righteouſneſs, and conformity to the law, but that it is wholly corrupt, that he is juſt a hell of ſin and enmity againſt God; and from thence the Spirit of God by the law, convinces the man of the *originating* ſin, even of Adam's ſin, and ſays to him, as it is, Iſa. xliii. 27. *Thy firſt father hath ſinned*, and thou in him.—This conviction makes a man to ſee alſo the *aggravations* of ſin, how much light, and how many mercies he hath ſinned againſt: and alſo the *power* and dominion of ſin, what a ſlave he is thereto, and that the law is ſo far from freeing him therefrom, that it but exaſperates corruption, and ſo is *the ſtrength of ſin*. Now, when the man comes thus to ſee ſin in its nature, kinds, aggravations, and dominion, what can more tend to kill his conceit of righteouſneſs by the law?

3. Through the law the man gets the conviction of *guilt* as well as ſin, that he is bound over to puniſhment according to the law; for guilt is properly an obligation to puniſhment. As by the precept of the law, the man comes to get the knowledge of the intrinſical evil of ſin in its nature; ſo by the penalty of the law, he comes to get the knowledge of the conſequential evil of ſin, as binding him over to hell, death, and damnation; that the curſe of God, the wrath of God, the vengeance of God is the retinue and train of attendants that accompany ſin: and ſo the man is put in fear of hell and damnation. It may be, when he goes to bed, he ſhall never riſe again; when he goes out, he thinks he ſhall never come in again; he is afraid his meat choke him, or the houſe fall above his head,

head, or the earth open and swallow him up: sense of wrath haunts him like a ghost; the man is put in prison, and *concluded under sin*, Gal. iii. 22. Sin is the prison, the sinner is the prisoner, God is the Judge, and the curse of the law is the bond by which the prisoner is tied neck and heel; and from this prison there is no escape, without the mercy of God in Christ; who can command this prisoner to come forth? The law cannot do it; it is *weak through the flesh*; man cannot do it, he is by *nature without strength*: only he, whom God hath given to be a *covenant to the people*, can say to the prisoner, *Go forth*, Isaiah xlix. 6, 9. Now, when the man is thus convinced of guilt and wrath by the law, this hath a tendency to make him *dead to the law*, and to kill his confidence in any legal righteousness of his own. O! is there any poor prisoner here, that finds himself shut up in prison, under the power of sin, and under the guilt of sin, and wrath of God? O let this give you some comfort for the present, till God loose your bands, that this is the way God is taking to make you dead to the law, that you may live to God.

4. Through the law, a man gets the conviction of God's *equity and righteousness*, though he should punish and execute law-vengeance; and so is made to justify God, though he should send him to hell. I do not say, that the sinner is made content to be damned; no: that, in some respect, were to be content to be an enemy to God, and to sin against him for ever; for, the state of the damned includes everlasting enmity and sin, and so it can never be the thing he is made content with; but the man is brought to a conviction of God's equity and righteousness, though he should send him to hell, as an everlasting punishment. "To justify God, says an eminent divine, is "to acknowledge on the one hand, that he does no "wrong to the sinner in the execution of the curse; "and, on the other hand, that he does no wrong to "himself, or to his own justice, when he executes the "judgment threatened against sin, but that he does "that which is right." O, says the sinner, in this case,

case, God does me no wrong, though he should destroy me; and he does not wrong his own justice, but is a just God in so doing: yea, I cannot see how the credit of his justice should be salved, and how he should be glorified in his justice, if he do not execute judgment upon me, either in myself, or in a surety for me, because I have offended such an infinitely glorious Being: *Against thee, thee only have I sinned,—that thou mightest be justified when thou speakest; and clear when thou judgest*, Psalm li. 4. *Is God unrighteous, that takes vengeance? God forbid*, Rom. iii. 5, 6. The offence done against the greatest of Beings, deserves the greatest of punishments, even the eternal destruction of the creature. It is true, God delights not in the death of a sinner; *As I live, I have no pleasure in the death of a sinner*, Ezek. xviii. 32.; that is, as it is a destruction of the creature, though he delights in it, as it is the execution of justice; even so, the sinner convinced by the law, though he cannot take pleasure in this, to think of being destroyed, yet there is some secret kind of justifying that which God takes pleasure in, namely, the execution of justice. O how fit is it, that God's justice be glorified! And, how just is God, in executing infinite judgment upon such an infinite evil as sin is! And indeed the sinner would not see salvation to be free, if he did not see damnation to be just; but the sight of this, in the glass of the law, and in the light of the Spirit, tends, in a manner, to reconcile the man with the device of salvation through Christ, whose bloody sacrifice gives justice full satisfaction.—He is now content that God's justice be glorified by a satisfaction more glorious than that which the damned in hell can give; and so it tends to make him dead to the law, and to all other legal penances, and sham satisfactions, which those, who are ignorant of God's equity and righteousness, are ready foolishly to invent.

5. Through the law a man gets the conviction of his own *inexcusableness*, which is that effect of a legal work of the Spirit, whereby the soul is left without

excuse of, or defence for itself; *Whatsoever things the law saith, it saith to them that are under it, that every mouth may be stopt, and all the world may become guilty before God*, Rom. iii. 19. Now the whole soul of man cries out, *Guilty, guilty*; his fig-leaves of excuses are blown away; his former shifts, and cavils, in defence of himself, do now evanish: he hath not a word to speak in favours of himself. What said he formerly? Why, it may be, his heart said, if not his mouth, O I hope there will be no fear of me, Adam's sin was not mine; original sin is what I could not help, it came with me to the world; as for my actual sins, I see others guilty of greater; as for my omission of duties, and commission of trespasses, I see none but have their faults; and God is a merciful God, and I hope he will not be so unjust as to damn his own creatures.—These, and the like, shifts and excuses formerly took place; but now he becomes speechless; his mouth is stopt. They see they will but deceive themselves by these miserable shifts, and that they are guilty, guilty, and sinful wretches, blacker than the very devil, and have not a mouth to open for themselves; and so they die to all conceit of themselves, and their own righteousness.

6. Through the law the man comes thus to get a conviction of his *absolute need of the gospel*, or of the SAVIOUR revealed thereby; being convinced of his sinful and miserable state by nature, and humbled under the serious consideration and view of his sin and misery, fearing the wrath of God due to him for sin, beholding the equity of God, though he should cast him into hell; having his mouth stopt, and despairing of getting out of this condition, by his own power, or the help of any other creature; he is now convinced of the need of a Saviour: O I perish, I perish for ever, unless the Law-giver provide a law-biding righteousness for me! Now, the soul is ready to cry out, not in Rachel's sense, *Give me children, or else I die*; but in her phrase, *O give me Christ, or else I die; give me a Surety, or else I die*. Now, he is content to be for ever indebted to the righteousness of another: and  
thus

thus the law is the occasion of bringing a man to Christ. And so you see how it is, that *through the law, they are dead to the law, that they may live unto God.*

III. The *third* thing is to speak of the *believer's* LIFE, which is the fruit of this death; it is a *living unto God*. And now, in speaking hereto, I would, 1. Enquire what *kind* of life it is? 2. What are the *scriptural designations* of it? 3. What is imported in its being called a *living* in general? 4. What is imported in its being called a *living unto God* in particular?

1<sup>st</sup>, What *kind* of life is it that the believer hath in consequence of his *being dead to the law*? And,

1. It is not a *natural* life, either in a physical or moral sense. Natural life, in a *physical* sense, is that which we received from Adam by generation; and it is the function of natural faculties, in living, moving, using of sense and reason; that is a life that is common to all men, who yet may be dead: neither is it a natural life in a *moral* sense, such as heathens may have; the heathens may have common notions of God, and of good and evil, so as to render them inexcusable in their unnatural immoralities, Rom. i. 19, 20. They have a book of nature, both *internal*, in the remainders of the law in their heart, so as they *do by nature the things contained in the law*, Rom. ii. 14, 15. and *external*, in God's works of creation and general providence; *The heavens declare the glory of the Lord, and the firmament sheweth his handy-work*, Psal. xix. 1. Now, this natural life cannot be the *living to God* here spoken of, because this natural life flows only from a natural state, which is a state of death: by nature we are dead, legally dead under condemnation: spiritually dead in sins, wholly corrupt, and the tree being bad, the fruit must be bad also: a filthy fountain can bring forth nothing but filthy streams.—This natural life does proceed from natural *principles*, and these are corrupt; such as the *desires of the flesh and of the mind; the lusts of the flesh, the lust of the eye, and the pride of life*. At best their natural life flows from self-love, or love to its own honour, praises, profits, or pleasures: all nature's work are sel-

fish, however heroic they may be. This natural life is directed by a natural *rule*, such as the light of nature inward, or outward, accompanied with the counsels and examples of naturalists; neither does it ever come up to that same rule of nature's light, which therefore does condemn them as guilty. This natural life hath only natural *designs*, and *ends*: the natural man acts from *self* as his principle, to *self* as his end, ascribing the glory of all his actions thereunto: thus Herod gave not God the glory of his fine oration, but took the praise to himself; but he was immediately smitten of an angel, and eaten up of worms.—This natural way of living, it is in a natural *manner*, after the *course of this world*, according to the *prince of the power of the air*, Eph. ii. 2. which is nothing but a *walking in the lusts of the flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind*: yea, in this natural life, nothing of Christ, or of his gospel, is either in the state, practice, rule, end, or manner of it; nay, they are *without Christ, being aliens from the common-wealth of Israel, and strangers to the covenant of promise; having no hope, and without God, [or ATHEISTS] in the world*, Eph. ii. 12.

2. It is not a *legal* life, either of Jewish conformity to the ceremonial law, or of perfect conformity to the moral law: It is not that legal life of Jewish *conformity* to the *ceremonial law*, or according to the Old Testament dispensation; for that ceremonial law is abrogated in Christ, the substance of all the old shadows; and so that Jewish life is unprofitable, and vain; yea, it is damnable, and prohibited under the highest penalties, Colos. iii. 20, 21. And therefore, says the apostle, Gal. v. 2. *If ye be circumcised, [or live according to the ceremonial law, or any other law of works, so as to expect justification thereby,] Christ shall profit you nothing.* Neither is this *living to God* that *perfect life of conformity* to the *moral law*, according to the old covenant of works, which required perfect, personal, and perpetual obedience, as the condition of life; and threatened death upon the least failure: I say, it is not this life either; for man hath become guilty, and for

forfeited life, and incurred death by Adam's first transgression; *By one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned*, Rom. v. 12. Thus we are for ever incapable of that life, which Adam was capable of before the fall. It is also impracticable, because man is by nature *without strength*, Rom. v. 6. We have no strength to give that obedience which the covenant of works requires, because we must be redeemed from the curse thereof, and restored to the righteousness thereof, before we can be capable to do what it requires.—And though Adam's sin and transgression were not imputed to us, as indeed it undoubtedly is, yet seeing every adult person at least hath *sinned after the similitude of Adam's transgression*; for, *no man liveth and sinneth not*; therefore he can never perform the perfect obedience therein required; and *by the deeds of the law no flesh can be justified*. Besides, there is no article of the covenant of works, that provided for a remedy in case of a breach; but all that the covenant of works doth, is, to promise life to perfect obedience in man's own strength, and threatens death in case of failure, and so leaves the transgressor thereof under its curse.—In a word, the life according to that covenant cannot be the life here meant, because that covenant speaks nothing of Christ, or of his gospel, by whom, and by which, only we can now come to this living unto God; and because this living unto God presupposes a being dead to the law, or dead to that covenant, otherwise we can never live unto God.

3. It is not a *pharisaical* life of external, legal, but imperfect conformity to the law, and thereby endeavouring to establish a righteousness of our own, as the Jews, Romans ix. 31, 32. and x. 3. Many reckon an outward moral conversation to be this living unto God, whether in performing the natural duties of civility and moral honesty, or in an external performance of religious duties, such as prayer, praise, reading, hearing and waiting upon divine worship. The church of Laodicea was self-conceited; they thought they *were rich and increased with goods*; but, behold the testi-

testificate that Christ gave them, that they were *neither cold nor hot*, such as God would *spew out of his mouth*; yea, that they were *wretched, miserable, blind, and naked*: that is all the testimony that he gave them, who looked upon themselves as rich in legal righteousness, and good works. This pharisaical life may be accompanied with a glorious profession; they may profess soundness in the faith, and disown all these legal and unsound principles, which others may have as their stated opinion: they may profess that righteousness and justification is not by the works of the law, but by the faith of Christ, or by the works of Christ received by faith alone; they may have a sound head, but no *sound heart*, nor a *good conscience*, nor *faith unfeigned*; for *the end of the commandment is love*, proceeding from these, 1 Tim. i. 5. People may be like the toad, that hath a precious stone in his head, but hath his belly full of poison; they may have a head full of knowledge, and a heart full of enmity; a filthy mud-wall may be garnished with fine arras; a rotten sepulchre may be whitened: they may have much of the matter, and external form of godliness, and yet want the power, and internal form thereof; *a name to live, and be dead*. Yea, this pharisaical life may be accompanied with many excellent gifts, and common graces, and high attainments (as well as all visible church-privileges) as we find some apostates may have, Heb. vi. 4, 5, 6. Their *understanding* may be so far enlightened, that they may attain to strange discoveries of Christ. Balaam was called a *man whose eyes were opened*, and that *saw the visions of the Almighty*, Numb. xxiv. 2, 3, 4, 15. Their *wills* may be so far renewed, as to have a great many good purposes, like these who resolved to *serve the Lord with all their heart*, Deut. v. 27, 29. Josh. xxiv. 18, 21. They may be *almost persuaded to be Christians*.—Their *affections* may be greatly raised, and enlarged; they may be raised to *some sorrow for sin*, like Judas, and like Esau, who *sought the blessing with tears*: to *some joy*, like the stony-ground hearers, who *received the word with joy and pleasure*, yet had

no root; to *some delight*, like the Jews, of whom it is said, *Iſaiah lviii. 2. That they ſought him daily, and delighted to know his ways; yea, to ſome fear and reverence*, like theſe enemies that are ſaid to *ſubmit themſelves*, *Pſalm lxvi. 3.* and even to *ſome extraordinary raptures*, like theſe who are ſaid to *taſte of the heavenly gift*, and to be *partakers of the Holy Ghoſt*. On all which accounts their *life and converſation* may be changed in part. Thus many, *Through the knowledge of God, and of Chriſt, have eſcaped the pollutions of the world*, *2 Peter ii. 20, 21, 22.* The common gifts and graces of the Spirit may warm, ſmooth, and waſh their outward converſation: all this will not amount to this living unto God in the text. Well, what kind of life is this? We reply,

4. It is a *ſpiritual* life, being the action, motion, and gracious ſaving operation of the Spirit of God in us, *cauſing us to walk in his ſtatutes*, *Ezek. xxxvi. 27.* It is the life of a ſpiritual man. It is impoſſible for one to have a godly life, whatever to the world he may ſeem to have, till he be a godly perſon, or in a ſpiritual ſtate. A man muſt have a ſtate of union to Chriſt, by the faith of God's operation, ſo that being married with his Huſband, he may *bring forth fruit unto God*. The branch of the old Adam cannot bear good fruit; it is only the true branch, planted in Chriſt by the ſpirit of faith, that bears good fruit, *John xv. 4, 5.* A man muſt be in a ſtate of *reconciliation* with God, juſtified, pardoned, and indemnified, before God accept of any ſervice off his hand; for *two cannot walk together, or live together, unleſs they be agreed*. God accepts no action from an enemy, but his returning to him by faith in Chriſt, and then begins all perſonal acceptance. Men muſt be in a ſtate of *adoption*, before it is poſſible that they can be *followers of God as dear children*; in a ſtate of *renovation*, renewed by the Holy Ghoſt in the ſpirit of our mind. The godly man, that is in caſe for a godly life, is juſt a new creation; even the *workmanſhip of God, created in Chriſt Jeſus unto good works, which God before ordained that he ſhould walk in them*. If the heart be not right with  
God,

God, a man cannot have a right life, or live unto God. —But I shall go on to enquire,

2dly, Into the *scriptural designations* of this life. To give all the names that it comes under in scripture, were too large a task : I shall only single out some of the most notable names it gets in scripture. —It is sometimes designed from GOD, sometimes from CHRIST, sometimes from the SPIRIT, and sometimes from these names that import the other special *qualities and properties* of it.

1. Sometimes it is designed from GOD ; and it is called the *life of God*, Eph. iv. 18. from which all natural men are alienated : this is a wonderful name that it gets, the *life of God* ; who can tell what this life of God is ? God lives in himself, and the believer lives in God ; *His life is hid with Christ in God*, Col. iii. 3. The best we can say of it, is, that it begins in grace, and ends in glory ; and is wholly of God, and in him.

2. Sometimes it is designed from CHRIST ; and so it is called a *living by faith on the Son of God*, Gal. ii. 20. immediately following our text ; where, when the apostle would explain what he understands by his *living unto God*, he says, *Nevertheless I live, yet not I, but Christ liveth in me*. Christ, might he say, is the ALPHA and OMEGA of my life, the beginning and the end of it ; the author and finisher of it ; Christ is the principle of my life, from whom I live ; Christ is the end of my life, to whom I live ; Christ is the pattern of my life, according to whose example I live ; Christ is the giver of my life, the maintainer of my life, the restorer of my life ; after decays, *he restores my soul*, and makes me to *walk in the paths of righteousness, for his name's sake* : Christ is the food of my life ; I would die, if he did not feed me with his flesh and blood, which is living bread and water to me : Christ is the medicine of my life ; it is by renewed touches of the hem of his garment, and renewed applications to him, that my soul is healed : for, there is *healing under the wings of this Sun of righteousness* : Christ is the ALL of my life : *For to me to live is Christ* ; he is my light, my strength, my righteousness. It is the glory of the believer to

acknowledge Christ the ALPHA and the OMEGA, and the ALL of his spiritual life.

3. Sometimes it is designed from the SPIRIT, and so it is called a *living in the Spirit*; Gal. v. 25. *If we live in the Spirit, let us also walk in the Spirit.* It is a living in the *light and leading* of the Spirit; *Thy Spirit is good: lead me to the land of uprightness.*—It is a living in the *graces and fruits* of the Spirit, which are described, Gal. v. 22. and a bringing forth these fruits of the Spirit.—It is a living in the *strength and power* of the Spirit, which is therefore called a law; *The law of the Spirit of life, in Christ Jesus, hath made me free from the law of sin and death.* The power of the Spirit hath the *force* of a law within the man, insomuch that when he walks in the Spirit, he does not *fulfil the lusts of the flesh*: he sets the power of the Spirit against the power of sin.—It is a living in the *comforts* of the Spirit, and joys of the Holy Ghost; and when he thus lives, the joy of the Lord is his strength.—It is a walking in the *liberty* of the Spirit; and, *Where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty.* When a man hath this life, then he hath liberty to hear, read, pray, believe, mourn; and liberty to serve the Lord: *Truly I am thy servant, thou hast loosed my bonds.*—In a word, it is a living in the *love* of the Spirit, and in a constant dependence on the Spirit.

4. Sometimes it is designed from these names that import other special *qualities and properties* of it. And here I might bring in a multitude of scriptures. It is called a *holy* life; *Be ye holy as I am holy.*—It is called a *humble* life; *Walk humbly with thy God.*—It is designed a *heavenly* life; *Our conversation is in heaven.* The man is heavenly in his thoughts, and *spiritually-minded*: heavenly in his speech, desiring to edify these that are about him; heavenly in his affections, which are *set upon things above*; his desire and delight being set upon heavenly things: heavenly in his hope; *Looking for that blessed hope, and glorious appearing of the great God*: heavenly in his trade, trading daily to the heavenly country by faith, prayer, and drawing bills of exchange upon Christ, as it were, for all that

he stands in need of.—It is called an *upright* life ; *No good thing will he withhold from him that walketh uprightly.*—It is denominated a *well-ordered* life ; *To him that orders his conversation aright, will I shew the salvation of God.*—It is called a *circumspect* life ; *See that ye walk circumspectly.*—It is called a *gospel* life ; *Let your conversation be as it becometh the gospel ;* that is, as it becomes a gospel-state, gospel-principles, gospel-rules, gospel-patterns, gospel-motives, and gospel-ends ; and, under the influence of gospel-grace, *Adorning the doctrine of God our Saviour.*—But, omitting all these, I only instance in one scripture, wherein this *living unto God* is described, in such a manner, as includes all other properties of it ; yea, and comprehends all the duties of obedience we are called to ; *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,* Titus ii. 11, 12. ; where you see, this living unto God comprehends all these duties of *piety* towards God, *sobriety* towards ourselves, and *righteousness* towards our neighbour, which we are obliged to by the law, as a rule of life and holiness ; and all under the influence of the grace of God, revealed in the gospel, teaching us these things efficaciously : for the law teacheth them only *preceptively* ; but it is the gospel that teacheth them *effectively* ; *working in us both to will, and to do.* O that we knew this life more than we do.

3dly, The *third* thing here, was, What is imported in its being called a *life* in general ? Indeed this living to God, is the only life that deserves the name of life. In *vegetative* life, the trees of the field do excel men ; for, from little plants, they turn to stately oaks. In *sensitive* life, the beasts of the field do excel man, for they go beyond him in these natural faculties ; as the dog in smelling, the eagle in seeing, the hare in hearing, and other creatures in other senses.—In *rational* life, many heathen philosophers may excel the Christian. So that it is not the *vegetative* life, whereby plants excel us ; nor the *sensitive* life, whereby  
beasts

beasts excel us: nor the *rational* life which reprobates have as well as we; but the SPIRITUAL *divine life*, that deserves the name; without which, our life is but a death. However, this spiritual life, or living to God, may be called life, because it hath all these things in it spiritually, which natural life hath in it naturally: as,

1. Life hath *motion* in it; and so here, this spiritual life imports motion; where-ever the Spirit of life comes, there is a *motion among the dry bones*.—Now, there are some *duties* he moves in, such as prayer; *Behold he prayeth*, who never prayed to purpose before; he moves in the duties of hearing, reading, examination and mortification.—Now, there are some *graces* that move in him; *faith* begins to move, saying, *I believe, Lord, help my unbelief*: *Hope* begins to move, *He is begotten to a new and lively hope*: *Love* begins to move, may be in sighs and groans, for want of love. Now he moves, and the *term* he moves *from*, is, sin, Satan, the world, self, self-righteousness; and the *term* he moves *to*, is, God and Christ, and heaven, and heavenly things. So far as this divine life takes place, so far all the faculties of the soul move towards God; the understanding, to see him; the will, to serve him; the affections, to embrace him: and all the members of the body move towards God; the eye is lift up to heaven in prayer and supplication; the ear is open to receive instruction; the mouth enlarged to sing his praises; the tongue will be no more the trumpeter of idle communication; the hand and heart will be instruments of devotion; the knees will be bowed to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ; the feet will delight to carry the man to the house of the Lord: all is in motion for God, so far as this life takes place. You may here see, by the way, whether you have or want this life, which is a living to God. Though I see an image lively representing a man, having eyes, ears, mouth, nose, hands, feet, yet I know it hath no life in it, because it hath no motion; so, if we see a professor without a suitable practice, we may say he is an

idol, he is no Christian, but the image of a Christian. It is true, a hypocrite may have all these external motions, like a painted puppy, that may, by some engine, be made to dance, and move up and down, but from no vital principle of life.

2. Life hath *breath* it in; James ii. 26. *The body without BREATH is dead*, as it may be rendered; so in this life there is breath: if a man's breath be held in a little while, the person cannot live; so the believer would die, if he had not breath in a spiritual sense. What is the air he breathes in? It is just the Spirit of God; *Awake, O north-wind; come, thou south; blow upon my garden, that the spices thereof may flow out*. What is the breath that is put within him? It is the Spirit of God: the Holy Ghost is that to the believer, that breath is to the body; yea, that the soul is to the body.—God breathed into Adam the breath of life; and he breathes on the believer, saying, *Receive ye the Holy Ghost: I will put my Spirit within you*. What lungs does he breathe with? It is faith; we receive the promise of the Spirit of faith. And what things does he breathe after? Indeed the earthly man breathes after earthly things, saying, *Who will shew us any good?* But the heavenly man breathes after heavenly things; *Lord, lift thou up the light of thy countenance upon me*. Many persons have a stinking breath; it hath the smell of earth; yea, the smell of hell: some breathe out blasphemies and oaths: some breathe out cruelty and wrath: but the man that hath this life, and lives unto God, his breath is a sweet breath; so far as he lives unto God, his breath smells of heaven, and of God, and of Christ. But,

3. Life hath usually *growth*; even so this life is a growing life; *this well of water springs up to everlasting life*. Let a painter draw the figure of grapes never so artificially, yet they may be seen and discerned from natural grapes, because they grow not: thus the painted hypocrite may look well, but never grows. A man that hath this divine life, is usually growing; if not upwardly in holiness, yet downwardly in humility; if not sensibly in outward fruitfulness, yet insensibly in

inward sighs and sobs, because of his unfruitfulness; and in pantings of soul towards perfection: *He that hath clean hands, waxeth stronger and stronger.* Indeed a winter time, or season of languishing, may put the believer far back, and interrupt the growth; but a summer-reviving will make up all again.

4. Life hath *appetite* and *sense*; even so this life imports spiritual *appetite* and spiritual *sense*: there is appetite after spiritual food. Many pamper their bodies and starve their souls; but he that thus lives, he hath a *hunger and thirst after righteousness*; and like *new-born babes, desire the sincere milk of the word, that he may grow thereby.* The doctrine of the gospel is his life; for, *a man liveth not by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God.* He hath an appetite after these words of grace, and *draws water with jey, out of these wells of salvation.* Many are the secret longings and pantings of the living soul, after the living God, who is his life: and as life seeks its own preservation continually, so does the living soul in the living God, in whom only his life is hid. — There is *sense* also; here life is sensible of whatsoever is an enemy to it, and resists it; the more life, the more sense; and the more sense, the more resistance: even so they that live this life unto God, they feel corruption, and they fight against it; *For the Spirit lusts against the flesh, and the flesh against the Spirit*: they groan under the weight of corruption, which they feel, and reckon themselves wretched on the account thereof: *O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death?* They that have no feeling of sin, no fighting against it, do look like these that have this life. — They who have spiritual senses, at least who have them exercised, they have the *seeing eye*; they see the evil of sin; they see the beauty of holiness; they see the glory of God, in the face of Jesus Christ; they see God in his ordinances: they see an internal glory, in the external administration of ordinances, which others not seeing, they think very little of these things: also they see God in his providences; in his judgments, they see a just God; and

and in mercies, they see a merciful God ; and themselves *less than the least of all his mercies*.—They have the *hearing ear* ; they hear the voice of God in the word, and rod ; They *smell* the favour of his name, which is as *ointment poured forth* : They taste his goodness, and feel his power.—And thus you see what may be imported in its being called a *life* in general.

4thly, The *fourth* thing was, What is imported in its being called a *living unto God* : what is this *living unto God* ? I have said several things about it already ; but this *living unto God*, more particularly, may import these four things following,

1. The believer's *living unto God*, imports, his *living suitably to the relations* that God stands in to him, and he unto God, as being his God in Christ Jesus ; and so it is a living to him as our *Redeemer*, both by price and power ; as these that *are not our own, but bought with a price* ; and therefore *glorifying the Lord in our souls and bodies which are his*.—It is a living to God as our *Head* : God, in Christ, is the believer's Head ; and so to live to him as our Head, is to live as members of such a Head, drawing spiritual virtue, light, life, and comfort from him as the Head.—It is a living to God as our *Husband* ; *Thy Maker is thy husband* : and so to live to him in this relation, is to live reverently, lovingly, affectionately, with submission and subjection to our Husband, as becomes the spouse of such a glorious Husband.—It is a living to God as our heavenly *Father*, depending on him as children on their father ; *Wilt thou not from this time call me, My Father, thou art the guide of my youth* ? Jer. iii. 4.—It is a living to God as our *Judge, Law-giver, and King* ; and so it is a living as these that are accountable to, and as we shall answer at the tribunal of this impartial *Judge* : it is a sitting at the feet, and receiving the law from the mouth of this righteous *Law-giver* : and it is a yielding the tribute of praise, obedience and subjection to this almighty *King*.—In a word, it is a living to God as the *object* of our *worship and adoration* ; loving him as the *Lord our God, with all our heart, soul, mind, and strength*.

*strength.*—Thus, I say, to live to God, is to live suitably to all these relations he stands in to us.

2. The believer's *living unto God*, imports, his living suitably to these *privileges* and *favours* that he receives from God.—Hath he enlightened us in the knowledge of himself? Then, to live to him, is to *walk as children of light*, and not as those that are yet in darkness and ignorance.—Hath he called us effectually? Then, to live to him, is to *walk worthy of the vocation wherewith we are called.*—Hath he given us *grace*? Then, to live to him, is to live, not as graceless, but as gracious persons; not as those that are in a state of nature, but in a state of grace.—Hath he *pardoned* our sins, *justified* our persons, and brought us into *peace* with himself? Then, to live to him, is to *stand fast in the liberty wherewith he hath made us free.*—Hath he *renewed* and *sanctified* us? Then, to live to him, is to live as renewed, and sanctified persons, whose lusts are mortified, and whose souls are transformed into the image of God.—Hath he poured in the promise into our hearts by the Spirit? Then, to live to him suitably thereunto, is, having *these promises, to cleanse ourselves from the filthiness of the flesh, and of the spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God.*—Hath he made us *heirs of glory*? Then, to live to him, is to live as candidates for heaven; as *pilgrims and strangers, abstaining from fleshly lusts*; travelling to the other world, having our affections and conversation in heaven.

3. The believer's *living unto God*, imports, his living in *communion with him*, and *comfortable enjoyment of him*: In *communion with him*; in the contemplation of him; *sanctifying the Lord in our hearts*: in a constant affection to him; *having his love shed abroad in our hearts, by the Holy Ghost*: and in a constant dependence on him; receiving all from him by faith, and returning all to him in duty and gratitude.—It is a living in the *comfortable enjoyment of him*, as all our portion and happiness, all our salvation and desire; renouncing all things in heaven and earth as our portion, but a God in Christ alone, saying, *Whom have I in heaven but thee?*  
and

and there is none in all the earth that I desire besides thee.

4. The believer's *living unto God*, imports, his living in conformity to God; and indeed, so far as we enjoy God, so far will we be conform to him. As it will be in glory, *we shall be like him*, for, *we shall see him as he is*; so it is in grace here: the more the soul sees and enjoys him, the more is he like unto him; *Beholding his glory, we are changed into the same image, from glory to glory*. And so this *living unto God*, it is a living in conformity to God's nature; being *holy as he is holy; perfect as our heavenly Father is perfect*. Is he a perfect God? Then, to live to him, is to *go on to perfection*, Heb. vi. 1.—It is a living in conformity to his *way of living*: God's way of living is a holy, just, good, faithful, merciful way; having a general good-will to all, and a special good-will to some: and so ought our ways to be.—It is a living in conformity to God's *ends*: God's great end, that he sets before himself, is the glory of his name, the honour of his Son, the advancement of Christ's kingdom, the ruin of Satan's kingdom, and in all, the praise of his rich and free grace: and surely we live to God, when we have these ends also which are God's ends.—It is a living in conformity to his *law*, as a *rule* which is the transcript of his communicable nature, for our practice; *If ye love me, keep my commandments*: we do not love him, if we do not so. They then that live to him, they do, from love as well as conscience, obey him.—These things might be greatly enlarged: however, thus you see, in short, what it is to live unto God. We are telling, and you are hearing, what this life is; but, O that we could live this life, as well as speak and hear of it! Look to the Lord, that he may make you know it to your experience. It is called a *living to God*, 1. Because it hath the *Spirit* of God for the *principle* of it. 2. Because it hath the *word* of God for the *rule* of it. 3. Because it hath the *love* of God for the *motive* of it. And, 4. Because it hath the *glory* of God for the ultimate *end* of it.

IV. The *fourth* thing proposed was, to shew the INFLUENCE that this being *dead to the law*, hath upon *living to God*; or the NECESSITY of this *death*, in order to this *life*. Here I might shew, 1. That it is necessary. 2. Whence it is necessary.

1<sup>st</sup>, That it is *necessary* that we die to the law, in point of justification, before we can live to God in point of sanctification: besides what was said upon the *first* head, for the confirmation of the doctrine, these following considerations, or remarks, may discover the *necessity* of being *dead to the law*, in order to our *living to God*.

1. *Remark*, That a man that is under the law, can *perform no holy act*: he may do some things that are *materially* good, but nothing can he do that is *formally* good, or holy: and his work, instead of sanctifying him, does still more and more pollute him; *To the pure all things are pure; but unto them that are defiled and unbelieving, is nothing pure; but even their mind and conscience is defiled*, Titus i. 5. He then that is alive to the law, and under the covenant of works, his works can never make him holy, but rather more and more unholy.

2. *Remark*, The man that is under the law, hath *no promise of holiness* or *sanctification by that law*. The law only promises life, upon perfect obedience, in our own person; and if true sanctification may be in one that is under the covenant of works, then we must change the articles of the covenant, and promises of the covenant of grace, and make sanctification no promise of it: we must blot out these promises, *I will put a new Spirit within you, and, I will write my law in your hearts*: and all other promises of the like nature, must be razed out of the covenant of grace: If one under the covenant of works may attain to sanctification by his own works, there is no need of this promise.

3. *Remark*, That the man that is under the law, hath *no principle of holiness*. The grand principle of true holiness, is the Spirit dwelling in the man: now, how does one receive the Spirit of sanctification? *Is it*

by the works of the law? No; but by the hearing of faith, Gal. iii. 2. It is the doctrine of grace, not of works, that makes us partake of this Spirit. It is the new testament, or new covenant, that is the *manifestation of the Spirit*, 2 Cor. iii. 6. Thereby the Spirit is ministred, or conveyed to us, but not by the law. It is the *gospel* that calls us *effectually to sanctification*, 2 Theff. ii. 13, 14. We received *the promise of the Spirit through faith*, and not by the *works of the law*, Gal. iii. 14.

4. *Remark*, That the man that is under the law, is *without Christ*, in whom sanctification only is to be found: they that are saints, are *saints in Christ Jesus*, as the apostle designs them; and *sanctified in Christ*: and our implantation into Christ, is only from grace, and not from the works of the law; and so is our sanctification only from grace, and only in Christ, who *gave himself for his church, that he might sanctify it*, Eph. v. 25.

5. *Remark*, The man that is under the law, is *without strength*, and cannot perform obedience to the law: *the law is weak through the flesh*, and cannot justify him, neither can it sanctify him. In order to sanctification, a new creation is necessary: the clean heart must be created; and the man created unto good works: creating power must be put forth: and creation is a work of God. We must therefore make a God of our works, and edify them, and endow them with a creating power, if we think, by the works of the law, to be sanctified; or ascribe such efficacy to them, as to work true sanctification in us. No man, then, that is under the law, or covenant of works, by giving himself to all holy duties and actions, and exercising himself in them, can come to attain true holiness, or to be truly sanctified.

6. *Remark*, That the man that is under the *power of the law*, is under the *power of sin*. Whence is it, that the believer is freed from the power and dominion of sin? It is because he is *under grace*, and not *under the law*, Rom. vi. 14. Shewing us, that these that are under the law, are under the power and dominion

of sin. How so? Even upon the account of all the reasons already assigned; and not only so, but because *the law is the strength of sin*, 1 Cor. xv. 56. Particularly as it irritates corruption, strengthening and stirring it up; *Sin taking occasion by the commandment, wrought in me all manner of concupiscence*. Sin, by occasion of the resisting command, brake out the more fiercely. Hence the law is only the occasion, and sin dwelling in us the cause; as the shining of the sun is the occasion, why a dung-hill sends forth its filthy favour, it is the corruption and putrifaction therein that is the cause; so here, the light of the law shining, and discovering sin and duty, is the occasion of sin's irritation and increase, but corruption itself is the cause. Well, so it is, that a man being under the law, is under the power of sin: how then can he live unto God, while under the law? or, how can sanctification take place while he is alive to the law, or not dead thereto?—These things may make it evident, I think, that it is necessary that a man be dead to law, and brought from under it, before he can have true sanctification, or live unto God.

2dly, Whence it is necessary, that a man be dead to the law in point of justification, in order to his living to God in point of sanctification; These particulars already mentioned, afford so many reasons of the necessity thereof: yet some things more may be said, for the further clearing of this point, namely, *The influence, that dying to the law, hath upon our living unto God*. Here two questions occur, 1. What influence *living to the law*, hath upon a man's *living in sin*. 2. What influence a man's *dying to the law*, hath upon his *dying to sin*, and *living unto God*.

1. What influence a man's *living to the law*, or being alive to the law, hath upon his *living in sin*.—This is a strange doctrine, some may think; but it is as true as strange, that the law, and our works of obedience to the law, while we are under it, is the cause of destruction, instead of salvation, Romans ix. 31, 32. There you see it destroyed the whole Jewish

nation; *Israel missed righteousness, because they sought it by the works of the law.*—Now, a man's being alive to the law, hath influence upon his living in sin, and so upon his destruction, in the following ways,

1. Because hereby he becomes *hardened in sin and security*, while he thinks he hath some good work to bear him out, Prov. vii. 14. What made the filthy whore there, impudent and hardened in her sins? Why? *I have peace-offerings with me; this day I have paid my vows.* Thus the Pharisees, for a pretence, made long prayers; and hereupon were hardened in their sinful courses, fearless of wrath; why I have done so and so.

2. Hereby they are *kept from Christ*, who only *saves from sin*. The works of the law step in betwixt them and Christ, and the man takes Christ's bargain off his hand, promising the same that Christ promised, even obedience to the law: *I delight to do thy will*, says Christ; nay, *I will do it myself*, says the man that is under the law: he makes himself his own saviour.—What! will not God accept of my good and honest endeavours? This is what he sets up on Christ's throne; and if Christ be pulled down from his throne, will it be sufficient that we set up an honest prince in his room? They have some things to say for themselves, which, they hope, will bring them off before God. Thus they reject Christ, *the Lamb of God, which takes away the sins of the world*; and how can they but live unto sin, whatever they may think of themselves?

3. Hereby their *pride and boasting* is fostered, Rom. iv. 4. *To him that worketh, is the reward not reckoned of grace, but of debt*: and the man expects his due for his work which he glories in; for, *boasting is not excluded by the law of works*, Rom. iii. 27. and therefore the man is loath to part with his own righteousness, which is by the law: because of his pride, he will not stoop to live upon another, while he can shift for himself. Self-love will not suffer a man to think the worst of himself, so long as he is alive to the law: nay, I hope I have a good heart to God, and I will do something that will please God; and so it is no little thing will  
bring

bring him to *submit to the righteousness of God*, Rom. x. 3. Thus the law fosters his pride, and sure the proud man was never a holy man. But,

4. Hereby sin is *strengthened and increased*, as I said before: the *motions of sin are by the law*, Rom. vii. 5. *The law entered, that sin might abound*, Rom. v. 20. Not only as to the knowledge of it, which is by the law, but as to the actual out-breaking of it from the heart; like a river being bounded and dammed up by the law, it swells and breaks out the more violently. The wicked nature of man, being reprov'd, swells and rises like a snake brought to the fire.

5. Hereby the man becomes *desperate*; for the law says, There is no hope without a perfect obedience; and the man having wearied himself in doing nothing answerable to what the law requires, comes at last, perhaps, to see there is no hope, and so he dies in despair; I mean, he dies in sin, saying, There is no hope; and therefore after idols I will go: he flies away from God as Adam did.

6. Hereby he becomes *slavish* also; the fear, torment, and wrath, which the law brings along with it, when the penalty of it is seen, weakens the man's hands; and these lying like heavy loads upon the soul, it is thereby fettered and bound in prison, hence said to be *held in the law; that being dead wherein we were held*, says the apostle. The man is held, and shut up in the prison of the law, and so out of case for service while his bands are not loosed; or at best his service is *slavish*, and not *free*; the law holds him in prison, he cannot serve God freely. The free Spirit of the gospel is what the world cannot receive, while under the law.—Thus you may see what influence *living to the law* may have upon men's *living in sin*, so as they cannot *live unto God*.

(2.) What influence a man's *dying to the law* hath upon his *living unto God*, or upon holiness and sanctification? To this we reply, It hath especially a two-fold influence, both a *physical* and *moral* influence.—  
And,

[1.] It hath a *physical* influence upon a man's sanctification, in regard that a man that is dead to the law, *is married to Christ*, Rom. vii. 4.; and so necessarily the man must be holy, being disjoined from the law, and joined to the Lord Jesus, who hath satisfied the precept of the law by his death: and in him, not only have they thus a full discharge of all the demands and commands of the law, but also, by the implantation and inhabitation of his Spirit, are created to a conformity to the image of God; and they cannot but live unto God. For,

1. In Christ they have *life*: though, while under the law, they were *dead in sin and trespasses*; now, in Christ, *they have life*, and have it more abundantly: they are quickened by virtue of their union to this everlasting Head; *because he lives, they live also*. A dead person can produce no living action, but Christ is the life of his people: *He that hath the Son hath life*; and then, and never till then, is he in case for spiritual action and living unto God: *He that hath not the Son of God, hath not life*. Vain men fancy within themselves, that they have not lost their life, and so they think they can do something that will please God, and profit themselves for justification and sanctification, even before ever they think of coming to Christ; but we may as well expect, that a dead corps will rise of itself, and do the natural actions of life, as to expect that you should rise, and act spiritually, before you be in Christ. The natural conscience indeed may be roused a little, and prevailed with to set about this and that duty; but there is no living unto God, till you get Christ: in him the believer hath life, even in his Head; as a man cannot live without his head; but, being joined to this new head, and disjoined from the law, he cannot but live.

2. In Christ, his new Head and Husband, he hath *light* as well as *life*: as you know, the eye is in the head, so the believer's eye is in Christ his light, whereby he sees sin and duty; sees to work, so as he may live to God. The man that is under the law, he is in the dark, and cannot see to work the works of holiness, which

which is a living unto God. He is blinded with self-conceit ; he sees not the vanity of his old covenant obedience ; and he sees not the way of the new covenant gospel obedience, till he get the Spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of Christ, who is *the light of the world ; a light to lighten the Gentiles* : by whose light the believer sees how to walk in a way well-pleasing to God.

3. In Christ, his new Head, he hath *strength* : the man that is under the law, joined to it as his Head, he hath no *strength* for his work, and the law gives him none ; and so he cannot live to God : but the believer can say, *In the Lord have I righteousness and strength* ? whereas others have no strength to produce spiritual actions ; sin domineers over them, and they have no ability to shake off the yoke of sin, their strength being but weakness. The believer hath strength in his head ; *all things are possible to them that believe : they can do all things through Christ strengthening them : they can over-leap a wall, and break bows of steel in pieces.* O believer ! *be strong in the grace that is in Christ.* O it is strange, the grace that is in him, is in thee ; as the life that is in the heart, is in the toe, the foot, the utmost members ! There is a communication of vital strength and influences from the heart and head to all the members : the believer's grace is in Christ ; and the grace that is in Christ is in the believer. Here is a mystery to the world, but yet this mystery lies wrapt up in that word, *Be strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus.* If the grace that is in Christ, were not in the believer also, according to the measure of the communication, how could he be strong in the grace that is in Christ ? *My grace shall be sufficient for thee, and my strength shall be perfect in thy weakness.*

4. In Christ, his new Head, he hath *liberty* : under the law the man is under bondage, and severe bondage to the command of perfect obedience, upon pain of death and damnation ; and so under bondage to the curse of the law, and fear of God's everlasting wrath ; and thereby he can do nothing ; he hath neither heart nor hand to serve God ; he is bound neck and heel ;  
but

but in Christ he hath *liberty* ; *If the Son make you free, you are free indeed* : free from service ; *Truly I am thy servant, thou hast loosed my bands*. Now, he walks at *liberty* ; yea, *runs the way of God's commandments, when he doth enlarge his heart*. This is the glorious liberty of the children of God begun in time, whereby they are put in case to live unto God.—Now, he is at liberty to serve *cheerfully*, being delivered from the hands of all his enemies, to *serve him without fear, in holiness and righteousness, before God, all the days of his life*.—Now he is at liberty to serve *spiritually* ; the Spirit of Christ being put within him, and *causing him to walk in God's statutes*. Now he is at liberty to serve *hopefully* ; knowing that *his labour shall not be in vain in the Lord* : though, while under the law, his labour was but vain labour.—Now, he is at liberty to serve *acceptably* : being *accepted in the Beloved*, Eph. i. 6. ; that is, not only for his sake ; for there is much more in it he being our Head, and we members of his body ; and he, as our Head, having performed perfect obedience to the *precept* of the law, and given complete satisfaction to the *penalty* of the law ; the Head having done it, the whole body is reputed as having done it ; and so we are accepted in him ; his *doing* is ours, because we are in him, as our Head, accepted in the Beloved ; our persons are accepted in him, and next our performances and duties. O what sweet liberty is here ! what a sweet foundation for spiritual and acceptable service and living unto God ! But this leads me next to shew,

[2.] That it hath a *moral* influence upon sanctification ; a man's being dead to the law, disjoined from it, and joined to Christ, hath not only a *physical*, but also a *moral* influence ; in regard that hereby he is constrained sweetly to live unto God ; *The love of Christ constraineth us*, 2 Cor. v. 14, 15. If we have not love at the root of our actions, love to a God in Christ, we are but empty vines, that bring forth fruit to ourselves ; it is but *self-love*, which is not fruit unto God, or living unto him. The *natural* way of man's thinking is, we should serve God, that he may save us ; but the *gosp-*

pel way is, he saves us, that we may serve him. What made Paul say, *Being dead to the law, I live unto God?* Why? in the next verse he enlarges on it, *I live to him, who loved me, and gave himself for me.* Be persuaded, man, woman, of this; or else as the Lord lives, you shall die in a delusion; that if you have not love to God, you have not a spark of holiness, though you should pray all your days, and work never so hard; *I will circumcise their hearts to love me,* is the promise; and this love is the heart and life of religious duties.—Now, you cannot have love, unless you see somewhat more or less of his love to you: we are naturally enemies to God, though we cannot get one of a thousand that will take with it: they think they have a love to God. God forbid, say they, that we should be enemies; nay, but I tell you, in the name of God, whether you will hear it or not, that as you are enemies by nature, and born with a dagger of enmity in your heart and hand against God; so, till you get somewhat of the knowledge of God, as *in Christ reconciling the world to himself,* this enmity will never be killed. Now, I say, it is the believer in Christ, who, being dead to the law, and joined to the Lord, hath this love; and this love constrains him, so that he *brings forth fruit unto God, and lives unto him,* Rom. vii. 3.; being *dead to the law, and married to Christ,* he *brings forth fruit unto God.* The believer hath sufficient encouragement to make him live unto God: he sees Christ hath satisfied divine justice, fulfilled all the righteousness of the law, that he hath done that which is imprestible, or unperformable by us; and when by faith he beholds this, he is encouraged to serve God. Hence, says the psalmist, *There is mercy with thee, that thou mayest be feared.*—Might he not have said, *There is majesty with thee, that thou mayest be feared?* The matter is, the *majesty* of God would put the sinner to flee from God, as Adam did, when he heard his voice in the garden; but his *mercy* makes us fear and love him, serve and obey him; *Then they shall fear the Lord and his goodness,* says the prophet, Hosea iii. 5. If a man hath no faith at all of God's

goodness, no hope of his favour in Christ, where is his purity and holiness? Nay, it is *he that hath this hope, that purifies himself, as he is pure*. I know not what experience you have, Sirs, but some of us know, that when our souls are most comforted and enlarged with the faith of God's favour through Christ, and with the hope of his goodness, then we have most heart to the duties; and when through unbelief, we have harsh thoughts of God, as an angry judge, then we have no heart to duties and religious exercises: and I persuade myself, this is the experience of the saints in all ages.

But that this moral influence, which dying to the law, or covenant of works, hath upon living to God, or holiness and sanctification, may be further evident: let us consider, how the law to the believer, having now lost its legal or old covenant-form, and being put into a gospel-form, and changed from the law of works into a covenant of grace, or the law in the hand of Christ; how, I say, every part of it now constrains the believer to obedience and sanctification, in a most loving manner. The gospel-law, or the law of grace, that now he is under, is a chariot paved with love. The law, in the hand of Christ, hath now another face, even a smiling face, in all the commands, promises, threatenings, and in the whole form thereof.

(1.) The *commands* of the law, in the hand of Christ, have lost their old covenant-form, and are full of love. The command of the law of works is, *Do, and Live*; but in the hand of Christ, it is, *Live, and Do*: the command of the law of works, is, *Do, or else be damned*: but the law in the hand of Christ, is, *I have delivered thee from hell, therefore do*: the command of the law of works is, *Do in thy own strength*; but the law in the hand of Christ is, *I am thy strength; My strength shall be perfected in thy weakness, therefore Do*. The command is materially the same, but the *form* is different: the command of the law of works is, *Do perfectly*, that you may have eternal life; but now, in the hand of Christ, the form is, *I have given thee*  
eternal

eternal life in me, and by my doing; and therefore do as perfectly as you can, through my grace, till you come to a state of perfection. The command, I say, is the same *materially*; for I do not join with these, who insinuate, as if here less obedience were required than under the law of works: though less be accepted in these who have a perfect obedience in their Head, yet no less is required, though not in the old covenant-form. And as the command is *materially* the same, so the authority enjoining obedience is *originally* the same, yet vastly distinct; in that the command of the law is the command of God *out* of Christ, an absolute God and Judge; but now, under grace, it is the command of a God *in* Christ, a Father in him: and sure I am, that the authority of a commanding God is not lessened, or lost, that the command is now in the hand of Christ: Christ is God, co-equal and co-essential with the Father; and as God's authority to judge is not lost, or lessened, in that *all judgment is committed to the Son*; so his authority to command, is not lost or lessened, in that the law is in the hand of Christ: nay, it is not lessened, but it is sweetened, and made amiable, lovely, and desirable to the believer, constraining him to obedience, in that the law is in the hand of his Head, his Lord, and his God.—

The end that he hath in commanding, and that they should have in obeying, is now distinct, and different from what took place under the law of works: the end that he hath in commanding, is not to lay a heavy yoke of duties on their necks, to be born by their own strength; nor, though performed by his strength, to be a righteousness for their justification, or a condition of life; but only to shew his *holy nature*, that he will not have a lawless people; to shew his *great grace*, that condescends to seek our service; to *grace* and *beautify* his people, their chief happiness consisting in a conformity to his will; that his people may get *good*, which is necessarily joined to duties, and connected thereto by the promises; that he may have something to *commend* his people for; and that he may, without a compliment, have ground to say, *Well done, good and*

*faithful servants* : and that by them he may have matter of *condemnation* against the rest of the world, who walk not in his commandments. In a word, he commands, that his sovereignty may be kept up, and the sense thereof, in the hearts of his people ; and that, by his word of command, he may, as many times he doth, convey strength to do what he calls to ; and in case of shortcoming, to force them out of themselves, under a sense of weakness and sinfulness, in to Jesus Christ, *the end of the law*, for strength to sanctify, as well as for righteousness to justify. For these, and such like ends, does the Lord command.—And then the end that they should have in obeying, is not to satisfy conscience, nor to satisfy justice, to purchase heaven, or the like ; but to glorify God, to edify our neighbour, and to testify our gratitude to God, and Christ, that hath delivered us from the law, as a covenant.

(2.) The *promises* of the law, in the hand of Christ, have lost their old covenant-form, and are full of love. The *law of works* promises eternal life, as a reward of our doing, or obedience ; and here the reward is a reward of *debt* : but the *law*, in the hand of Christ, promises a reward of *grace* to gospel-obedience, especially as it is an evidence of union to him, in whom all *the promises are Yea and Amen*. Eternal life was promised in the covenant of redemption to Christ, upon his perfect obedience, who paid that debt, when he came under the law of works for us ; and now, eternal life being obtained to the believer in Christ, as the reward of Christ's obedience to the death, there is no other reward of debt that now takes place.—Rewards of grace are now come in fashion, and this encourages the believer to live unto God, that in the way of gospel-obedience, there is a gracious promise of sweet communion and fellowship with God ; *He that loves me, and keeps my commandments ; I will love him, and manifest myself to him, and my Father will love him*, John xiv. 21. Here there is a fatherly promise of God's favour and familiarity with him ; yea, there is a promise of heaven itself, in the way of gos-  
pel-

pel-obedience, and sanctification: a right to heaven is purchased by the blood of Christ, and the believer is the young heir of glory; but his possession of heaven is suspended till he be fit for it; till he do some business for his Father, and *be made meet for the inheritance of the saints in light*. This is sweet encouragement the believer hath, to live unto God.

(3.) The *threatenings* of the law, in the hand of Christ, have lost their old covenant-form, quality, and nature, and are now turned to threatenings out of love: there is no such threatening now to the believer, *If thou do not, thou shalt die*. The penalty of the law of works is condemnation and eternal death, which the believer hath no cause to fear, being *dead to the law*; no more than a living wife needs to fear the threatening of her dead husband: *There is no condemnation to them that are in Christ*. *He that believes in him, shall never die*. Believers are under no threatening of eternal wrath, because under grace. It is a high expression that blessed Rutherford hath to this purpose, “The gospel, says he, forbids nothing under pain of damnation to a justified believer, more than to Jesus Christ.”—Though the sins of believers deserve hell, and the intrinsic demerit of sin is still the same; [yea, I think the sins of believers being against so much love, and so many mercies, they deserve a thousand hells, where others deserve one;] yet, being *dead to the law*, he hath no vindictive wrath to fear, the blood of Christ having quenched the fire of God’s wrath, Rom. v. 9. *While we were sinners, Christ died for us; and much more now being justified by his blood, we are saved from wrath through him*; and sure he is not to fear that which God calls him to believe he is saved from: his slavish fear, therefore, is from unbelief, and weakens his hands in duties. But now the law, in the hand of Christ, hath threatenings and punishments, but they are fatherly and loving; a short view of them you may read, Psal. lxxxix. 30,—35. *If his children forsake my law, and walk not in my judgments: if they break my statutes, and keep not my commandments:*

mandments; then will I visit their transgression with the rod, and their iniquities with stripes; nevertheless my loving-kindness will I not utterly take from him, nor suffer my faithfulness to fail: my covenant will I not break.—Once have I sworn by my holiness, that I will not lie unto David, q. d. Though I will not send them to hell, nor deprive them of heaven, no more than I will break my great oath to my eternal Son; yet, like a father, I will chastise them; I will correct them for their faults; I will squeeze them in the mortar of affliction, and press out the corrupt juice of old Adam that is in them; yea, I will hide my face; I will deny them that communion and fellowship with me that sometimes they had, and give them terror instead of comfort, and bitterness instead of sweetness. A filial fear of these fatherly chastisements will do more to influence the believer to holiness, and obedience, than all the unbelieving fears of hell and wrath can do: fear, least he want that sweetness of God's presence, which sometimes he hath had, will make him say to his sins and lusts, as the fig-tree in Jotham's parable, *Shall I leave my sweetness, and be king over you?* O! shall I leave all the sweetness that I have enjoyed with God, and take on with base lusts and idols! And hence, when the believer hath gone aside and backsliden, what is it that brings him back to God? He finds the Lord breaking him many ways, and he reflects, through grace, upon this sometimes, O! how am I deprived of these sweet interviews that once I enjoyed? Therefore *I will go and return to my first Husband, for then it was better with me than now.* Yea, his freedom from law-threatnings, and being only under fatherly correction, when he sees this, it breaks his heart, and melts it more than all the fire of hell could do.—The slavish fear of vindictive wrath discourages him, weakens his hands in duties, and makes him run away from God: but the filial fear of God's fatherly wrath, which is kindly, is a motive of love that encourages him to his duty. Which of these motives think you will work up the believer to most obedience? *viz.* This legal one, *O! my wrathful Judge will send me to hell, if I do so and so;* or this gospel one; *O! my God and*  
*Father*

*Father in Christ Jesus will be angry at me, and deny me his love-tokens?* I suppose the former works upon enmity, and raises it, but this works upon love, and inflames it.

But here a question may be moved, Ought not the believer to live unto God, even without respect to the threatening of fatherly chastisement and punishment? To this we answer,

No doubt, the more perfect his obedience be, the better and the more like to the obedience of the saints in heaven, where no chastisement is feared; but while he is here, he carries a body of sin about him, and needs to be stirred up by fatherly correction. He should indeed serve God purely out of love and respect to the command itself, and because he commands it: but thus the matter stands, that as on the one hand, being perfect in his Head, Christ Jesus, it is not his duty to have respect to what the law of works either promises, or threatens; so on the other hand, being imperfect in himself while here, it is his duty to have respect to what the law, in the hand of Christ, promises and threatens; which indeed is a loving respect, tending to advance holiness.

(4.) The whole *form* of the law as a covenant of works, being thus altered, the law in the hand of Christ, is all love, all grace, and so influences the man to sanctification. The man that is under the covenant of grace, he hath a principle of grace within him, striving against sin; he hath the Spirit of grace within him, causing him to walk in God's statutes; he hath the promise of grace to be sufficient for him: if sin prevail, and pollute him, he hath daily access to the fountain open for sin and for uncleanness, to which he runs; if his backslidings encrease, he hath Christ engaged by promise to heal his backslidings: which, when he views by faith, it doth not encourage him to sin, if he be in right exercise of his senses, but draws him to his duty, like a cord of love, and brings him back to his kind Lord. In a word, being *dead to the law, he is married to Christ, who is like a green fig-tree, from whom all his fruit is found.*—Thus you see what *influence* a man's being *dead to the law*, hath upon

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pon his *living unto God*. And so much for the fourth  
head proposed.

V. The *fifth* thing in the method, was the *application*, which we shall essay in an use of *information, examination, lamentation, and exhortation*.

Is it so, that being *dead to the law*, in point of *justification*, is *necessary*, in order to *living unto God* in point of *sanctification*? Then for *information*, hence we may see,

1. That the doctrine of the gospel is not a doctrine of *licentiousness*, or *carnal liberty*, however it be reproached in the world: and if the preachers thereof, who would bring off people from the law of works, and from their self-righteousness, be reproached, as if they were enemies to holiness, I will venture to say it with confidence, in a place where falsehood should be an abomination, that it is a *vile slander*; for whatever sinful weakness and imperfection may cleave to the preaching or practice of these, who desire to publish this gospel-doctrine, yet the Lord God of gods is witness; yea, the Lord God of gods knows, and all Israel may know, and all whose eyes God enlightens shall know, that this doctrine of *dying to the law*, in point of *justification*, is a *doctrine according to godliness*, and the very means of holiness itself, and of living unto God: if this be *Antinomianism*, I am content to be called an *Antinomian* \*. But, we see who are indeed  
*Antinomians*,

\* The rise and ground of this injurious accusation may be seen, in some measure, accounted for, Serm. IV. page 238. — The Baxterian *legal scheme* of doctrine had, by this time, spread itself abroad, and diffused its dangerous and pernicious influence and direful effects, not only among the clergy in England, but had even crept into many of the pulpits in Scotland: This paved the way for exhibiting the charge of *Antinomianism* against all those ministers who adhered to, and assiduously taught the *doctrine of grace*; especially those who maintained the *absolute freedom of the covenant of grace*; the *unlimited grant that God hath made of Christ, and salvation with him to mankind*; the *necessity of becoming dead to the law as a covenant*, and of *faith to apprehend and appropriate Christ, and his righteousness for salvation*. And though the *Marrow of Modern Divinity* was designed to vindicate the *doctrine of grace*, in opposition to Antinomian and Neonomian extremes; yet they who befriended this  
book,

*Antinomians*, and enemies to the law and holiness; even all those who oppose this doctrine, whereby we give the law all the honour imaginable; *Do we make void the law through faith; God forbid; yea, we establish the law*: as a covenant we establish it, while we preach Christ as *our righteousness* for justification: and as a *rule of holiness* we establish it, while we preach Christ as *our strength* for sanctification of heart and life: and they that do not thus honour the law, do but disgrace and dishonour it, and are truly *Antinomians*, *i. e.* enemies to the law. And if this be called a *new scheme* of doctrine by way of reproach, though I confess it is a *new covenant scheme*, in opposition to that of the *old*, yet I will grant to no man that it is *new* otherwise; seeing it is not only as old as Paul here, but as old as the first publication of the covenant of grace in paradise; so that we see where it is, that the reproach of

bock, especially such who appeared in defence thereof, when attacked and condemned by the Assembly, were accused with being *Antinomians*, enemies to the law and holiness, friends to licentiousness, and branded with introducing and venting *new schemes* of Divinity. Though it is a notour fact, and well known to many yet alive, that there were not greater friends in the whole church, to *evangelical Doctrine*, than those who befriended the *Marrow Doctrine*: They were justly allowed to be first-rate Divines. It is true, indeed, they were enemies to *all previous legal qualifications, to be performed by us, in order to fit and qualify us for coming to, and closing with Christ*. And with respect to our worthy Author, it is obvious to every intelligent person, who either heard him preach, or have carefully perused his writings, that he had a peculiar talent in stating the difference between the law and the gospel, and put a respectable honour upon, and paid a due regard to each of them; and that he constantly urged conformity to the law, as a rule of life: and assiduously inculcate the practice of holiness — Any who incline to see the justness of these observations, and have a complete view of this affair, may attain it, by perusing the *Marrow* itself, with attention, and carefully advert- ing to the judicious Mr. Boston's notes upon it; and the Brethren's Answers to the Assembly's Queries; and an Act concerning the Doctrine of Grace, by the Associate Presbytery: In which Act, the Doctrine of Grace, as revealed in the Holy Scriptures, and set forth in our Standards, is asserted and vindicated from the errors vented against it; the *Marrow* doctrine freed from the charge of Antinomianism, laid against it by the Assembly, and shewn to be founded on the Scriptures, consistent with our Standards, and agreeable to the sentiments of other approved Divines; and the Act of Assembly condemning the *Marrow*, evinced to be injurious to the Doctrine of Grace, contrary to many passages of Scripture, and diametrically opposite to our Standards.

a new scheme should be lodged.—I would have reproachers to mind what Paul says of this doctrine of his, Gal. i. 8. *If we, or an angel from heaven preach another gospel, let him be accursed.* Here is the doom of such as preach another gospel, which yet, says the apostle, is not another; but there are some that trouble the Lord's people, and would pervert the gospel of Christ. To be *dead to the law*, is not to turn a loose *Antinomian*; it is to *live unto God*.

2. Hence see the reason why the *devil* opposes the *doctrine of grace* so much, and cares not though the law, as a *covenant*, be never so much preached up, because it is the gospel-doctrine that tends only to true godliness, while the law and legal doctrine tends to keep men strangers to the life of God. The devil cares not how much you be in duties, providing you keep off from Christ, who is *the end of the law for righteousness*; for then he knows you would be holy also: but he is an unholy devil; and therefore he opposes the gospel, and its doctrine. The devil knows that he hath fast hold of you, so long as you cleave to the law; but that he hath lost you, if once you have laid hold on Christ: for, if once you get Christ for *justification*, as having fulfilled the righteousness of the law *for you*, then you will also get him for *sanctification*, to fulfil the righteousness of the law *in you*. The devil knows, that though in seeming holiness, you should be-transformed to an angel of light, like himself, yet you ly under the heavy vengeance of God, and curse of the law, and under the power of sin too, so long as you are under the law. Therefore,

3. Hence see the reason why the most part of the world are *living to sin, living to self, living to the world, living to the devil*; Why? because they are not *dead to the law*. They only that are dead to the law, do live unto God; and surely then, they that are alive to the law, and not dead to it, they are-living to the devil. No man that is alive to the law, can be a holy man: nay, what is the reason of all the ungodliness and unrighteousness, all the profanity and wickedness of the generation! Why? people are strangers to  
Christ,

Christ, and are still under the power, the irritating power of the law, which is *the strength of sin*. The world is crying up *morality*, as if the preachers of Christ and his righteousness were enemies to the moral law, as a rule of holiness; and behold, in the righteous judgment of God, there was never a generation left to greater *immoralities* than the present; a just punishment of mens despising Christ, and his law-biding righteousness, through the faith whereof only true holiness, and conformity to the law can be attained. O when the believer comes to see by faith, that he hath nothing to do with the law as a covenant, this makes him delight in the law of God, as a rule of holiness; when he sees he hath not a farthing of debt to pay, either to the precept, or threatening of the law as a covenant, because that debt was paid by Christ's obedience to the death, this makes him find himself under the most grateful obligations to serve the Lord, in obedience to his law, as a rule; yea, under greater obligation than ever Adam was in the state of innocency: but the rest of the world, that are utter strangers to this freedom, they are in bondage to the law, and so in bondage to their lusts.

4. Hence we may see the necessity of a *law-work of conviction and humiliation*, and how much of it is necessary, even as much as will render the person *dead to the law*, that he may *live unto God*. So much conviction is necessary, as will unbottom the man from the covenant of works, and make him disclaim his own righteousness, and make him cry out, *Unclean, unclean; guilty, guilty*; that thus his self-confidence may be killed, and he, *through the law, may be dead to the law*, and may come under the covert of the blood of the Lamb, under the covert of the righteousness of Christ for justification; that, being *dead to the law, he may live unto God*. While men are without this law-work, rendering them dead to the law, they are at best but establishing a righteousness of their own, which will keep them out of heaven, as much as their sins will do. And this makes the gate

of heaven indeed to be a *strait gate*, because *many seek to enter in*, in a legal way, and *shall not be able*, Luke xiii. 24.; and this makes the way broad that leads unto hell, so broad, that it lets in all that are out of Christ, but the openly wicked, and the self-righteous. There is but one way to heaven, and that is Christ; but there are many ways to hell: especially these two; some walk in a more cleanly way of self-righteousness, and others in a more dirty way of open wickedness; but both meet together at the end of the way, and that is the centre of damnation. O what need, then, is there of a law-work, to convince the wicked of their sins, and the self-righteousness of their need of a better righteousness, that, being *dead to the law*, they may *live unto God*.

5. Hence we may see whence it is, that believers live *so little to God*, and are *so untender*, and *unholy*: it flows from this, that they are not *perfectly dead to the law*, nor *perfectly freed from it*: much of a legal spirit remains; the more that takes place, the more unholy they are. Tho' they have shaken off, in conversion, the authority of the covenant of works as a prince, which is a great matter; yet they are many times under the authority thereof as an usurper, and by reason of the old legal nature, which is but partly renewed in time; and hence the voice of the law speaks many times in the believer's conscience, and he is terrified at the voice of it; for it presumes to curse him, and to desire him to do, or else be damned; and so it weakens his hands, and makes him think God is a hard master: whereas the voice of the gospel in his conscience, is the still, calm voice, sweetly intreating, and alluring the heart to its obedience, and conveying a secret strength to obey, and making the soul to delight in the Lord's way; *Draw me, we will run after thee*, Song i. 3. But what should the believer do, when the law comes to charge him, and command him to obey upon pain of death, or to curse him for his disobedience? Why, he may even say in the words of Luther, who, upon the point of justification, was as found as any since his day; "O law, Christ is my righteousness, my treasure, and my  
" work;

“work; I confess, O law, that I am neither godly nor  
 “righteous, but yet this I am sure of, that he is godly  
 “and righteous for me.” His obedience answered  
 both the godliness required in the first table of the law,  
 and the righteousness required in the second table. The  
 believer may say to the law, O law, I am dead to thee,  
 and married to another Husband, even Jesus Christ;  
 and therefore, cannot bring forth any children, any  
 fruit, any acts of obedience to thy threatening com-  
 mands: but, behold, I run to my sweet Husband, who  
 hath sugared and sweetened the law, with a gospel-dress  
 and form; which, giving strength to obey, and shewing  
 the believer’s freedom from the wrath of God; “en-  
 “courages the believer, as our Confession of Faith  
 “speaks, being free from the curse of the moral law,  
 “and delivered from everlasting damnation, to yield  
 “obedience to God;” not out of slavish fear, but a  
 child-like love, and a willing mind.

6. Hence see how it is, that *holiness is necessary to sal-  
 vation*; why, it is the very life of the justified man,  
 being *dead to the law, to live unto God*: he is not holy  
 that he may be justified, but justified that he may be  
 holy. I do not here meddle with the question, *Whe-  
 ther regeneration or justification be first in order of nature?*  
 For I am speaking mainly, not of habitual holiness,  
 or the first habit of grace, but of actual holiness; whe-  
 ther internal in the exercise of grace, or external in  
 the performance of duty. Thus holiness, I say, is ne-  
 cessary to salvation, as being the native, necessary, and  
 inseparable fruit of justification, or dying to the law;  
 it is the justified man’s way of living, or walking to-  
 wards heaven. They that turn the grace of God into  
 wantonness, they pervert the right end of grace, which  
*teacheth us to deny ungodliness, and worldly lusts*: and  
 they that give up with the law as a rule of holiness,  
 because they are, or think they are delivered from the  
 law, as a covenant of works, they pervert the very end  
 of that freedom, which is that they may *live unto God*:  
 and no doubt, many among believers themselves are in  
 danger of this sin: for I know no sin, but a believer  
 is liable to it, if he be left to himself; and because ma-

ny of them abuse grace, therefore God keeps the law-spur at their side ; for it is with many, as with dull lazy horses, so long as the spur is in their side, they ride quickly ; but when that is removed, they become dull and heavy, and are ready to stand still : so, while the law exacted rigid obedience, and threatened damnation and hell, they were diligent, and durst not neglect a duty ; they were tender in their walk : but now, being delivered from this spur, that was daily pricking their sides, and seeing that Christ hath satisfied the law, which now can neither justify, nor condemn them, they imagine they have no more to fear ; and so they sin the more, and live securely, instead of *living soberly, righteously, and godly*. This is a *turning the grace of God into wantonness*, and a perverting of the very end of grace : and if any child of God here be guilty, remember, that your heavenly Father will not let you pass unpunished ; though he pardon your sins, yet he will *take vengeance on your inventions*. It is to prevent this wantonness in some, that the spur is kept long in their side ; and they are kept many days and years, perhaps, under many legal shakings, fears, doubts, and tremblings, attaining to very little of any cheerful gospel-obedience ; for the law cannot work that. And this leads me to another inference.

7. Hence, from this doctrine, we may see, that the law can neither *justify*, nor *sanctify a sinner* : it cannot *justify* him, for he must be *dead* to it in point of justification ; it cannot *sanctify* him, for he never *lives unto God*, till he be *dead to the law*. On the one hand, *By the deeds of the law, no flesh living can be justified* : Why ? Because you are *dead in sin by nature*, and can do nothing that the law requires, in the way that it requires it ; and though you would do any thing, yet your doing is imperfect ; but the law requires perfection : yea, though you could obey the law perfectly for the time to come, that will not make amends for former faults ; there must be satisfaction ; yea, suppose it were possible that you could do all this, and that from your cradle to your grave you never sinned ;  
and

and were as free from original sin, and had as good a nature as ever Pelagius thought any had, and strength to keep the law, and did actually keep it perfectly from your youth up; yet the law of works is broken in Adam; in him we all sinned, and that one sin is enough to damn the whole world, and would do so, if Christ did not redeem from the guilt thereof.—

On the other hand, the law cannot *sanctify* any, it works wrath; and *when the commandment comes, sin revives*: it is *the ministration of death* every way, as I said before. But here a question may be moved, *If the law can neither justify nor sanctify, what use is it for?*

We may answer, It is for many noble uses, both to the regenerate and unregenerate. To the *unregenerate*, it is of use to *conviction of sin*; to *break up the fallow-ground of the heart*; to be a *school master to lead to Christ*, by convincing him of his absolute need of a Surety, and of his undone state without Christ.—

And to the *regenerate*, it is of use to make them highly esteem Christ, whose righteousness answers the law in its commands and threatenings both; and it serves to give him a daily conviction of sin, that the man may more and more prize the pardon of sin, and seek daily in to the Lord, for pardoning and sanctifying grace: also to let him see the intrinsical demerit of sin, while he sees hell threatened against it in that covenant; and thereupon may fear to offend that God, who is a *consuming fire*, but rather that he may *worship him with reverence and godly fear*: not with a slavish fear, that he shall be sent to hell, which is impossible; that is not his duty; he may have the over-awing fear and apprehension of hell, but should not have a slavish fear of it: this fear of it he should not have, but the faith of it he ought to have, and many times needs to have it, to terrify him from sin, which of its own nature, leads to destruction; as a man that is bound with a great chain to a stake on the top of a high tower, though he cannot but know, that by reason of the chain, he is sure enough; yet when he looks over the battlement, and sees the dreadful precipice, it fears him from going near the edge of the battlement. It

is certain, that believers, when they know not that they are under grace, may unwarrantably apply to themselves the sentence of the law ; unwarrantably, I say, because *there is no condemnation to them that are in Christ* ; yet God may, for holy ends, suffer his conscience to be troubled with the fear of condemnation, that being humbled, he may make the more use of Christ for righteousness and strength. In a word, the commands of the law, not formally as a covenant, but materially as a rule of life, serve to be an active directory for his walk ; and *whoever walks according to this rule, peace be on them, and on all the Israel of God*. Thus it is of manifold use, though it can neither justify nor sanctify, which only the grace of the gospel can do.

8. Hence see what a *mystery to the world religion is*, and the *difference betwixt God's judgment and man's* : man thinks, to be *dead to the law*, is the way to *live in sin* ; but God's word tells us, That to be *dead to the law*, is the way to *live unto God*. Why ? here is a mystery, a holy riddle ; and we are decrying holiness, when we preach in this apostolical strain ? God forbid ; nay, we declare unto you, in the name of God, that the way to be truly holy, is to quit with your false legal holiness ; the way to be truly righteous, is to quit your legal righteousness ; yea, I tell you, man, that even in point of sanctification, *Except your righteousness exceed the righteousness of the Scribes and Pharisees, you shall not enter into the kingdom of God* : and you know, they made *long prayers*, they *fasted twice a week*, and *gave alms of all that they possess* ; and some of them were, *touching the law, blameless*, and could say, *All these things have I done from my youth up* ; and yet I say, Unless your holiness exceed their holiness, you shall never enter into the kingdom of God : and, till your unrighteous righteousness, and unholy holiness, be cried down in your heart, and the perfect righteousness of Christ cried up, true holiness you shall never have.—Was Christ a friend to publicans and harlots ? or, did he approve of their sins, when he said, to these Pharisees,

*Publicans and harlots go into the kingdom of God before you!* Matt. xxi. 31. O beware of such blasphemous thoughts of a holy Jesus; nay, so far from that, that we may hence gather his abhorrence of their sins; only he would give us to know, that if sin keep them out of heaven, as much and more will self-righteousness keep out the Pharisee, who must be rid of his righteousness, as well as his sins, before he get there.—O but religion is a mystery! to be *dead to the law*, in order to *live unto God*.

9. Hence we may see the *miserable state of these that are alive*, and the *happy state of these that are dead to the law*. Their state is miserable who are alive to the law; for, though they have a *name to live*, yet *they are dead*; legally dead, bound over to the wrath of God, and under the curse of the law; spiritually dead in sin, having no holiness, no godliness, acceptable to God through Jesus Christ. If they be any way awakened, and seeking life by the law, and the works thereof, what a madness is this to *seek the living among the dead*? or to seek help where it cannot be had? God hath laid all our help upon Christ; and it is impossible to find justification or sanctification any where else.—But on the other hand, their state is happy who are dead to the law; for though they be dead, yet they live; they live a life of justification, and a life of sanctification thereupon; being *dead to the law, they live unto God*. O what a mercy is it, if God hath awakened your consciences, convinced you of sin and self-righteousness, and brought you off from the law! You see your extreme guilt, vileness, baseness, and wickedness; and it may be are groaning under the sense thereof: but God may have a glorious design in this, to bring you more and more off from the law, and from any confidence in the flesh, that you may build upon a better foundation, and be married to a better husband, even to Jesus Christ, that *you may bring forth fruit unto God*.

10. Hence see the *malignity of a legal spirit*: if we must be *dead to the law*, that we may *live unto God*: then a legal spirit and temper must be a wicked and

ungodly spirit: it is an *ignorant* spirit; if they were not *ignorant of God's righteousness*, they would never *establish a righteousness of their own*: but they are ignorant of the perfection of his law, the terror of his justice, the severity of his tribunal, and of their own natural weakness and wickedness, otherwise they would not dare to make any thing a ground of their acceptance with God, except the blood and righteousness of his Son. It is a *proud* spirit, that will not let *grace* be exalted, but puts *self* in the throne of Christ, and his righteousness. It is a *filthy* and *abominable* spirit, and pollutes the man more and more; and God abhors it, as that which contradicts his most glorious plot. And it is a *damning* spirit, if it be not removed; *For the wicked shall be turned into hell*: and this man continues wicked still, even under the presence of holiness; he is wicked and ungodly still, for he lives to himself, but not to God; for it is only these that are *dead to the law*, who *live unto God*.

Use *second*, Of *examination*. Try your *state* then, man, woman: you should try after, as well as before a communion: and there are two things you should try here, 1. Whether you be *dead to the law* in point of *justification*? 2. Whether you be *living to the law*, or *living to God*, in point of *sanctification*? Two as necessary points as are in all divinity, and such as are of the utmost concern in time, and through eternity.

*First*, Try whether you be *dead to the law* in point of *justification*. I might here give you marks of these that are *alive to the law*, and then marks of these that are *dead to the law*; but seeing these will coincide, I join them together. I shall not multiply evidences; but you may try by these following.

1. The man that is *dead to the law*, hath got a *sight of holiness* in the glass of the law, and of his *natural legal temper*. Some think they have a good heart to God, and they can do so and so; but the believer dead to the law, he sees his heart, the worst piece in or about him; and that he cannot believe, he cannot repent, he cannot mortify sin; corruption is like the  
giants

giants of Anak. The man sees he is vile, with Job: *Behold I am vile!* Vile in every duty; in praying, communicating; *Behold I am vile!* He sees himself, and he sees his own legal temper.—The man that is *alive to the law*, never sees his *legal temper*, nor his strong inclination to self-righteousness: the believer sees and finds something of this, even after he is made a gospel-saint; but the Legalists never see it. What, say they, would you have us Papists? Blessed be God, we are better instructed; we have no merit, our righteousness is rags: and yet, after all, there is a secret trusting in their own righteousness.—Hath it ever been one exercise to you, how to be rid of your sins? and another, how to be rid of your righteousness?

2. The man that is *dead to the law*, is *tired and wearied* out of it. Perhaps he hath been convinced of sin; and thereupon falling to the law, to this and the other duty; O I deserve hell, for my sin is great; well, he endeavours to make a mends, and to find peace; and so he runs to prayer and preaching, thinking he will get peace; he repents, he resolves; and wo to the man that finds all his peace there without going further.—But, behold, the man whom God shews mercy to, he goes on in these duties, but finds no peace, no rest, no satisfaction; he is tired out of it: his soul sinks with discouragement, and languishes and hangs down the head: and God thus unbottoms the man of himself.—Whereas, he that is *alive to the law*, he that takes up his rest and comfort in his duty; he hath the fear of wrath to come, and then he runs to duty; the duty gives him ease; he is relieved; all is well: as a husband comforts his distressed wife, so obedience to the law comforts him, and the law heals him: it is the law that throws him down, and it is the law that raises him up again. But the man that is *dead to the law*, though the law terrify, yet it is not the law that satisfies him again.

3. The man that is *dead to the law*, he knows what it is to *act from Christ, as his principle*; and to *him, as*

his end: he knows what it is to perform duty from a borrowed strength. The Legalist may indeed speak soundly, and say, He can do nothing of himself without Christ; and yet he reads, prays, preaches, hears, communicates, and does all, as if he had the power in his own hand. Let a man have never such an orthodox head, if he be not a believer in Christ, he is an Arminian and Pelagian all over: he knows not his own weakness; he looks not up for immediate influences. And as self is his principle, so to self he acts as his end; as he that is joined to Christ brings forth children, or fruit unto Christ; so he that is joined to the law, brings forth children to the law: he does duty, it may be, to hush the clamours of conscience, and give it ease; to keep himself out of hell, for he hath no will to be damned; and for the like ends.—The believer being *dead to the law*, cannot perform duty, but by borrowed strength; he can do nothing till a gale of the Spirit come; he cannot bring forth children, till the Spirit of God beget them in his soul: no, no; every act of grace flows from a creating power: and when he acts, the love of Christ especially, and desire of communion and fellowship with God constrains him; and the glory of God in Christ is his great end.

4. The believer, that is *dead to the law*, he hath *wilifying thoughts* of all he does: the Legalist over-values his duties; *Wherefore have we fasted, and thou hast not seen? Wherefore have we prayed, and thou hast not heard?* They challenge God as he were unjust, for not giving them what they merit: *God, I thank thee,* said the Pharisee, *I am not as other men:* it was like a proud boasting of what he had done. But let the believer spend days and nights in prayer, and that with much liberty and enlargement, yet the issue of the work is, *O my righteousness is filthy rags, a menstruous cloth!* Wo to me, if I be not found in Christ, for my best duties deserve damnation; I find my praying, my worshipping, my communicating full of atheism, unbelief, formality, and hypocrisy.—The Legalist over-rates his duties; he thinks more of what he hath done

done, than of what Christ hath done; and more of his praying on earth than of Christ's pleading in heaven: he thinks more of his tears than of Christ's blood: he is proud of his humility, and never duly humbled.

5. The believer that is *dead to the law*, so far as he is dead thereto, his *complaints* and his *comforts* move in a *gospel-channel*. The Legalist will complain more for want of holiness, than for want of Christ: seeing he hath taken up with a self-righteousness, it is his all, it is his happiness, it is his husband, it is his God; and when it is wanting, he cannot but be troubled. But the language of the man dead to the law is, O for Christ! O for a day of power! O to be wrapt up in the covenant of grace, to get an omnipotent power, determining me to comply with the gospel-offer! His comforts move in a gospel-channel.—But the Legalist finds comfort in law-works, even in all his extremities in time: In the prospect of trouble, what comforts him? Even this, that he hath done many good duties; he wraps up himself in a garment of his own weaving. Upon challenges of conscience, what comforts him, and gives him peace? He even covers himself with the same robe. In the prospect of judgment, what comforts him, and gives him peace? Why, he hopes God will be merciful to him, because he hath had a good profession, and said many good prayers, and done many good duties. But, O sorry peace-maker. The only thing that gives a believer peace and ease, in these cases, is the law-biding righteousness of Christ, under which he desires to shroud himself: he flees to the blood of Christ, saying, O I am undone, unless my soul be wrapt up in the mantle of Christ's perfect righteousness; *I desire to be found in him*: upon this righteousness of Jesus do I venture my soul; I have no shift but this.—The Legalist, I said, comforts himself in all his extremities with the law, till the extremity come, and then he finds himself cheated, miserably deceived: and hence, O what a mercy is it, that the Lord drains a man of his legal comfort, that he may unhinge him off the law, and off  
his

his self-confidence ! Oft-times, when God is bringing him his elect, he makes all the common work they had before to disappear. It may be, they had a profession, were morally serious, they had zeal, prayed with life, heard with affection ; but behold now, all the streams of common influences are dried up ; the poor soul finds he cannot pray, he cannot shed a tear, though he should be cast into hell : yea, he cannot think a right thought, though it should bring him to heaven ; yea, he finds his heart hardened like a devil, and his mind bemisted with the darkness of hell.—Why? this is all in love to induce him to relinquish himself, abandon the law as a covenant, and flee in unto and embrace the dear Son of God.

6. The believer that is *dead to the law*, is content to have his *righteousness* tried, and compared with the perfect law. As Christ is the Lord his *righteousness*, and this he knows is sufficient to answer all the demands and commands of the law, and he is not ashamed of this righteousness, but glories in it ; so as to the works of holiness, whatever shortcoming he is sensible of, yet he is content to be tried with the clearest light. Let omniscience descend, and make a critical search ; *Search me, O God, and see if there be any wicked way in me ; and lead me in the way everlasting.* I do not love to die with a lie in my right-hand : let all the inward corners of my heart be laid open before me : I am satisfied to know if I have a lawful husband, or not ; if Christ be my husband, or not : he is content to be tried.—But the Legalist, the man that is *alive to the law*, a searching sermon is uneasy to him ; a gospel-sermon he cannot abide ; a narrow trial he cannot endure ; he thinks that the minister is too impartial to cast us all to hell ; he hath stolen goods, and therefore dreads the light. Yea,

7. The man that is *dead to the law* he hath got a *soul-humbling sight*, and *saving view* of the *glory of Christ's righteousness*, that made him quit with all his legal rags as loss and dung ; even as the stars vanish out of sight when the sun arises. O hath Christ's glory ever shined

ed into your heart, man, woman, and made you see thousands of worlds to be nothing to him ; thousands of righteousnesses of men and angels, to be nothing to his ? Have you seen an utter impossibility of obtaining God's favour by any righteousness of yours ? and such a sure ground of obtaining God's favour here, that your soul hath been made to renounce all other ways of acceptance ; and to see, admire, and rejoice in the glory of this way ; and to approve it, as a device worthy of God, and suitable to you ? And have you found rest here ? It is good.—The Legalist is a stranger to such saving views of the glory of Christ, and his righteousness : having never got *the Spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of Christ*.

8. The man that is *dead to the law*, is in love with the *doctrine of the gospel* ; *How beautiful upon the mountains, to them, are the feet of these that preach the glad-tidings of peace !* Whereas he that is *alive to the law*, he always suspects the doctrine of the gospel, as if it were leading him away from the law, and away from holiness. Here is a mark that may well find out a pharisaic generation ; they suspect the doctrine of Christ, and his righteousness, as if it were a doctrine tending to licentiousness, and opposition to the law, a sign they never felt the power of the gospel upon their hearts, otherwise they would feel the revelation of the righteousness of Christ, from faith to faith, to be *the power of God to their salvation* ; they would find, that never are they so much disposed to holy duties, as when they are under the influences of the spirit of faith, discovering the glory of Christ, and his righteousness, to them. But an ignorant generation, that knows not the power and virtue of the gospel, still suspects it as contrary to the law, this was the false charge against Christ of old, and against Stephen Acts vi. 18. and against Paul, from which therefore he many times vindicates himself. See Acts xviii. 13.

9. The man that is *dead to the law*, can, in some measure, put a difference betwixt *Christ* and a *frame* :—whereas, he that is *alive to the law*, can never distinguish between Christ in duty, and a frame in duty. I suppose

pose this is a hard question, *How shall we know the difference betwixt Christ in duty, and a frame in duty?* I will answer, in a word, The man that hath only a frame in duty, and not Christ in it, he is only pleased with his frame, his tears, his enlargements; he makes that his righteousness; he is content with that, and exalted with that; and now thinks all is well: but he that hath Christ in duty, and not a frame only, he is ready to cry, O I would have Christ! tears will not do the turn; my own heart hath deceived me a thousand times; I find my tears do not wash me, my frame does not sanctify me: this flowing of affection may be but a natural thing; it will not do; it is Christ I want; nothing but his blood can wash me: nothing but this blood can pacify his conscience; nothing but some views of Christ can give him solid quiet. A sweet frame may indeed be the chariot, in which Christ may ride towards the soul; but the gospel believer is not so much taken up with the chariot, as with the glorious King that rides in it.

10. The man that is *dead to the law*, is *dead to sin*: Sin hath not dominion over him: because he is *not under the law, but under grace*. The views of Christ are of a transforming nature; *Beholding his glory, we are changed*. It is true, here the believer fears most of all, because of his shortcoming in point of sanctification, and mortification of sin, because he finds iniquity prevailing against him: and how is it true, that sin hath not dominion over him, he not being *under the law, but under grace*! Why, sin hath no righteous nor lawful dominion over believers; the first husband is dead, and they are married to Christ the second husband; and therefore they are not debtors to the flesh; tho' still the flesh craves them to obey it, yet it hath no just power so to do. Sin's just authority is exaundered; and Christ, by satisfying the law, *which is the strength of sin*, hath *condemned sin in the flesh*. Sin hath a sort of right to reign in wicked men, and these that are under the law; but none in the believer, who is delivered from the law, which is *the strength of sin*. Though it actually exercise authority, yet it is but an usurped authority:

thority : as sin hath no power nor authority to condemn the soul that is in Christ ; so it hath no authority to reign ; and *sin shall never reign unto death* over them, Rom. v. 21. And the believer that hath cast off the authority of sin, as being no more his lawful king, may complain of its unjust oppression, and plead with a righteous God, that the power of sin may be more and more broken, and so it shall be.—But the *legalist*, that is *alive to the law*, in regard that he is both under the commanding and condemning power of the law ; he is also under the commanding and condemning power of sin. The law commands him, and he obeys it as his lord ; and sin commands him also, and he obeys it too, and makes his legal duties a plaister to cure his conscience of his sin : like Lewis XI. of France, who would swear a bloody oath, and for a pardon kiss a crucifix ; and swear again, and then kiss it over again ; and so runs the round. However, the believer is delivered from the power of the law, and the power of sin too ; having cast off the law as covenant, and finding nothing to satisfy and still his conscience, but the blood and righteousness of Christ, that satisfies divine justice ; as in this way he finds rest from the curse of the law, so also some rest from the rule and dominion of sin : the faith of God's love in Christ, does purify his heart, and kill his natural enmity, insomuch that he can attest, to his sweet experience, that the faith of the love of God in Christ, is so far from leading him to licentiousness of life, or encouraging laziness, that he finds it the hottest fire in the world, to melt his heart for sin ; and the strongest cord in the world, to bind him to duty, while the love of God is shed abroad upon him.—Try by these things if you be *dead to the law*.—In a word, if you be dead to the law, then you will be *living unto God* ; *I through the law am dead to the law, that I might live unto God*. He is led sweetly to the law as a rule of life.

But here it may be enquired, *How shall I know if I be living unto God?* This leads me to the other part of the examination.

Secondly, Try if you be *living unto God*. Having enlarged so much upon the preceeding head, and having offered several particulars upon this head already in the doctrinal part, which may be improved by way of trial; therefore I will offer you but these two marks of this.

1. If you be *living unto God*, then the *Spirit of God* will be the *chief principle* of your life; *The water that I shall give him, shall be in him a well of water springing up to everlasting life*, John iv. 14. The man hath not only the *water* within him, the graces of the Spirit; but the *well* itself, the Spirit himself dwelling in him. And as we know a spring-well, by seeing the water bullering and bubbling up; so a man may know he hath the Spirit, by the springing and flowing out of this water now and then. None have a life unto God, but these that have the Spirit of Christ in them, causing them to *walk in his statutes*; for, where the Spirit of life is, he is a Spirit of faith, and a Spirit of love; a Spirit of faith, leading the man to the *obedience of faith*; which sets him to duty from the authority of God, and in a dependence upon Christ, both as his strength for assistance, and as his righteousnes for acceptance, in the performance thereof: a Spirit of love, leading the man to the obedience of love; and this obedience makes a man serve like a son, and not like a slave; and makes the service sweet and pleasant; *This is the love of God, that we keep his commandments, and his commandments are not grievous*, 1 John v. 3.—This makes the believer's obedience, while he lives unto God, a mystery to the world, that reckon it a burden to keep the Sabbath, a burden to wait on ordinances, a burden to perform duties: Why? on the other hand, when the believer is mounted up in the chariot of love, indeed it is a burden to him to leave off duty; it is a burden to him to leave ordinances; it is a burden to him to think of going back to the world again: Why? the matter is, he is about the obedience of love, which makes the commands of God not grievous, but delicious. Try your obedience, and living to God, by this principle of it, the Spirit of God

as a Spirit of faith and love, leading to the obedience of faith and love.

2. If you be *living unto God*, then the *glory of God* will be the *chief end* of your life. But here a question may be propounded, *How shall I know, if the glory of God be my chief end in my obedience?* Indeed it is a material question. I will just offer a thought upon it. If the glory of God be the chief end of your life, then you will have a continual conflict with *self*, and how to get self-ends mortified. O! I see *self* creeping in upon me, in all my preaching, praying, communicating; how shall I get this enemy killed? Here *the flesh lusts against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh, and these two are contrary the one to the other.*—The believer finds a war here against self, as his greatest enemy; and it is his joy, and the triumph of his heart, when he gets *self* dashed to the ground, and debased; when *the loftiness thereof is brought down, and the Lord alone shall be exalted in him.*—The man that hath God's glory as his chief end, he can sometimes trample even his *own happiness under his feet*, in a manner, when it comes in competition with the glory of God in Christ: the glory of God is of more worth than ten thousand heavens; and therefore the self-denied believer, before the divine glory should sink, would venture his all, though he had a thousand lives; *Blot me out of thy book*, says Moses; *Let me be accursed*, says Paul; and all was, that God might be glorified, that Christ might be magnified, and have a glorious name in the world. There were some things indeed extraordinary in that measure that Moses and Paul attained to; but there may be something like it, I think, tho' in a smaller measure, that believers may know in their experience: O! whatever should become of me, let thy name be glorified; let Christ have a numerous train to praise him to eternity; let me decrease, and him increase; let him be exalted, tho' I should be for ever abased: and if it might contribute to his mounting of the throne, let me be even the foot-stool on which he may ascend.—The man prefers *Christ's public interest* before his *own private interest*;

interest; If I forget thee, O Jerusalem, let my right-hand forget her cunning. If I do not remember thee, let my tongue cleave to the roof of my mouth: if I prefer not Jerusalem above my chief joy, Psalm cxxxvii. 5, 6. In a word, the man that lives to God, as his chief end, he acts in duties, because God is thereby honoured and glorified; and he hates sin in himself and others, because God is thereby dishonoured.

Finally, If you be living unto God, your life, your obedience, will be influenced by the grace of the new covenant, being dead to the law, or to the old covenant: But of this I have spoken at large, on the fourth general head.—Thus much for the trial.

The *third use* may be for lamentation over, together with reproof of, all legalists, both doctrinal and practical.

1<sup>st</sup>, As to the *doctrinal legalists*, we might bewail, and refute the *legal schemes* that take place in the world. I name these two.

1. The *Popish scheme*, denying the imputation of Christ's righteousness. The imputed righteousness of Christ is blasphemed by the church of Rome; they call it an *affectitious, imaginary air; a putative righteousness*; contrary to the very strain of our apostle in his epistles. They talk of a twofold justification: Their *first* justification is that, whereby an unjustified man becomes justified, or a wicked man becomes godly; where they confound justification and sanctification.—The *second* is that, whereby a man, already righteous, becomes more and more righteous, more and more holy. We know no justification, but one justification by faith, in the day of closing with Christ; laying hold upon the blood of Christ, *Whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in his blood, to declare his righteousness for the remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God. To declare, I say, his righteousness: that he might be just, and the justifier of him which believeth in Jesus*, Rom. iii. 25, 26. It is a complete righteousness, we have it all at once; and it is not within

within us, but without us : it is in Christ *inherently*, but in us *imputatively*. They tell us, that we are not justified by the works of the ceremonial law, but by the works of the moral law : they tell us, that we are not justified by perfect obedience, but by imperfect ; and, by an *acceptilation*, it is looked on by God as perfect : and, in a word, they acquaint us, that we are justified, not meritoriously, and simply by works done in our own strength, but by works acted and done by the strength and assistance of the Spirit of God.—There is the *Popish scheme*.

2. The *Baxterian scheme* is also opposite to this gospel doctrine : they tell us, that God hath made a *new law* with mankind ; and *obedience* to that *new law*, and to its commands, is our righteousness : and this obedience gives us a title to heaven, and gives us a title to Christ's blood, and to pardon : and the *act* of *faith* is our righteousness, not as it *accepts* of Christ's righteousness, but as it is an *obedience* to that *new law* ; the very *act* and *work* of faith is, according to them, the *righteousness itself* : and this faith takes in all kind of works, namely, repentance, love, obedience, and ten or twelve duties of that sort ; and all these together are our righteousness for justification. “ Really, “ as one says upon this very head, if the apostle Paul “ were alive, he would excommunicate such mini- “ sters.”

2dly, As to *practical legalists* ; this generation is full of these. I know not a more reigning sin among professors : a gospel-strain is almost lost, and a gospel-method is almost forgotten. If we would go back to our reformers, we would see a gospel-spirit among them ; but now the *gospel-scheme* is come under reproach, as if it were a *new scheme* ; and some preach against it, write against it, reason against it, as if it were Antinomianism, and a going off from the law ; as the Papists accused the Protestants of old : why ? what is the matter ? A hellish, unholy, legal spirit reigns in the world. Now, in prosecuting of this use, and that we may see how much ground there is to lament over, and bewail a legal temper that takes place ;

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I would here, 1. Shew some evidences of a legal spirit in the *ungodly* and unconverted. 2. Some evidences of a legal temper in *believers* themselves. 3. Shew the *cause* of this legal temper that is in the world. 4. Shew the *evil* and *danger* of it.

[1.] Some evidences of a *legal temper*, that is natural to the *ungodly*, who having no new nature, have no gospel-spirit at all. This may be evidenced in these four degrees of self, and legal pride.

1. While man is just in the dead sleep of *natural security*, having no sight, nor sense of his sin, no conviction of; nor contrition for sin; even then, which is strange, he may imagine many times, that he is perfect, that he never breaks all the commandments of God, but keeps the whole law: the young Pharisee in the gospel is an eminent instance hereof; our Lord gives him an account of the commands of the law, and he had the insolent boldness to say to Christ, *All these things have I kept from my youth up*; and Paul, before his conversion, was stuffed with the same legal pride; *I was touching the law blameless*. What means he by that? Why, it is as if he had said, I was such a stanch Pharisee, and religious zealot, that, as I never thought I broke any of the ten commandments, so I thought I had kept the whole law. Wonderful arrogance and ignorance, to imagine that a man in his fallen state can have a perfection, and keep the whole law! And yet the elect of God, before their conversion, have found that they have been filled with such pride and insolent thoughts, as you see in Paul: yea, and many think little less; though they say they are sinners, yet they see not sin, and fancy they are conformable to the law: they have a good heart, they wrong no body, they are just in their dealings, none can say, black is their eye; and here is their righteousness being alive to the law.

2. Degree is, when men come to be *convinced of sin* and *rebellion*, and of their *lost state*, by reason of their having trampled the divine authority under foot, offended his Majesty, violated his law, provoked his anger; then, as if Christ were the most needless and useless

less thing in heaven or earth, they run to their repentance for an atonement, as Papists to their penances, and Pagans to their sacrifices, to atone their offended deities; as if there were no Day's-man, no Mediator betwixt God and man, to make atonement: Christ the Propitiation is altogether slighted; they hope to make atonement, and pacify God, by repenting seriously, and lamenting bitterly; and so they fall to work, praying, fasting, mourning, confessing with an absolute neglect of Christ; and, upon the back of all their legal fears, confessions and bitter lamentations, their awakened consciences are pleased and pacified. The storm that was raised there, is turned to a calm; a false peace takes place, not founded upon Christ, or his atoning blood, but upon their confessions, tears, prayers, whereby they think to disgorge and vomit up all the sins of their life, and to save themselves from them, and from the wrath that follows them. To this purpose was that saying of Augustine (it looks like a harsh saying, but had a good meaning) namely, "That repentance damns more than sins do." When people are under any fearful apprehension of the wrath to come upon them for their sins, they flee to their repentance, instead of fleeing to Christ, and that effectually destroys and ruins them.

3. Degree is, when a man not only repents, but *amends*: he not only takes up resolutions of amendment of life, but actually studies obedience, reforms his way; he is at pains to get his life changed, but not to get his state changed: he is not taken up to get a new heart, but would have the old heart made a little better; he thinks a little mends will do the business; and what is all this, but, as one says, *like the gilding of a rotten post*; the post is rotten within, but it is finely gilded over without? It is but like the whitening of a sepulchre, that however white it may be without, yet it is full of dead mens bones within: it is like the painting of a chimney without, that is all black and sooty within: it is like the adorning a dead corps with sweet flowers.—The man is dead in sins and trespasses, notwithstanding all this.

4. Degree is beyond all this, *gospel-light* hath shined  
*objectively*

*objectively* upon them, and they are more illuminated than to be pleased with this; why? they hear of Christ, and that there is no salvation, no justification, without him; and therefore, they act faith upon him in a legal way; they believe in him, not by a saving faith, but a temporary faith. As believers do perform gospel-obedience to the law, so unbelievers may have a legal faith of the gospel, a legal faith upon Christ; believing in their own strength; believing before ever he sees his inability to believe; before ever he see his unwillingness to believe, before he be humbled under a sense of his absolute need of Christ; and before he sees what right and warrant he hath from the word. However, he fancies he hath closed with Christ, laid hold on his covenant; and this is the most subtle part of self-righteousness; yet, after all, he is the old man, still wedded to the law: and hence he hath no sanctification, no new nature, no new principle of spiritual life, no living unto God.

[2.] Some evidences of a *legal temper* that remains in *believers* themselves.

1. When their *comfort* is always up and down with their *frame*: if their frame be up, their comfort is up; if their frame be down, their comfort is down; if their frame be gone, their comfort is gone, their joy is withered: herein the legal spirit discovers itself. Whereas a gospel temper of soul would lead the man to rejoice, even when the changeable frame is gone, that the unchangeable covenant still remains: and to say, *Though the fig-tree should not blossom,—yet will I rejoice in the Lord.* Though grace be at a low ebb with me, yet the ocean of grace is in Christ; and herein I rejoice: tho' I be in darkness, yet I will rejoice that there is light in him; tho' I find nothing but deadness in me, yet will I rejoice that there is life in him; tho' I be empty, yet will I rejoice that there is fulness in him, and this is to be communicate in his time and way.

2. It is a *legal temper* in the believer, when his *assurance* is lost by his *challenges*. It may be, the man attained some sweet measure of assurance, but behold sin prevails, conscience challenges him, and hereupon he

razes all ; this is an evidence of a legal temper, contrary to that gospel spirit which we may see acting in David, Psal. lxxv. 3. *Iniquity prevails against me ;* it is against my heart, against my will, against my prayers, against my secret groans and wrestlings, against my resolutions, against my inclination they prevail : Shall I raze the foundation of my faith upon this account ? No : I flee to the blood of the Lamb of God, for cleansing and purging both from the guilt and power of sin ; and therefore I will maintain my assurance and confidence in thee ; *As for our transgressions, thou wilt purge them away.*

3. It is a *legal temper*, when *faith is marred*, either by *sins* or *graces* ; I mean, either by the prevalence of sin, or the pride of grace. On the one hand, when the exercise of faith is marred by the prevalence of sin ; when their known sense and feeling of out-breakings, either make a man stand a-back from Christ, or make him run away from him, by sinking discouragement or secret despair : this evidences much legality. Are you convinced of sin ? Well then, you have the more need to come to Christ, and believe in him, and the less need to stay away from him. Peter had a prayer once, that looked like a set form of the devil's composing, *Lord, depart from me ; for I am a sinful man.* If it had run in a gospel form, he would rather said, *Lord, come to me ; for I am a sinful man.* Yet many believers have learned Peter's form of prayer ; *Lord, I am such a sinful man, I dare not come to thee, nor believe that thou wilt come to me : Why ? the more sinful thou art, the more need thou hast to come to him, and to employ him to come to you, and save you.*—On the other hand, when the *exercise of faith* is marred by the pride of grace, this is a part of a legal temper : when believers trust more to their graces than to Christ, the fountain of all grace ; when they look more to the strength of gracious habits, and trust more to them, than to the grace that is in Christ, in which they are called to be strong ; *Be strong in the grace that is in Christ :* As by poring of their sins, they are many times led off from depending on Christ, from

constant incomes of actual influences. And hence, when a believer is lively, he is ready to think, he will never be dead again; when he is spiritual, that he will never be carnal again; when he is up in the mount, that he will never be down in the valley again, saying, *By thy favour my mountain stands strong*; he thinks it like mount Zion, that can never be shaken, and that he will never doubt again; but behold, *Thou didst hide thy face, and I was troubled*: my good frame was changed to a bad one; of a sudden my mount Zion was turned to a mount Sinai; all fears, all frowns, all darkness. Never hath a believer more need to act faith, and close dependence on the Lord, than when his graces and frames are most lively, lest self-confidence creep in, and he confides more in created grace, than in the fountain; out of whose fulness he is to have *grace for grace*. Let your frame be never so good, your faith never so strong, your grace never so lively, at any time, yet look up still for new influences; for without momentary supplies and breathings from heaven, your gracious habits cannot act, and will not hold out a moment.

4. It is a *legal temper*, when *peace* is always marred by short-comings; short-comings in the exercise of grace, short-comings in the mortification of sin, short-comings in holiness; when they pore upon these short-comings; upon the weakness of grace on the one hand, and the strength of corruption on the other; upon such a sin and lust that prevails, upon such a plague and distemper that affects them; insomuch that they cannot let in a word of comfort, they cannot hearken to the *joyful sound of the gospel*; like Israel, who hearkened not to Moses, because of the *anguish of the spirit*: they look inward to themselves, and finding nothing there but failings, and infirmities, and plagues, instead of holiness, their peace is wholly demolished; because they do not, at the same time, look upward to Christ, to his blood and righteousness, and to his fulness: here is a legal temper.—So also, to the same purpose, when a man's peace and comfort rests only and always upon his sanctification, as if there were

no other ground of joy, but a righteousness inherent: surely, when the joy of sanctification is greater than the joy of justification, it is an evidence of a legal temper; for the joy of justification is founded upon a law-biding righteousness, the perfect obedience of the glorious Head, which is always the same unchangeable ground of joy to believers; whereas his sanctification is imperfect here, and cannot afford such peace and joy, as faith in a perfect obedience will give. The true circumcision rejoice in Christ, and in what they have in him, more than in what they have from him. But behold, even the believer is ready to be taken up with his sanctification, which is inherent, and so to be lifted up, when he attains to a good gale, a great measure of sanctification; corruption may abuse the privilege, and then he is proud and lifted up. It is true, communion with God is of a humbling nature, and natively makes a man humble, and lively, and watchful; but when the good frame is wearing off, and corruption beginning to work again, if this nick of time be not noticed, and the believer on his guard, a proud thought may enter in, were it even upon a Paul wrapt up to the third heavens; *Lest I should be exalted above measure, a messenger of Satan was sent; a thorn in the flesh.* O how does a legal temper run through every frame! When a man is dead and dull, then he is in danger of murmuring; and when he is active and lively, then he is in danger of swelling.

5. It is a *legal temper*, when a man's *expectation of success* is built upon the *minister that preaches*: if the minister hath a weak gift, O they will not hear that man, at least they expect little good of him: if another hath great gifts, and a taking way, O now they expect heaven will come down; way? this is an evidence of a *legal temper*: for a gospel temper will expect nothing, but in a gospel why; even by the powerful influences of the Spirit promised in the gospel. The gospel in any man's mouth is but a dead letter, without the Holy Ghost.

6. It is a *legal temper*, when the believer is under *excessive discouragements*, on whatever ground: it is an

evidence he is too much under the law; for the law can give no encouragement, no settlement to the conscience; it is only Christ can give rest; *Come unto me, all ye that labour, and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.* What is it that discourages a believer, when he is under this legal temper? Sometimes he is discouraged when he performs duty, and cannot find that presence, that sensible help he would have: why then he is quite dispirited.—Indeed he hath ground of mourning, when the Lord is away; he should be deeply humbled, for the causes of it: but when he is so dispirited, that he loses his confidence, and is beaten quite away from his faith and hope, questions his state, and gives way to slavish fear, that weakens his hands in duties, and draws his heart from duty, it is a token he is secretly hankering after the law; for the language of the heart of him is, O if I could pray with as much life, and hear with as much attention, and perform duty with as much vigour as I would be at! O then I would have a good hope; and so it is not Christ, so much as the law, the old husband, that you desire to place your hope upon, while you are under that legal frame: the apostle speaks of some believers that *desire to be under the law*, Gal. iv. 21. Sometimes their discouragements arise from this, that they dare not apply the promises; and why so? because they think they are not for the like of them; such a promise belongs to such and such a good person; it is for a holy man, but not for the like of me: what is this but a legal temper, apprehending, that if you had such and such a legal righteousness, then God would be some way indebted to give you the promise! But, O is not grace to be glorified in this new and gospel way! And therefore, the more of a gospel spirit you have, the more cheerfully will you embrace the promise, for this end, that *having these promises, you may cleanse yourself*, by sucking virtue from the breasts of the promise.

7. It is an evidence of a *legal temper*, when they are *always straitened in duty*. Sometimes they are discouraged,

couraged, because they are so straitened in duty; and they are straitened in duty, because they are so legal in it. Their discouragement flows from their straitening, and their straitening flows from their legal spirit; for a gospel spirit is a spirit of liberty. 1. When a believer is for ordinary straitened without life, without liberty, it is an evidence of a legal spirit; for, *Where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty: The law of the spirit of life in Christ Jesus makes the man free from the law of sin and death*, Rom. viii. 2. When one is influenced by the covenant of grace, he runs in the way of God's commandments. Though you have once known what it was to run sweetly in the Lord's way, yet if now you find a habitual indisposition to duties and religious exercises to be a heavy yoke, a grievous burden, this indisposition testifies against you, that though you have once known the gospel of Christ, yet now you are hankering after the law. The Lord may indeed withdraw his presence from his people, for necessary ends, even from the man that hath much of the gospel-spirit; and such a man, amidst all his trials of that sort, will triumph in Christ, and say, tho' I have little in hand, yet I have much in hope; whatever my own wants be, I have enough in Christ; however weak in myself, I am strong in him; imperfect in myself, but complete in him. But when, for ordinary, the person does not find pleasure in duty, hath little heart to it, and finds it not easy and light, but grievous; it is a token, that he is bearing the yoke of the law, or old covenant: For *Christ's yoke is easy and his burden is light*; but this law-yoke is heavy. The law, the first husband, requires hard, and heavy things, and does not help the sinner with strength; but Christ, the new husband, requires the same things, but he gives strength to perform; and what he requires of us, he works in us; *I can do all things thro' Christ strengthening me*; were it to over-leap a wall, and fight armies of devils in my way.

8. It is a sign of a *legal temper*, when a poor creature finds always discouragement, except when about religious duties; and finds no peace, when about any other

other work; but is still racked, except when upon his knees, or going about some religious performance or other: it is a token of being knit and wedded too much to the first husband; for the law drives hard, and craves hard: but Christ is very tender and gentle in his commands and demands; and a person, under the influences of grace, will find as much sweetness, even when eating and drinking, and when he is about his lawful employment sometimes, as when about religious exercises. Mistake me not here; think not that Christ will indulge his people in the omission of duty, that is not what I intend, God forbid; I know and am persuaded, that the sweetest hours that the believer hath, is when he enjoys communion with God in the ordinances and duties of his appointment: but yet, they that have much of a gospel-spirit can, with peace, and freedom of mind, go about other things as the work of Christ; though it be a piece of self-denial to them, not to be always with him, they would notwithstanding incline to be every minute with him, and are longing for uninterrupted communion and fellowship with him: yet the thing I say is, that their hearts are not disheartened, nor their spirit dispirited, when called to other things; and it favours much of a legal spirit, when the poor exercised creature can find no peace about their other lawful duties, unless they be still about duties that are properly religious duties, such as prayer, and reading, and hearing, and the like; for, in some sense, other duties, such as plowing and sowing, and the like, may be turned to religious duties, by a spiritual-minded man, and such as have a gospel-spirit, while they carry a heavenly mind to their earthly work.

9. It is a sign of too much of a *legal temper*, when a man is not *satisfied* with the *measure of grace* that the Lord allows him, but frets against heaven because he hath not so much as others. Let none mistake me here either: no man ought, in any different way, to be content with any measure of grace; we are still to be going on to perfection; but when we grudge and repine, and are pained at the heart, and murmur against God,  
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because we have not this and that measure as others have, it is a symptom of hankering after the law. A gospel spirit does not strive with God, but meekly waits upon the Sovereign, who *will have mercy upon whom he will have mercy*, and dispenses freely of his gifts and graces as he pleaseth.

10. It is a sign of a *legal temper*, when a person is more taken up with the *gifts* of Christ, than with *Christ himself*; more taken up with any little thing they get from him, than with himself. When they get any sensible grace, any sensible good affections, melting of heart, melting of spirit; any inclination to what is good; any gifts, or graces, whether more common or special, they admire these, and are not so much taken up with Christ himself. But the person that is evangelical in his actings, by what he gets he is led to the giver; if this be sweet, O he is infinitely sweeter that sent it: I embrace the token, and it draws out my heart the more after him, from whom it came.

11. It is a sign of being too much under the influence of the law, when the believer is possessed with a *fretful spirit*, and is not content with any thing; for the gospel sweetens a man's frame of spirit. If the believer go to the law, he is constantly pained and wounded; and a diseased person is always a repining person; and this fretfulness is a sign, that they are not found at the bottom; but the gospel is health to the heart, and medicine to all the flesh. A gospel spirit is a spirit of *faith*, a spirit of *love*, a spirit of *power*, and of a *sound mind*, 2 Tim. i. 7. And hence, take a believer, when he is much under the influence of the grace of the gospel, ten thousand little difficulties, that sometimes fret him and put him out of humour, will not move him then, when he is living near Christ, and under the influence of the covenant of grace; but when at other times every thing frets him, it is a sign that the law hath the ascendent, for *the law works wrath*, Rom. iv. 15.

12. It is a sign of a *legal spirit*, when, upon the back of religious duties, the man hath *more freedom to sin*; *Sin shall not have dominion over you: for you are not under*

*der the law, but under grace.* The laws irritates corruption, raises the devil, but cannot lay him ; but the grace of God in Christ, *teaches to deny ungodliness, and worldly lusts.* This grace only keeps down the devil, and lays him low, as it were ; yea, *bruises the serpent's head, and destroys the works of the devil.* When a man performs duty in a legal way, to quiet his conscience ; why, then, when conscience is quieted with the duty, lust gets a vent like the whore, of which we read, Prov. vii. 14. *I have offered my peace-offerings, this day I have paid my vows : come, let us take our fill of love.* But when a man performs duty in a gospel way, not merely to satisfy conscience, or pacify the judge, but to glorify God, to honour Christ, which is the great gospel end of performing duty ; then this glory of God and Christ, that he hath in view, prompts him to desire, by the means of duty, to get the better of God's enemies in the heart ; and when he gets the victory, he desires to pursue his enemies, even to the death.

Now, my dear friends, if there be any believer here, I am sure some of these evidences, if not all, may find you out, to have too much of a *legal temper* about you. O believers, you who *have fled for refuge, to lay hold on the hope, set before you,* will you consider what danger you are in from Christ's rival, the law as a covenant, your first husband, and how much your following after that doth undo you ? You, it may be, think, you are in hazard from carnal friends, or from the world ; but you cannot understand how you can be in hazard from the law : but you may be in the greatest hazard from that which you are least afraid of. Paul tells the believers here, and elsewhere, to whom he writes, what hazard they were in, even from these that pretend to preach the gospel, who were but ministers of the old covenant, who pressed, and knew nothing but to press the people to yield obedience and subjection to their old husband, the law ; pretending to the greatest holiness and strictness of life : and pressing nothing but Do, do, and live. Nay, but says Paul, I, and all believers, have another way of living to God, and his glory, than by living on, or by the law as a covenant ; *I through the*  
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*law am dead to the law, that I might live unto God.* O believer, arm yourself against all proxies that the law makes use of; study the nature, fulness, and freedom of the new covenant; and pray much for the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of Christ, and his gospel. I go on to

[3.] The *third* thing here proposed, which was to shew the *causes* of this legal temper. Why is the world so set upon the law, as a *covenant*, and so little upon Christ, as the *Lord their righteousness*? I sum up all the reasons into this one, which I shall draw out into some particulars: and it is *gross ignorance, proud ignorance*; *For they being ignorant of God's righteousness, and going about to establish their own righteousness, have not submitted themselves unto the righteousness of God,* Rom. x. 3. The world is ignorant of God, ignorant of the law, ignorant of the gospel, ignorant of Christ, and his righteousness.

1. Ignorance of *God* is one cause of this legal temper. People are ignorant of the perfections of God; more particularly, they are ignorant of the holiness of God: if men saw what an infinite holy God he is, and what an infinite hatred he bears towards the least sin, or violation of his law; if they knew that a proud thought were enough to damn a million of angels, and that a wandering thought is enough to damn a million of worlds, would they entertain a fancy of being justified and accepted upon the ground of any legal righteousness of their own, whether natural or gracious? Nay, they would not imagine to be thus accepted, if they did not think that God is such an one as themselves.—They are ignorant also of the justice of God, and the righteousness of that judge, who will by *no means clear the guilty*; and if it were not so, that they were ignorant of his justice, would any guilty sinner hope to be cleared, and acquitted any other way, than upon the account of a ransom of infinite value?—They are ignorant of the wisdom of God, in the glorious plan of redemption, and contrivance of salvation by the righteousness of another, even of the God-man Christ Jesus.—Ignorance of these, and the like attri-

butes and perfections of God, is the great cause of their being joined to the law, and alive to it.

2. Ignorance of the *law* is another cause of this legal temper and disposition: and here,

(1.) They are ignorant of the *precept* of the law in the extent, spirituality, holiness, and perfection thereof: the young man in the gospel thought himself perfect; why? he did not know the law. Paul thought himself blameless, while he was alive to the law; men think it a narrow rule, condemning only some gross enormities of life, and commanding only some outward materials of obedience; but they see not the *commandment to be exceeding broad*; hence they imagine, they can observe it perfectly well.

(2.) They are ignorant of the *penalty* of the law, the sanction of it: they do not believe, that there is a curse intailed upon every disobedience; *Cursed is every one that continueth not in all things that are written in the book of the law to do them*. Hence, they are foolishly fond of their own legal righteousness, not knowing the severity of the legal sanction.

(3.) They are ignorant of the *end* of the law, even of God's end and design in giving it. God gave the law to Israel with fire and thunder: For what end? even to be a *school-master to lead them to Christ*, Gal. iii. 24. *For Christ is the end of the law for righteousness, to every one that believeth*, Rom. x. 4. But behold so ignorant was Israel of the end of the law, that, like the legal spirit in our own day, they thought it was given for this end, that they might obey it as a condition of life, as it bore the image and representation of a covenant of works; so they turned it directly to a covenant of works, saying, *All that the Lord hath commanded, we will do*, Exod. xix. 8. If it had been possible, or practicable, for them to have performed what they ignorantly promised, there would have been no need of Christ, or his righteousness either: *We will do*, say they; there is *obedience*; yea, we will do ALL that the LORD JEHOVAH hath commanded us, there is *exactly and perpetually perfect obedience*: yea, *we will*  
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*do all*; we ourselves; there is *perfect personal obedience* resolved upon: as if they had in their possession, all the power and holiness that Adam had in innocence.—What says Joshua to them, upon such a proud, ignorant, and arrogant resolution as this? Indeed, he tells them, it was simply impossible for them; *Ye cannot serve the Lord, for he is a holy God*, Joshua xxiv. 19. He is a holy God, and you are a sinful people; it is impossible for you to do what you say. The law was given them, to let them see their utter insufficiency and inability; to let them see their sins, and desert because of sin; that, under the fear of divine wrath, they might be obliged to have recourse to the Saviour. But they being ignorant of this great end of the law, set up an obedience of their own.

3. Ignorance of the *gospel*, is another cause of this legal temper; and here ignorance discovers itself in manifold instances.

(1.) They are ignorant of the *promise* of the gospel; such as that, Isa. xlv. 24. *Surely shall one say, in the Lord have I righteousness and strength*. Here is a sum of the gospel promise; a promise of Christ, and of faith in him: *Surely shall one say*; here is a promise of faith, and faith working out from the heart to the mouth; for, *With the heart men believe unto righteousness, and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation*. *ONE shall say*; What! no more but ONE? what a pity is it, that only *one* should say so? Indeed it intimates, that very few will be brought off from their legal temper: *ONE shall say*, not every one; well, but what will he say? *In the Lord have I righteousness and strength*: Righteousness, for justification; strength for sanctification: righteousness, to make me happy; strength, to make me holy: righteousness, to give me a title to heaven; strength, to give me a meetness for heaven. I have all this, shall one say, by the appropriating act of faith; applying all to himself in particular, with assured confidence, according to the measure of faith: *I have righteousness and strength*: where hath he it? It is *in the LORD* I have it: I have it not in myself, nor in my own natural power; I have it not in my

own free-will; I have it not in my walk and conversation; I have it not in my zeal or profession; I have it not in my religious duties or performances; I have it not in my heart or life; nay, certainly I have it not there; but, *Surely in the LORD have I righteousness and strength*; in the LORD only: men are ignorant of this.

(2.) They are ignorant of the *method* of the gospel, in the application of grace promised, particularly in the command of believing, which belongs to the dispensation of the gospel; wherein the law, in its commands and threatenings both, is used in a subserviency, to advance the ends of the gospel. Though the law doth not teach us to believe in Christ, yet he being revealed, it obliges us to believe in him; though the law reveals not a Saviour, yet the gospel revealing him, the law obliges us to come to him.—But now this method of the gospel, and dispensation thereof, is not known in the world; hence come legal undertakings of it; men confounding the *command of believing*, with the *gospel to be believed*; the *duty of faith*, with the *object of faith*; and so turn the gospel to a new law, a new covenant of works; as if the act of believing were our righteousness for acceptance with God. Neither can they conceive the command of believing to be the *great command*, though God himself hath said, *This is his commandment, that ye believe in the name of his Son*: Nay, legalists cannot understand that; they think it is God's great command, that seeing they have sinned by breaking the law, they should repent by turning to it; seeing they have displeased God by their sins, they should please him by their repentance; seeing they have provoked him by their disobedience, they should pacify him with their obedience; seeing they have drawn down the curse by their transgressions, they should remove it by their reformation: They do not know that the great command is, *to believe on the Son of God*.

(3.) They are ignorant of the great *end* of the gospel, which is, to humble and abase the creature to the lowest, and to raise and exalt grace to the highest; that

that *No flesh should glory in God's presence, but that he that glorieth, should glory in the Lord: In the Lord shall all the seed of Israel be justified, and shall glory.* That is the great end and design of the gospel: but the base legal spirit is ignorant of that design.

(4.) They are ignorant of the *gospel-covenant*: the doctrinal and practical confounding of the two covenants of works and grace, is the great reason of this legal temper. And here people discover ignorance of the condition of the covenant; they are ignorant of the condition of the covenant of grace and works: the *condition* of the covenant of *works*, was *personal* obedience; the *MAN himself that does these things shall live in them*: and *perfect* obedience, was required; a perfection of parts, a perfection of degrees, a perfection of duration. The *condition* of the covenant of *grace*, is *Christ's perfect obedience received by faith*. There is much ignorance of this, at the root of all the legality that takes place in the world. They are ignorant of the *form* of the covenant; how by the covenant of works we get strength within ourselves; and by ourselves we could obey it; how by the covenant of grace our strength is without us, as well as our righteousness; *In the Lord have I strength*; and, *we are to be strong in the Lord, not in ourselves, but in the Lord*; and, *in the power of his might*; to be strong in *grace*, not that grace that is in ourselves; but the grace that is in *CHRIST JESUS*.

4. Ignorance of *Christ* and his *righteousness*, is a great cause of men's establishing a legal righteousness; *For they being ignorant of God's righteousness, and going about to establish their own righteousness, have not submitted themselves unto the righteousness of God, Rom. x. 3.*—God was about to cast off a whole church, to reject them, and unchurch them: Why? What is the reason? because they were such a proud pack, they would rather be damned with their own righteousness, than saved by Christ's righteousness, or obliged and beholden to him for it. They would not *submit* to it; Why? because they are *ignorant* of it; they do not see the glory of it, as it is the righteousness of God; they

they do not see the necessity of it, because their own righteousness was reckoned sufficient; they do not see the fulness of it, as answering all the demands and commands of the law; they do not see the value of it, as sufficient to procure the favour of God, and purchase grace and glory; they do not see the acceptableness of it, as being the only righteousness with which God is well-pleas'd, and that thereby the law is magnified, and made honourable: they are ignorant of all this, and therefore they go about to *establish a righteousness of their own*, and *will not submit* to this. Their ignorance was a proud ignorance; and so it is with all by nature: we are filled with proud ignorance, and ignorant pride; though our power be gone, our pride remains.

[4.] The *fourth* thing here propos'd, was, the *evil* and *danger* of a legal temper, and legal obedience: Why?

1. This legal way is very *unpleasant* work, it is a wearisome work; *What a weariness is it?* says the man. *He is wearied in the greatness of his way, and yet says he not, there is no hope*, Isaiah lvii. 10.—It is true, the law hath sometimes its influences of comfort to its votaries; and stony-ground hearers may *receive the word with joy*; and no doubt they may pray, and do other duties also with joy; but it is only a mood that soon evanishes, having no root in Christ. Can a dead man have pleasure in vital actions? can a heavy stone incline upwards? O but the legal soul is a miserable creature! The law drags him to duties, conscience presses him to work; saying, Fast, pray; pray, man; work for your life; repent, reform, as you would not be damned: But behold, he cannot, though they be good duties he is called to; and the legal covenant, the legal minister, the legal conscience of him cries, Make brick, make brick, make brick; but behold, he hath no straw, no straw, no straw; nothing to make it of. He hath no strength, no grace, no communication; and so he tugs, he works, he sweats; but it is a heartless and unpleasant work.

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2. Legal obedience is very unprofitable work, as well as unpleasant; *I will declare thy righteousness and thy work; for they shall not profit thee,* Isaiah lvii. 12. The self-righteous Pharisee may fast twice a-week, give alms of all that he hath; he may make long prayers, many prayers; he may both preach and pray frequently and fervently; yea, the poor legalist may work at his secret devotion and family devotion; he may wait on ordinances, and frequent communions, and run the whole round of duties; and when he hath done this thirty, forty, fifty years, all the profit is, he gets hell for his pains; *To what purpose is the multitude of your sacrifices?* Isaiah i. 2. All is unprofitable.

3. The legal obedience is very *carnal*, for it is a life wholly destitute of the Spirit; *This would I learn of you,* says Paul; if you would be doctors of the law, let me have a lesson from you, if you can give it; *Received ye the Spirit by the works of the law, or by the hearing of faith?* Gal. iii. 2. Was it by the works of the law? I suppose not; nay, the Spirit is not received in that way: it is in and by the gospel of Christ. The legalist is destitute of the Spirit; whatever affectitious holiness he may have, or real holiness he may pretend to, he wants a sanctifying work, sealing work; *Sensual, not having the Spirit.*

4. Legal obedience *crosses the most glorious design of heaven*, particularly God's design in giving Christ, and Christ's design in coming to the world.

(1.) It crosses *God's great design*; What is that? It is even the exalting of his free grace; What is the great design of all the great works of God, *viz.* election, redemption, regeneration, providence?—Why does he choose one, and reject others? Why does he choose a wicked Publican, and cast a righteous Pharisee to hell? Why does he redeem a poor ignorant, ill-natured man or woman from their miserable state, and let the rich and learned go to hell? Why does he regenerate an elect soul, after he hath been twenty, thirty years in the devil's service? and after they are regenerate, why does he in providence let them fall into straits, wants, sins, manifold temptations, troubles, affliction,

fiction, desertion, and heavy complaints on these accounts? Why? All is to exalt free grace in the issue. But now the legalist crosses this design of God; he would have self exalted, his works exalted, instead of Christ, and free grace. He puts another righteousness in the room of the righteousness of Christ, and so takes the *dung* of his own righteousness, as Paul calls it, and casts it upon the face of free, rich, and sovereign grace, to cover, and hide, and darken it.— O what a devilish design is this, in opposition to God's glorious design of making grace shine brightly!

(2.) It crosses *Christ's great design in coming to the world*: The grand intention of the Son of God, in coming from heaven, was, *To bring in an everlasting righteousness*, Dan. ix. 24. But behold, the legalist's design, in establishing his own righteousness, is, to make all Christ's labour to be lost labour; he endeavours to frustrate the very end of Christ's death, and makes it vain; *If righteousness come by the law, Christ is dead in vain*, Gal. ii. 21. Instead of Christ's everlasting righteousness, he sets up a righteousness that cannot last half a day, nor half an hour; nay, not a moment.

5. Legal obedience hath the evil of *blasphemy* in it. It reproaches the righteousness of Christ, as if it were not sufficient, as if his atonement were not perfect, as if his satisfaction were not full, as if his obedience were not perfect, unless it be patched up with the rags of the man's own righteousness. Is not Christ's righteousness perfect without their addition? O do not blaspheme the Son of God, and say in effect, his obedience was not a divine, perfect obedience; for thus you reproach his fullness and sufficiency.

6. Legal obedience issues in a *terrible disappointment*; the poor deluded man thinks, his prayers and duties, that he hath been performing for so many years, will make an excellent robe to cover him: I hope, says the man, I have something that will contribute to make me die in peace; I have something to make me stand in judgment, that others have not; for many a duty have I performed, many a prayer have I made, these twenty or thirty years; and many times have I prayed with  
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very much warmth of affection, and liveness of frame, and therefore I have a good hope, that God will be pleased, and all will be well with me. But, O what a fearful disappointment does the man meet with! Death comes; and if he die in the same legal dream, he goes down to the grave with a lie in his right-hand; *The hypocrite's hope is like the spider's web*; Why? What comes of it? The spider works it out of his own bowels: it is her house, it is her food, it is her fence; there she dwells, there she feeds, there she secures and shelters herself for a while; but at the close of the day, or the end of the week, the besom comes along, and sweeps her and her lodging, and all to the ground: Even so, the legalist, he works a web out of his own bowels, he wraps himself in this garment of his own spinning; here he dwells, here he works, here he feeds, here he shelters himself from all challenges, and apprehensions of danger: but behold, the besom of death and destruction comes, and sweeps him, and his refuge of lies down to the bottomless pit. If his eyes be open on a death-bed to see hell, to see the justice of God, to see the spirituality of the law, the imperfection of his duties, the emptiness of his performances, and the sandy foundation he hath been building his faith upon, then his conscience roars, his heart despairs; he hath no peace, no comfort; but finds himself miserably disappointed. If his eyes be not open; what then? why, he dies in a delusion, as he lived, sinks into the lake of fire; and in hell he opens his eyes, and finds himself eternally disappointed.—O see then, what ground there is to lament over this legal temper, which is indeed a damnable temper, where it hath a full reign.

Use *fourth* viz. Of *exhortation*, both to them that are *alive to the law*, and to them that are *dead to the law*, of whom the text especially speaks.

1<sup>st</sup>, To *unbelievers*, and all these that are *alive to the law*. O! for the Lord's sake, take no rest till you get out of that damnable state! O consider what you are doing, so long as you are not dead to the law: the best thing that you are doing, in that case, is, that you are

building your residence about the old rotten walls of the covenant of works. Perhaps you think you are a good protestant, you are a good Christian, you have a good heart, you perform good duties, you partake of good ordinances, and what evil should you fear?

1. I assure you, that you are under the *curse* of the law of works; *Cursed is every one that continueth not in all things that are written in the book of the law, to do them.* And while you are under the law, and seeking to establish a law-righteousness of your own, all the people of God are obliged to say, that God is in the right to curse you; they are obliged to say *Amen*, to all the curses of the Bible against you; *Cursed is he that confirmeth not all the words of this law; and all the people shall say, AMEN*, Deut. xxvii. 26. If you will take the old covenant of doing for life, and justification, then you must take it with a vengeance, unless you do perfectly, and do to purpose, which is impossible for you; *Cursed is every one that continueth not in all things that are written in the book of the law, to do them*: And all believers can say *AMEN* to it, in the words of Paul; *Let him that loves not our Lord Jesus Christ, be ANATHEMA MARANATHA*, [*i. e. accursed until the Lord come.*] 1 Cor. xvi. 22. While you are under the law, no blessing belongs to you, but all divine curses; if you will not get out of your legal righteousness, and get under the gospel covert of the blood of Jesus, nothing but terror belongs to you; and nothing but terrors and curses can I preach to you: for, *As many as are of the works of the law, are under the curse.*

2. I must tell you, as you are under the curse of the law, so you are under the *command* of the law; *Do, and Live.* Though by the gospel-call, you are not obliged indeed to seek righteousness in yourself, in order to life, but to seek it in Christ; yet by your unbelief, you keep yourself under the command of the law; *If thou wilt enter into life, keep the commandment*; keep it perfectly, or else vengeance shall overtake you. It is not your little endeavours that will satisfy the law; though you should read, fast, mourn, and shed tears of blood all your days, it will not avail, or be to any purpose, in satisf-

satisfying the law's demands : if you will pay any duty to the law, as a covenant, *you are a debtor to fulfil the whole law*, Gal. v. 3. The law, is a chain that is linked together, and if you take one link of it, the weight of the whole chain will be upon you ; and so, if you will do any thing in obedience to the law, that you may be thereby saved and justified, you are under bondage to the whole law ; and bound to do every thing perfectly, that you may be justified. O the miserable bondage that you are under ! You will never be able to satisfy the law ; and so you are *condemned already* ; yea, let me tell you more, you are a wicked ungodly creature : whatever you seem to be to others, or think you are yourself ; yet, being alive to the law, you are a stranger to the life of God ; for, till you be dead to the law, you shall never live unto God : though you look like an angel of light for holiness, yet, being alive to the law, you have no true holiness nor godliness. Ye that are still leaning to your works, then you will meet with a sad disappointment ; for, *By the deeds of the law no flesh living can be justified*.—But there are others, who seem to be upon another extreme ; they say, the law is now abrogated, and we are not to seek justification or salvation that way ; and therefore we are careless about the law, or about any duty of obedience.—Yea, but let me tell you your doom out of the law also ; you are a desperate sinner : because you cannot satisfy the curse of the law, therefore you run away from the commands of the law, and run away to the devil, instead of running to Christ.—But I will tell you, though the law cannot justify, or save you, yet it can condemn you : it hath power to condemn you, though it hath none to save you ; and it will condemn, and does condemn you, and all that are out of Christ ; and therefore, for every sin that you are guilty of, you must answer ; and every sin is enough to damn you, by virtue of the law. O then, may this be a mean to move you all that are under the law, to seek in to Christ, *Who is the end of the law for righteousness, to every one that believeth* ! Come,

poor, cursed, condemned, ungodly sinner, if you would live unto God here, and live with him hereafter, come out from under the heavy yoke of the law; Christ hath a good and perfect law-biding righteousness to give you, though you have nothing to bring to him, but sin, and guilt, and misery, and hell about you, yet come to him; and if you cannot come, O go to him, and tell him that you cannot come; and plead, that, by his omnipotent power, he may draw you; and if you do so in truth, it is one to a thousand, if he does not meet you half way. O man, you cannot be saved, to the credit of God's holiness, unless you join with Christ's righteousness, which answers also the threatening of the law, and satisfies the justice of God. In this way, mercy can take vent, to the credit and honour of all God's perfections. O man, woman, are you for this way of it? O then say, Farewel to the law of works for ever: here is a more noble and glorious way. O blessed be God for ever, if that be the bargain betwixt Christ's righteousness and your soul! O may the Lord draw you to it! But now,

2dly, To you that are *believers*, and have closed with Christ, and so are *dead to the law*: remember, you are not to live a lawless life for all that. My exhortation to you is, that, being *dead to the law*, you *live unto God*. Let me offer some *motives* and *directions*, and the rather that I have taken some pains to gather together, and lay before you many things relative to a *legal temper*, for guarding you against the Neonomian *extreme*, on the one hand; let men beware lest their carnal hearts abuse this doctrine of grace to Antinomian *licentiousness*, on the other hand. Sure I am, the gospel doctrine of itself hath no such tendency: though an ignorant world may suspect the doctrine of the gospel, the doctrine of Christ's righteousness, as if it were against a personal righteousness or holiness; I declare to you, in the name of JEHOVAH, that the contrary is true; and assure you, that you will never live according to the law, as a rule of holiness, till you be dead to the law, as a covenant and condition of life. *He that hath ears to hear, let him hear.*

If the light of the glorious gospel, even the light of the *glory of God, in the face of Jesus Christ*, did once *shine into your heart*, then, *beholding this glory of the Lord*, you would be *changed into the same image, from glory to glory, by the Spirit of the Lord*; yea, to believe the gospel savingly, is the way to fulfil perfectly. The true believer may be said to fulfil the law, both as it is a covenant, and as it is a rule: As it is a *covenant*, he fulfils it perfectly and regally in his Head and Surety, in whom he hath perfect, everlasting righteousness: And as it is a *rule*, he fulfils it perfectly also, with a perfection of parts here, and a perfection of degrees hereafter: and in both these respects may that word be explained, Rom. i. 3, 4. where the *righteousness of the law* is said to be *fulfilled in believers*, whose character is, that they *walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit*. Now, I would press you to this spiritual walk, this holy life, which is a living unto God; for, tho' your holiness be not necessary for your justification, that is the damnable doctrine of Popery; though, I say, it be not necessary for your justification, because you are dead to the law in point of justification; yet it is necessary, because you are *dead to the law*, for this very end, that you may *live unto God* in point of *sanctification*, and that you may be holy.

More particularly for *motives*, consider the *necessity of holiness*, in these following particulars.

1. It is necessary in respect of *God*; and here (to use the method of a great divine on this head) consider how the will of God, the love of God, the glory of God, obliges you in particular, believer, to live unto God.

(1.) The sovereign *will* of God obliges you to holiness; *This is the will of God, even your sanctification*, 1 Thess. iv. 3. It is the will of God the *Father*, he hath ordained it; *We are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God before had ordained that we should walk therein.*—It is the will of God the *Son*; *I have ordained you that you should bring forth fruit, and that it should remain*, John xv. 16.—

It is the will of God the *Holy Ghost*, whom we grieve by our sins, if we do not study holiness.

(2.) The *love* of God obliges you to holiness; yea, this is the end of the electing love of the Father, the purchasing love of the Son, and the operating love of the Holy Ghost. It is the peculiar end of the *electing* love of the Father, who hath *chosen us that we should be holy, and unblameable before him in love*, Eph. i. 4. He hath *chosen us to salvation, through sanctification of the Spirit*.—It is the peculiar end of the *purchasing* love of the Son, *Who gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify to himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works*, Titus ii. 14. *And who loved his church, and gave himself for it, that he might sanctify and cleanse it, by the washing of water, and present it to himself a glorious church, not having spot, nor wrinkle, nor any such thing, but that it should be holy, and without blemish*, Eph. v. 25, 26, 27.—It is also the peculiar end of the *operating* love of the Holy Ghost; his whole work in us, and for us, consisting in preparing us for, and enabling us to the duties of holiness, and bringing forth the fruit thereof in us.—Believer, if you have any regard to the sovereignty of God, Father, Son, and Holy Ghost; any regard to the love of God, Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, it obliges you to holiness of heart and life.

(3.) The *glory* of God obliges you to holiness, and makes it necessary. Would you glorify the *Father*? then *let your light so shine before men, that they seeing your good works, may glorify God. Herein is my Father glorified, that ye bear much fruit*.—Would you glorify the *Son*? It is *the will of God, that all men honour the Son, even as they honour the Father*. And how is this done? even by believing in him, and obeying him; *Ye are friends, ye evidence yourselves to be so, if ye do whatsoever I command you*.—Would you glorify the *Holy Ghost*? It is by studying holiness; for we are *his temple*; and *holiness becomes his house and temple for ever*; and he is dishonoured when his temple is defiled.—Surely, believer, when I speak to you, I cannot be supposed to speak to one, that neither regards the

the sovereign will, love, nor glory of God, Father, Son, and Holy Ghost; though your holiness should all be lost, and never regarded, which is impossible; yet here is reason enough for it.

2. Holiness is necessary in respect of *yourselves*; you are necessarily obliged to holiness; your own honour and peace is concerned here: It is *gainful*; *Godliness is great gain, having the promise of this life, and that which is to come.* It is *pleasant*; for, *Wisdom's ways are pleasantness, and all her paths are peace.* There is no peace, saith my God, to the wicked; but the fruit of righteousness is peace, and the effect of righteousness, quietness and assurance for ever. Yea, it is honourable, and the greatest honour you can be advanced unto; to be holy, is to be like unto God.

3. Holiness is necessary in respect of *others*; you are obliged to holiness; it may tend to the conviction and conversion of others. On the one hand, it may tend to their *conviction*, and to stop their mouths, who are enemies of God, and that both here and hereafter. (1.) It may stop their mouths here in a present world, as you see, 1 Pet. ii. 15. *This is the will of God, that with well-doing, you may put to silence the ignorance of foolish men.* Ignorant fools may call you hypocrites; they may call you Antinomians, and enemies to the law: now, by *well-doing*, you give them an unanswerable document, that though you be *dead to the law*, as a covenant, yet you put honour upon the law, as a *rule of holiness*: and so make them ashamed of their base calumny, according to that, 2 Pet. iii. 16. *Having a good conscience, that whereas they speak evil of you, as of evil-doers, they may be ashamed that falsely accuse your good conversation in Christ.* And, (2.) Holiness in you, believer, may tend to stop the mouths of God's enemies hereafter, in the day of judgment: it is said, *The saints shall judge the world*, not only as they will be assessors with the Son of God, and applaud him in all his judicial proceedings; but in regard their holiness and good works will tend to the confusion, and conviction of the wicked. And indeed the good works of the saints will meet one day, with a changed countenance, that they shall  
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scarce know them : they see them now to be all black, defiled, and deformed ; but they will then be brought forth beautiful and glorious, to the shame of the wicked, Matth. xxv. 34,—40.—On the other hand, your holiness may tend to the *conversion* of others ; *Having your conversation honest among the Gentiles, that whereas they speak against you as evil-doers, they may, by your good works which they shall behold, glorify God in the day of visitation,* 1 Pet. ii. 12. The holiness of professors hath sometimes tended to the conversion of the profane, who, when the day of their gracious visitation hath come, have glorified God on that account, 1 Pet. iii. 1, 2. ; and therefore says Paul ; *This is a faithful saying, and these things I will, that thou affirm constantly, that they which have believed in God, be careful to maintain good works : for these things are good, and profitable unto men,* Tit. iii. 18.

4. Holiness is necessary in respect of your *state* : you stand obliged to holiness. Are you in a *justified* state, accepted into friendship with a holy God, *Who is of purer eyes than to behold iniquity* ? Should you not evidence your justification by your sanctification ? Is it not necessary that you should be holy, if you dwell in the presence, walk in the sight, and ly in the bosom of such a holy God ? Are you in a sanctified state ? Wherefore was you regenerate ? Wherefore got you a new heart, and a new nature, and a holy principle of grace, but that you should be holy ?—Are you in an *adopted* state ? Why so ? but that you should live like the children of God, and *be followers of God, as dear children* ? O ! was you not justified, adopted, and sanctified for this end, that you might live unto God ? If we be believers, what a shame is it for us, to live unsuitably to our state, as many times we do ? Is that all the thanks we give to God for his favours, that we should trample his statutes under our feet, dishonour his name, break his laws, and grieve his Spirit ? It does not become you ; it is not like you, believer : he hath *loved you with an everlasting love, and drawn you with loving-kindness* :—will you act like a devil in enmity against him, because he hath acted like a God of love towards you ? O fy for shame,

shame, believer ! *Tell it not in Gath, publish it not in the streets of Askelon ; lest the daughters of the Philistines rejoice, lest the daughters of the uncircumcised triumph,* 2 Sam. i. 20. Have we not the *hope of glory* ? and shall we not, having this hope, *purify ourselves even as he is pure* ?—Are we *partakers of the precious promises* ? Then *Having these promises, dearly beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, and perfect holiness in the fear of the Lord.*—Are we *heirs of glory* ? and shall we not seek to have our right and title unto glory cleared ? Rev. xxii. 14. *Blessed are they that do his commandments that they may have right to the tree of life, and may enter in through the gates to the city ;* that is, either that your right may be made evident, according to that word, *Ye are my friends, if ye do whatsoever I command you ;* that is, you thus evidence yourselves to be my friends : or, concerning this right, know that there is a right of *merit*, and a right of *meetness*, both necessary : a right of *merit*, believer, you have not in yourself, but in Christ ; and that is established in justification through the righteousness of Christ : a right of *meetness* you must have in yourself from Christ, and that is in sanctification and holiness.—What shall I say, Are you not *dead to the law*, that you may *live unto God* ? Are you not to testify your gratitude towards him, that hath provided another law-righteousness than your own ? Are you not to difference yourself from the world, that are walking in the broad way to hell and damnation, and under the curse of the law, and the wrath of God ?—Are you not *delivered from the wrath to come*, and of all men in the world under the greatest obligations to be holy ? Should you not study to please that God that hath pitied you ? Hath he washed you in his blood ? and ought you not, through his grace, to study, to let it be known to the world, that his blood hath a virtue to sanctify you ?—Yea, hath he not promised, *Sin shall not have dominion over you, because ye are not under the law, but under grace ;* should ye not study, through his grace, to let it be seen, that his promise is verified in you ?

5. Holiness is necessary in respect of the *danger* you are in, if ye do not study to holiness. If you be a child of God, you are indeed freed from the curse of the covenant of works, that penalty can never reach you; but, is it nothing to you, that your heavenly Father should chastise you, hide his face from you, deny an answer to your prayers, hide your evidences of heaven from you, give you up to the tyranny of your lusts, and then take vengeance on your inventions.

6. Holiness is necessary in respect of the *advantage* herein. You are obliged to holiness; why? in this way you may come to live joyfully, and die comfortably: in this way your integrity may be supported, as it was with Job; in this way you may come to have sweet communion with God, according to Christ's promise, John xiv. 21. *He that hath my commandments, and keepeth them, he it is that loves me;—and I will love him, and will manifest myself to him.* In this way you shall be fitted for serving him in your generation, 2 Tim. ii. 19. In this way you will have an evidence of your justification, 1 John iii. 9. In this way you shall bring down the blessing of God on every work of your hand, all that ye do shall prosper, Psal. i. 4. Yea, in this way you shall become a public-good, a common good, a blessing, and a benefit to all about you, both in communicating good to them with whom you converse, and in diverting judgments from these that are about you, as ten righteous men would have preserved Sodom: O what a Sodom is the present generation! And as it is like Sodom and Gomorrah, and perhaps a thousand times worse, in respect of sins against law and gospel-light, which Sodom never had; so, if the Lord do not leave us a remnant, we shall be like Sodom and Gomorrah, in respect of judgments. —All these things, and a thousand more that might be adduced, should press you mightily to the study of holiness, and living unto God: you are *dead to the law*, that you may *live unto God*. But next,

For *direction*. Now, here the question may be propounded, *O how shall I live unto God?* I shall offer you no directions but one, which my text leads me to,  
and

and it is this. If you would *live unto God*, O study to be more and more *dead to the law*. The more you are dead to the law as a covenant, the more will you live according to the law as a rule: What! do you not find a legal spirit that remains with you, and weakens your hands in duties of holiness? When you are wrestling at duties in your own natural strength, it is a legal old covenant way; and do you not find it a hard, heavy, wearisome task? I suppose there is little holiness there: but when you are leaning on the strength of Christ, do you not find your soul enlarged and quickened in duty? When you perform duty from a principle of slavish fear, that is a legal way; and do you not find your hearts weakened, and little heart to the work?—But on the contrary, when the love of Christ constrains you, is it not then that you run with pleasure in the ways of his commandments? Yea, sin hath dominion over you, when you are, and in so far as you are under the law; for the *motions of sin* are by the law: the law irritates corruption, and cannot subdue it; for it is *the grace of God*, revealed in the gospel, that effectually *teaches to deny ungodliness and worldly lusts*. To be *dead to the law*, is to be *married to Christ*; it is to be brought off from the first Adam, and united to the second Adam. And, believer, as you are in Christ, so you are to abide in him, if you would be fruitful, and live unto God; *As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, except it abide in the vine; no more can ye, except ye abide in me*, John xv. 4. Now, to *abide in him*, is just to be *strong in the grace that is in him*, and to continue to be strong in him by faith; and this is necessary in order to fruitfulness: as, though an imp be grafted into the root, if it be not fastened and take firm rooting, it does not come to fruitfulness; so the sinner is made a Christian, by being cut off from the law, and ingrafted into Christ; but he is not a fruitful Christian, if he do not take a strong grip of Christ, and draw virtue from him: therefore, *Abide in me, and I in you*, says Christ; and, O but it is well said! for, if he do not abide in us, we cannot abide in him. We will never abide in him by the grace of

faith, unless he abide in us by the Spirit of faith. If we provoke God to take away his Spirit, our faith fades, fails, and decays; and then we depart from the Lord by an evil heart of unbelief.—Here is the way then to live unto God, and to bring forth fruit to him, even to die more and more to the first husband, the law, and to live by faith upon your blessed Husband, Christ.

QUEST. *But, by what outward means should we thus live?* May we not neglect duties, since we are dead to the law? Nay, God forbid. It was the devil's temptation to Christ, to cast himself headlong from the temple, because God had promised to preserve him in all his ways; so, believer, God hath promised to preserve you; he hath promised that *sin shall not have dominion over you, and that you shall never perish*; and is the devil tempting you therefore to throw yourself down headlong from the temple, and from temple-means and ordinances, public and private? O tell that abominable devil, as Christ did, *It is written, Thou shalt not tempt the Lord thy God*. If you neglect means, you tempt the Lord your God, who hath commanded you to use means, and made this the method of the communication of grace and strength, to wit, in the use of such means, as faith, prayer, reading, hearing, meditation, watchfulness: therefore, O be diligent in the use of these means; only do not confide in the means, by putting them in Christ's room: give means their own room, and do not expect, without the grace of the new covenant, that means will do the business. Grace is the spring from which the living water does flow, and means are the channel and pipes through which the water is conveyed; and if the fountain do not send our streams, all the conduits and pipes in the world can never convey it unto us. Therefore, in the use of means, be still looking to the Lord: look to him, both for grace to use the means, and for grace to bless the means. If you lay any stress upon the means, they become unprofitable. In the use of these means, O cry, cry mightily to the Lord, that he would kill your self-confidence: cry for the Spirit of life, to quicken

quicken you, that you may live unto God ; for, till the Spirit of life enter into the dry bones, there will be no stirring, no motion, no living to God : cry for the Spirit of faith, so as you may say with Paul in the context, *I live, yet not I, but Christ liveth in me ; and the life I live, is by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me.* O cry for faith, and the assurance of faith : no doubt, one may have faith, and yet want that assurance, which we commonly call so ; but whether there be some kind of assurance or persuasion in the nature of faith, is a question that I do not here enter upon : only, this I am sure of, from the word of God, that doubting is no part of faith ; for faith and doubting are as opposite as light and darkness. Some believers indeed have many doubts, many doubts : why ? because they have little faith, little faith, little faith : *O thou of little faith, wherefore didst thou doubt ?* And I find the believer who *walks in darkness, and hath no light*, he is directed to faith, as the antidote against his darkness and doubting ; *Let him trust in the name of the Lord, and stay himself upon his God.* Cry, I say, for the Spirit of faith ; and *faith will work by love* : cry for a gospel-spirit ; for I testify in the Lord's name, that gospel-holiness will never flourish among us, or in the generation, till we be more free of a legal spirit : and that we will not *live unto God*, unless we be *dead to the law*.

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

The BEST BOND; or, the SUREST  
E N G A G E M E N T.

J E R E M I A H XXX. 21.

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

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

The Lord, by the prophet Jeremiah, had been comforting his church, by several excellent promises relating

\* This was an action sermon preached immediately before the administration of the sacrament of the Lord's supper, at Dunfermline, July 19th, 1724. To which is annexed, a Discourse on the same subject, delivered after the solemn work was ended. This sermon hath undergone five editions.

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

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

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

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

In the words you may notice these four things.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

- I. Shew what a *wonderful person* this is, that engaged his heart to approach unto God; as seems to be pointed out in this question, *Who is this?*
- II. The *nature* of the *work* that he engages himself in, while it is an engagement to approach unto God.
- III. The *singularity* of the *fact*, included in the manner of the expression, *Who is this that engaged his heart to approach unto God?*
- IV. The *reasons* of the doctrine; or, why Christ came under this engagement: together with the reasons of our faith concerning it; or, why it is, that JEHOVAH's testimony is added in these words, *saith the Lord.*
- V. Draw some *inferences* by way of *application* of the doctrine, as the Lord shall please to assist.

Now,

Now, before I proceed to the method here laid down, I would offer you some scriptural proofs of the doctrine. That Christ willingly engaged himself herein, is evident,

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

4. *Who is this? He is one that stood in no need of us, being infinitely happy in himself, and had lost nothing, though all mankind had perished for ever; and yet, before we were not happy, he would expose himself to the greatest misery, resolving that he would not be happy without us. He would rather come and endure the contradiction of sinners against himself, reproach, blasphemy, and all manner of indignities: though he was rich, yet for our sake he became poor, and though he was exalted*

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

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

6. *Who is this?* He is one whose name is called WONDERFUL, Isa. ix. 6. But, who can tell the wonders of his person, the wonders of his perfections, the wonders of his offices, relations, appearances, birth, life, death, resurrection, ascension, and intercession? the wonders of his righteousness, the wonders of his purchase, the wonders of his love, in its height and depth, length and breadth; in its eternity, efficacy, and constancy? He is one whose name is WONDERFUL, whose followers, that bear his name, are for signs and wonders, Isa. viii. 18. *Behold I and the children which thou*

*thou hast given me, are for signs and wonders.* Zech iii. 8. *Thou and thy fellows, that sit before thee, are men wondered at.* And indeed the more of Christ that they have about them, the more they do become a world's wonder, as Christ himself was. What shall I say! Time would fail to speak of these things, and to mention his wonderful acts, his wonderful counsels, his wonderful way upon the earth, and in the hearts of his people; his wonderful works towards the children of men, both in judgment and mercy; and his wonderful conduct towards his own children. Let it suffice that this is he, whose name is, and shall be called, W O N D E R F U L.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

1. He engaged to put himself in the *form of a servant*, by taking on our nature, and taking our place in law, that so the law might reach him in the room of the guilty sinner; otherways the law-curse due to us could never have reached him. Now, to this engagement belong several things, which I shall shortly deliver in so many spiritual expressions.—He engaged *to be made of a woman, made under the law, to redeem them that were under the law*.—He engaged, even he *who knew no sin, to be made sin for us, that we might be made the righteousness of God in him*. And thus,

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

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

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

(1.) He engaged for our debt, that it should be paid every farthing, to the uttermost that the infinite holiness of God could command in the precept of the law,

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

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

(3.) He also engages for our safety, saying to his Father, *I give them eternal life, and they shall never perish; neither shall any pluck them out of my hand,* John x. 28. He engages to the Father, *That of all that he hath given him, he shall lose nothing, but shall raise it up at the last day; and that they shall all be with him where he is, to behold his glory.* And hence issue all the promises wherein also he engages to us for God, such as, *that he will save us from falling, and present us faultless before the presence of his glory with exceeding joy; and that though we may be sometimes carried captive of our enemies by constraint, yet that we shall overcome by the blood of the Lamb, and sit with him on his throne, even as he overcame, and is set down with his Father on his throne:* And that no cross shall come, but what shall be for our advantage in the end, whatever for the present it seem to be to our sense; but that

*all things shall work together for our good who love him, and are the called according to his purpose.*

This leads me to a question, Why, say you *who may expect a share of this engagement of Christ? Does he engage in behalf of us all!* I answer, in such a manner as concerns all that hear me, that he engaged in behalf of all that were given him of the Father; and that none of all that hear this gospel, may look upon themselves as shut out, he expresses it thus, John xi. 37. *All that the Father hath given me, shall come to me; and him that cometh to me, I will in no wise cast out:* And consequently he engages in behalf of all that shall not exclude themselves from the benefit of this glorious engagement, by their final unbelief, in rejecting this Christ, and refusing to be saved on these terms, which Christ engaged to fulfil. And so the door is open to you all, to put in for a full share of all that Christ hath engaged to do; especially if you think that your own personal bonds and engagements, vows, promises, and covenants, are not so good and sufficient as Christ's personal engagement in your room: think you so, man, woman? O then, here is a good bargain for you; you that have no money to pay your debt; no grace to perform your duty; no strength to secure your safety; O here is a Christ engaging to God for your debt, your duty, and your safety! O let your heart say with application, AMEN, it is a good bargain for me; and if so, God hath before-hand said AMEN, *so let it be.* In a word, the sum of Christ's engagement, that he came under in his approach to God, was, to fulfil God's law, to vindicate his holiness, to satisfy his justice, to bear his wrath in our room, and to be *made sin for us*, and so to be made a *curse for us*, 2 Cor. v. 21. Gal. iii. 13. He engaged to be made a sacrifice, a ransom, a propitiation for us, and to be all that the glory of God's perfections in the matter of our salvation required.—Thus he engaged himself to approach to God.

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

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

2. It was a *bold* approach, by God's own assistance; as well as *near*, by his allowance. This is evident also in the text, *I will cause him to draw near; and Who is he that engaged his heart to approach unto me? saith the Lord.* It was a bold and courageous approach indeed; but it was by his Father's help and assistance; Isa. l. 7. *The Lord God will help me, therefore shall I not be confounded; yea, therefore have I set my face like a flint.* It was such a bold adventure, as none could have made but himself. And yet,

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

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

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

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

2. He engaged to approach unto God as a *commanding* God, commanding perfect obedience, according to the tenor of the covenant of works; commanding perfect obedience in man's own person as the condition of life; and now, seeing, in the covenant of grace, a change of persons is allowed, but no change of the terms or conditions, but that our holy God will still be a commanding God, Christ accepts of the terms, and engages to fulfil the condition of life, be the command what will: *Lo, I come, to do thy will*. Father, what is thy command? I come to thee as a commanding God, a Law-giver, to obey thy law; yea, *Thy law is within my heart*; or, as it is in the Hebrew, it is IN THE MIDST OF MY BOWELS. None, that had any blemish, was to approach or come near unto God, Levit. xxi. 21. If there had been any blemish in the person or righteousness of Christ, he could not have approached to an infinitely holy and commanding God; and his coming to God under this consideration, is just his coming under the law, or under the command, in our room.

3. He engaged to approach unto God as a *threatening* God, threatening death and wrath to the transgressors of his command, and saying, as Lev. x. 3. *I will be sanctified by all that approach, or come nigh unto me*; I will

I will either be sanctified by them, or sanctified upon them: and thus he had God do deal with, not only as a Commander and Law-giver, requiring obedience; but as a Judge requiring satisfaction when the law is broken. He approaches to God, not only as a God of infinite holiness, whose command must be obeyed; but as a God of infinite justice, whose threatening must be execute: and therefore, he coming to God in the room of these that had broken the command, and incurred the threatening, it must follow that.

4. He engaged to approach to God as an *angry* God, an *offended* Deity, and an *Avenger of blood*: *The Lord laid on him the iniquity of us all*; and under this load of sin and guilt he approaches to the God, that was to take vengeance upon sin in his own person, and all the vengeance that sin deserved: He engaged to approach to God as a displeased and incensed God, that he might please him by his obedience, and pacify him by his satisfaction. He engaged to approach to that God, who is a *consuming fire* to sinners; and, taking their sins along with him, he goes in to the very midst of that devouring fire, which would have devoured and destroyed the sinner himself eternally, that he might quench the flame of that fire with his blood; though he was burnt to death in the cause, that we might not burn for ever in hell.—What is hell, but the fire of God's wrath? It is just God himself, as a consuming fire, that is the hell of hell. It was a lamentable mean of a man upon his death-bed once, "We have some in this life that will go to a quire for us, some that will say mass for us, some that will plow for us, and some that will pray for us; but, O where is there one that will go to hell for us!" But behold, here is one that engaged his heart to approach to God, as a consuming fire, and so to go hell, and quench the fire of it for us; yea, and to drink off the cup of God's red-hot boiling vengeance to the bottom. For he engaged to approach to God as a God of terrible Majesty, being content that infinite justice should act upon him a tragedy of

blood and wounds, that our salvation might be obtained without any detriment to divine justice, and to the highest glory of all the other divine perfections.—When Christ approached to God as an *absolute* God, he came near, as it were, to the seat of his Majesty, to present himself in our room; when he approached to God as a *commanding* God, he came near, as it were, to the throne of his holiness, and there he was an obedient subject in our room; when he approached to God as a *threatening* God, then he came near, as it were, to his bench of judgment, and there he was a condemned pannel at the bar in our room; and when he approached to God as an *angry* and *offended* God, then he came near, as it were, to the tribunal of justice, the fiery tribunal of his indignation, and there the sentence was execute upon him, while he gave himself to incensed justice in our room.—Now, Christ having thus approached to God, according to his engagement, the God to whom he approached is so well-pleased with this approach of his, that now, by an act past at the same tribunal of justice, where he was solemnly condemned to death in our room and stead, he is as solemnly justified and absolved in our room; therefore he is said to be *justified by the Spirit*, 1 Tim. iii. 16.; and Christ himself says, *He is near that justifies me*, Isaiah l. 8. And therefore *the Lord is well-pleased for his righteousness sake*: and when the Spirit of Christ *convincés of righteousness*, he will demonstrate this from that argument, that *Christ hath gone to his Father*, John xvi. 10.—And now the approach that he makes to God, is to a God whom he hath pleased and pacified in our behalf, whose Majesty he hath allayed, whose command he hath fulfilled, whose threatening he hath sustained, and whose wrath he hath endured, and for whose loving-kindness he hath made a vent; and accordingly it is vented by an audible voice from heaven, saying, *This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well-pleased*. Whatever approach now it is that Christ makes unto God, as an Advocate at the Father's right-hand, it is in the virtue and value of that engaged approach that I have mentioned; and

so it is now to a God whom he hath pleased and pacified: and whatever approach we make to God in him, it is to a God reconciled in him, Rom. v. 10. — Thus you see under what considerations we are to view the God to whom Christ did engage to approach, and, *Who is this that engaged his heart to approach unto me? saith the Lord.*

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

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

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

not away; that agreement and concord betwixt heaven and earth, betwixt man and man, which he took not away.

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

4. He engaged to approach to God in the station of a *mean Servant*; for, *He made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant*; yet, a *faithful Servant, faithful in all his house*; a *Servant according to God's heart*; and as *righteous as God would have him to be*; *By his knowledge shall my righteous Servant justify many.* A *Servant whom God glories in*; *Behold my Servant, whom I uphold; mine Elect, in whom my soul delighted.* I might here show you how he engaged to approach to God in the station of a *Prophet, Priest, and King*; a *Witness, Leader, and Commander*, Isaiah lv. 4. But what I have said, is sufficient to give us some view of the nature of the work he engaged himself to, in approaching to God. Therefore I come,

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

1<sup>st</sup>, Consider the *matter* of this engagement, and we will see the *singularity* of it, especially if we notice the

*myster'es*

*mysteries* that ly in the bosom of this engagement ; particularly these six.

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

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

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

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

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

6. The *sixth* mystery to be seen in this engagement, is, that here we may observe *justice raging against the innocent*, and *absolving the guilty*, and yet without any iniquity or injustice; a God of love and a compassionate Father forgetting, as it were, his bowels towards his only Son, and taking pleasure in his death; *For it pleased the Lord to bruise him*: and yet receiving these into his arms and bosom, who had violated his law, and contemned his authority, and grieved his Spirit.—And by this means: here we see the *righteousness of the law*, fulfilled in these that had *broken the law*, and never obeyed one of its precepts.—Here we may see the poor *guilty sinner*, that stands condemned by the law, condemned by justice, condemned by conscience, yet put in case to challenge the whole world to *lay any thing to his charge*, Rom. viii. 33.—By this mean also we see the debt paid and yet pardoned, the guilt of the sinner punished and yet forgiven.—In a word, there was this singular in it, that he engaged to bring the greatest good out of the greatest evil. Sin is the greatest of all evils, and that whereby, of any thing in all the world, God is most dishonoured; and yet there is nothing by  
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which God brings greater glory to himself, than by the fall of man : upon these ruins *mercy shall be built up for ever*, says God ; and mercy magnified to the highest, in a way wherein justice is satisfied to the uttermost ; sin being condemned by a sacrifice ; life bought by a death ; and the gates of heaven opened by a cross. The mysteries contained in this engagement shew it to be singular.—And thus the matter of the engagement discovers the singularity of the fact.

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

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

2. He engaged *fully* to do all, to suffer all, to purchase all, to apply all, and to be All in all ; he engaged not only to do, but to *suffer*, 1 Pet. iii. 18. *Christ hath once suffered for sin, the just for the unjust, that he might bring us to God* : not only to suffer, but to die, and to die for enemies, rebels, and traitors, such as were given him of the Father ; and not only to die, but to continue for a time under the power of death ; tho' he was life itself, and could, in the first instance of time, have risen up from the grave that he was laid into.

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

4. He engaged *firmly*, and that both in point of constancy and courage. In point of *courage* ; he engaged in the work couragiously, though he had justice, and wrath, and hell, and heaven, and all on his top ; yea, and poor man also, for whom he engaged ; yet, how couragiously did he go through with his work ! so firmly, as not to be moved with discouragements. He went and set his face up to Jerusalem, where he was to be crucified ; and you see wherewith he encouraged himself, Psal. xvi. 8. compared with Acts ii. 25. *Because the Lord is at my right-hand, I shall not be moved : God's hand was upon the Man of his right-hand, upon the Son of man whom he made strong for himself : and therefore the right-hand of the Lord did valiantly : the right-hand of the Lord was exalted ; the right-hand of the Lord did valiantly.*—As he engaged firmly in point of courage, so also in point of *constancy* : he never took his word again, but stood to the bargain : neither fear of the wrath of his Father, nor sense of the unworthiness of the sinner, nor yet the frequent falls and relapses of his people, could make him alter : he foresaw all their relapses into sin, and into the same sins, yet could it not move him to break the bargain ; therefore, *Return ye backsliding children, I will heal your backslidings*, Jer. iii. 22. ; yea, *I will heal your backsliding, and love you freely*, Hosea xiv. 4. Your inconstancy, might he say, shall not make me inconstant too : he hates putting away, and continues in his love.

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

6. He engaged *heartily*; he engaged his *heart* to approach unto God. This being the main particular, with respect to the *manner* of the fact, or that branch of the *singularity* of it, expressly mentioned in the text; therefore let us especially take notice of this, *He engaged his heart to approach.*—*He engaged his heart*; that is, not only did he engage for his *soul*, as some understand it, that his *soul should be made an offering for sin*; but also, *he engaged his heart*, that is, he engaged *willingly*; and so it was with a thousand good-wills: Lo I come, Father; thy will is my will.—*He engaged his heart*; that is, he engaged *cordially, cheerfully, and affectionately*; *I delight to do thy will, O my God!* We never read that Christ had a sad heart to quit, for a while, that joy and pleasure that he had in heaven: Why, what was the matter? You see it, Prov. viii. 31.; he had so much pleasure and satisfaction in the work he was engaged in, that it is said, *His delights were with the sons of men, rejoicing in the habitable parts of the earth*, even the places where his sick patients lay. It was not for any pleasure that he took in *habitable places*; nay, it was not *places*, but *persons* in such and such a place: some of my sick patients ly in this corner of the world, and some of them in that corner; some of them ly among the isles, and uttermost parts of the earth; some of them ly in yonder isle of Britain, some of them in Scotland; and, may not I say, some of them ly in Fife, and some of them in Dunfermline? He rejoiced in the habitable places of the earth, where he had patients to heal; *His delights were with the sons of men*: For his heart was engaged in his work, he heartily consented to it from all eternity. And though eternity cannot be divided into parts, yet, to speak after the manner of our conception, he spent the rest of that eternity in rejoicing in the thoughts of it.

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

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

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

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

here? *Get thee behind me, Satan.* His heart was engaged to the work.

(4.) It appears from his *longing to pay the debt* which he had engaged to pay: *I have a baptism to be baptized with, and how am I straitened until it be finished?* He longed to be plunged over head and ears, as it were, in the ocean of divine wrath: and when it came near to the time of his death, it is noted, Luke ix. 18. *He went before ascending up to Jerusalem;* as a child, that is going with his friends to a place where he desires to be, runs out before, as being fond to be forward; so Christ went before, and all the way talked of it to them, as we use to talk of what we pant after: Yea, when it came near to his suffering, he cannot forbear telling his disciples, that *with desire he desired to eat that pas-sover*, wherein he saw, as in a glass, how he was to suffer. And when Judas went forth to betray him, he said, *What thou doest, do quickly*, John xiii. 37.; and when he was gone, he rejoiced, and said, *Now is the Son of man glorified, and God is glorified in him:* He reckoned the work done, because the instrument that set all a-work was gone out. And, at the end of the 14th chapter of John, he brake off, as it were, in the midst of the sermon, and says, *Arise, let us go hence.* Of all works, preaching was most pleasant to him; but behold he breaks off, and goes out, that he might be taken and crucified, that the occasion might not slip. And then he does not stay till Judas found him out; No, he goes forth to the place where Judas and his band were, and offered himself a willing sacrifice. When they said, *We seek Jesus of Nazareth:* he answers, *I am he*, John xviii. 4, 5.: and when Peter would have rescued him, he bade him put up his sword, saying, *The cup which my Father hath given me to drink, shall I not drink it?* Yea, when he was beaten and buffeted, how did he *give his back to the smiters, and his cheeks to them that plucked off the hair?* He was led as a lamb to the slaughter: and as a sheep before her shearers is dumb, so he opened not his mouth. Yea, when hanging on a cross, he had enough to provoke so great

a spirit to have rescued himself, when they cried, *Come down, and we will believe thee: If thou canst save thyself, we will believe that thou canst save others: Nay, say they, he saved others, but himself he cannot save.* He might, like a Sampson, have broken down the pillars of heaven and earth about their ears; but he bears all patiently. And then, how his heart was engaged, appears in the very last act; *He bowed his head, and cried out with a joyful heart, It is finished: the work which my Father gave me to do, is finished; the work which I engaged my heart unto, is finished: And so he gave up the ghost, committing his spirit into his Father's hand as a pledge and token that the engagement was fulfilled.*—And now, this work being accomplished, shall we not think that his heart is as much engaged to the work of redemption by *power*, as it was to the work of redemption by *price*? Yea, *He hath entered into heaven, now to appear in the presence of God for us, Heb. ix. 24. If, when we were yet enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son; how much more, being reconciled, shall we be saved by his life? Rom. v. 10. He that was dead is alive, and lives for evermore; and he ever lives to make intercession for us.* He lives to apply, by the power of his Spirit, what he purchased by the price of his blood.—Thus you see the *singularity of the fact*, both to the matter and manner of it; and how his heart was engaged to approach unto God: And so far is he from being dissatisfied with the bargain, that never a repenting thought was in his heart to this day, with respect to the whole of his work.

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

Now, as to the *first* of these, *viz.* the *reason* why Christ

Christ did so *cordially engage* in this work. There are these *four* reasons especially that I would offer.

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

2. He engaged his heart from *zeal* to his *Father's glory.* Though the whole creation of men and angels had been offered up as a whole burnt-offering, it would not have repaired the honour of God for one sin whereby his honour is impaired: But Christ's engagement is what brings more glory to God, than if all mankind had stood, or yet fallen a sacrifice to divine justice; therefore Christ, from a zeal to his Father's glory, did come under this engagement; *The zeal of God's house did eat him up.* By his engagement all the *attributes of God* are glorified.—God had a mind to set out his *love* and *mercy* to the utmost, and herein it is done more than any other way; *God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life,* John iii. 16. We may behold here the height and depth, the length and breadth of the love of God, in taking his Son out of his bosom, where he lay from eternity, and giving him for us. He looked over all the copies of his love, grace, and mercy that he had written in all his former works, and found them short of the thing; therefore it is his will to write his love in letters of blood, upon him who is an infinite Spirit with himself: and, that this may be done, he gives him a body; *A body hast thou given me,* that this body, this human nature, might be a sacrifice for sin.—God had a mind to set forth the glory of his *justice* to the utmost, and by this engagement it is done. What though the whole world were drowned in a deluge of water, or, as Sodom, burnt to ashes! What though all the posterity of Adam were doomed to everlasting burning? What though every spire of grass, or atom  
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of dust, were a rational creature, and for sin thrown into hell: This would be indeed an act of excellent justice: but what is all this to the justice execute upon Christ, when he stood in our room? What are all other judgments to his bloody sweat in the garden, and his expiring groans upon a cross? Here is the highest act of justice imaginable, to make the soul of his dearly beloved Son an offering for sin, when imputed to him. See Romans iii. 23. *Whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation, through faith in his blood, to declare his righteousness for the remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God.* Here the awakened sword of justice is drunk to full and complete satisfaction with the most noble blood that ever was or could be.—God had a mind to set forth his holiness to the utmost: now the perfect obedience of men and angels might set forth his holiness; but what is all this to the obedience of the Son of God, whose obedience does indeed magnify the law? God's law was never honoured, and his holiness never shewed with such a sparkling lustre.—God had a mind to set forth his power to the utmost; and now the arm of omnipotency was not so much manifested in laying the foundation of the earth, and stretching out the heavens as a curtain, and turning the wheels of providence, as in bringing about the salvation of sinners by Christ; the power of God supporting Christ under that load of wrath, which would have crushed ten thousand worlds: *Once have I heard, yea twice, that power belongeth unto the Lord,* Psalm lxii. 11.—Once have I heard it in the work of creation and providence, but far more gloriously in the work of redemption, wherein he spoiled principalities and powers, bruised the head of the serpent, destroyed the works of the devil, disarmed death, and knocked off the fetters of our spiritual captivity.—In a word, God had a mind to set forth his wisdom to the utmost. Wisdom shines every moment in the work of creation, it glitters every day in the work of providence; but *all the treasures of wisdom are hid in Christ.* Here is the wisdom of God in a mystery; *the manifold wisdom of God*; particularly in uniting the most divine extremes: the di-  
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vine and human natures are united in one person; the justice and mercy of God united in one joint harmony, for the salvation of sinners, without robbing each other of their right, and so God and man united in an eternal fellowship; stubble is made to dwell with devouring fire, without being destroyed; and weakness to behold glory, without being overwhelmed; yea, straw is made to dwell with everlasting burnings; *Who among us shall dwell with devouring fire? who among us shall dwell with everlasting burnings?* Isa. xxxiii. 14. Why, even the believer can dwell with a God of terrible majesty and infinite justice, and dwell there with satisfaction, and without hazard of being consumed, because of this engagement of Christ, whereby justice is infinitely satisfied.—Thus, I say, God had a mind to set forth the glory of his perfections: now, zeal for this glory of God engaged the Mediator's heart to this work.

3. He engaged his heart, from a view of his Father's reward: *For the joy that was set before him, he endured the cross, despising the shame, Heb. xii. 2. and now is set down at the right-hand of God, Heb. ii. 9.* His Father promised him, that, having drunk of the brook in the way, he then should lift up his head; and accordingly, he having humbled himself, and become obedient unto death, even the death of the cross, therefore God hath highly exalted him, Phil. ii. 8, 9. In a word, it was the Father's promise to him, that, upon his making his soul an offering for sin, he should see his seed, and see the travel of his soul and be satisfied. And therefore his heart was engaged to the work.

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

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

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

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

3. Nothing is more *rejoicing to the heart*, Psal. xix. 8. and Psal. lx. 9. *God hath spoken in his holiness, I will rejoice:* Why? nothing speaks out more love than this, when JEHOVAH says the word, as well as does the work. The soul cannot but rejoice when the Lord speaks to it; at least, here is ground of joy unspeakable; John xv. 11. *These things have I spoken to you, that my joy might remain in you, and that your joy might be full.*

4. Nothing is more *silencing to unbelief* than this: why? here is the very utmost length that unbelief can go; for, says the unbelieving heart, if God would say it, then I would believe it. Well, *Thus saith the Lord* comes in here, to ruin and silence your unbelief. Here is the reason of our faith: for you are to notice two things in the text; the one is, the glorious *object* of faith, a Christ engaging himself in our room: The other is the convincing *reason* of faith; it comes with a *Thus saith the Lord.* Now, in order to get our faith fixed, and brought to a full assurance and certainty, we

are not so much to look to the *object* of faith, or the thing to be believed, as to the *reason* of faith, and the ground of it, namely, God's testimony ; he says it : his truth and veracity is at the stake to give us security ; it is the great word of the great God. It is not the greatness of a promise that draws our faith, but the fidelity of the promiser ; nay, the greater the promise is, the more will we doubt of it, unless there be a ground for believing it. If a man of undoubted integrity come and tell you never so great things that he is to do for you, and give to you, the greatness of the things promised is not the reason of your believing him ; nay, the greater they are, the further will you be from believing : but the reason of your believing is, because the man is honest and able, and a person of intire credit, whom you can trust. Even so it is here ; there is a great thing proposed to our faith, that Christ, the *Sent of God*, is engaged for our complete salvation ; and upon this ground he promises in the context, *I will be your God, and ye shall be my people*. But, the greater it is, the further are we from believing it ; and therefore we must have a reason for our faith : well, it is here, the God of truth says it, and we are to take it upon the testimony of the God that cannot lie. When Abraham was *strong in the faith*, and *against hope believed in hope*, was it the greatness of the promise that supported his faith, or the reasonableness of it ! No, no ; his body and Sarah's both were dead : but he considered the veracity and ability of the God that promised ; *He was fully perswaded that he that had promised was able to perform*, Rom. iv. 21. When Moses was sent to Israel in Egypt, to tell them that the set time was come that they were to be delivered from their Egyptian thraldom and bondage, and to be brought to a land flowing with milk and honey : here is a great promise : but O, says Moses, how will they believe this ? Why, says God, *Go tell them I AM hath sent you*, even the God of *beings*, that can give being to what I say. I was known to their forefathers by the name, *Lord God Almighty* ; because I did mightily for them, to wit, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob : and now I

am come to accomplish my promise that I made to them concerning their seed; therefore I will be known now to them by the name, I AM THAT I AM. I have all Beings in myself from eternity, and can give a being to my promise. Here is a good ground for their faith. If we look not to this ground, the greatness of the promise will overset our faith, while the man says, O! it is too good news to be true? It is too great for me! and so we reason ourselves out of our faith: But, O! see who says it, and that it is the word of JEHOVAH, and here is firm footing for your faith.

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

1. The greatness of our *ruin by nature*, and the sad case that mankind is in; that not one of all the posterity of Adam can or dare approach unto God, or come under engagements for this end. If we do, we engage ourselves to what is impossible to perform, and we approach to a fiery tribunal, where we are doomed to eternal death, unless we come under the wings of this glorious Engager and Approacher to God. This God will shew no regard to any personal bond or engagement of ours: for our personal credit is cracked and broken, not only originally in Adam, by the violation of the covenant of works, but actually in our own persons: we never kept a word that we promised to God; we never kept our engagements to God one day to an end: and therefore God will not trust us. I am far from disallowing of *personal covenanting* and engaging, when it is put in its due place; that is, after a man hath once closed with Christ, as the principal Engager; and then vows, through his grace, and under the covert of his engagement, from gratitude, to serve the Lord, and walk in his ways: but for all other kinds of engagements, let us know, that God will take none of our bonds without a cautioner. And we are blind if

we do not see that our credit is cracked : look to our national engagements ; our COVENANTS, NATIONAL and SOLEMN LEAGUE ; and sure our *national* credit is cracked and broken : never a nation was more solemnly engaged to God, and yet never any national engagement was more solemnly broken and buried ; the credit of our ministers and people, of our nation and church, are sunk into the depth of defection, division, error, security, and carnal compliances. And whereas our forefathers transmitted to us their posterity, precious truths, and pure Confessions of Faith, worthy of the name of Reformers ; how are we like to transmit to our posterity a world of trash and lumber, instead of precious treasure ? while, among other things, *old Reformation-principles* and *doctrines* are like to be carried down to succeeding generations after us, under the tash of *wildness, new schemes, and Antinomian-cant* \*. And

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\* This affair may be seen cleared up, Vol. I. Ser. IV. p. 238. Ser. XX. p. 175. the whole of Ser. XXIII.--XXVII. particularly p. 304, 305. Although among the many peculiarly important and singularly interesting doctrines of Christianity there is scarce any that hath a greater tendency to promote holiness, than the believer's being freed from the law as a covenant, in point of justification, in virtue of the meritorious obedience of Christ in his room ; yet, in regard this doctrine is eminently calculated to advance the glory of God, in the manifestation of the freedom of his grace and to debase the creature, is levell'g pride and self confidence, there is hardly any that is more spurned at than this, in the age we live in, and by none more than the self-sufficient Legalist, who prides himself in, and vaunts mightily of his legal righteousness : and so speaks, writes, and reasons against the Scripture-doctrine of free justification through the merits of Christ : yea, to much is he in conceit with his legal turn of mind, and external conformity to the law, that he sticks at nothing that he thinks will bring a reproach upon his opponents ; and therefore, let their abilities be never so great, and their character never so high, he is determined to calumniate their name, and depreciate their reputation : for this purpose he hesitates at nothing he imagines will gain his end : and hence we find, that introducers of new schemes in Divinity, disturbers of the peace of the church, enemies to holiness, friends to licentiousness, advancers of Antinomianism, and what not, are the usual epithets and appellations we meet with conferred upon them. But what period of the church produced more eminent divines, greater lovers of our Reformation-principles, truer patrons of genuine piety, more shining examples of true holiness, greater promoters of external purity, and stronger opposers of licentiousness, than the friends to the Marrow doctrine, of *dying to the law, in point of justification, in order to living unto God in point of sanctification* were, who were, and still are thus impeached ?—But they being fully persuaded, that

this

as we ought to be humbled this day for the breach of our *National Covenant* and *Solemn League*; so we may see what is necessary, in order to the reviving of a covenanted Work of Reformation, and of our Solemn Engagements, even that the generation be brought to acquaintance with Christ, as the first and foremost Engager in their room; and then, that, under the acceptable covert of his engagement, they come under obligations, through his grace to approach unto God, by returning to him and to their duty. O that the Spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of Christ, were poured out for this end! However, as our national engagements are sadly broken, so look to your baptismal engagements, your communion engagements, and all your other particular engagements to duty; and see, that as our national, so our personal credit is cracked; for an evil heart of unbelief causes your departure from the living God, every hour of the day. And this is such an universal disease, that there is not one of Adam's race that God can now trust without a cautioner, nor allow to approach to him without a mid-man.

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

this is a doctrine agreeable to the inspired Writings, and peculiarly calculated to promote holiness, [Gal. ii. 19. Titus ii. 11, 12] they bore all this unjust calumny and defamation patiently, accounting it their greatest honour to suffer reproach for the truth's sake.

*light of the knowledge of his glory in the face of Jesus Christ.*

3. Hence see what is the *gospel-way of a sinner's engaging to duty, and approaching to God*: Why, it is just to take on with this Engager, and so to engage under him; and to take on with this blessed Approacher, and to approach to God in him. In the old covenant of works, man got a stock of created grace in his own hand; and if he mispent his stock, and became bankrupt, he was to answer for himself; he had no surety or cautioner to stand up for him, or to pay his debt, or to approach to God for him: but the covenant of grace is better ordered than so, and therefore called *a better testament*, whereof Christ is the Mediator, in whose hand the principal stock is; and whatever small measure of grace believers have bestowed upon them, yet their stock can never be spent, and they can never break, or become liable to a law-pursuit, for the Cautioner keeps them and their stock both; and he being the Engager, they may engage to do any thing, yea, all things, upon this score; *I can do all things, through Christ strengthening me*: and he being the leading Approacher to God, they may approach to God with boldness, when he goes before them; *We have boldness to enter into the holiest, by the blood of Jesus*. Here then is a test of right engagements; you cannot be trusted if you engage alone; you must match with one that can make good your engagements. In your common affairs in the world, you know that no man will take a person's bond or engagement for a sum of money; for example, if he know the person to be insolvent, that can never make payment, but rather is always taking on more and more debt; but if that person, be he never so poor himself, will provide you a sufficient cautioner, that will give his bond of suretyship for him, then you will accept of the person's bond under this cautionry; because, though the principal, whom you have good ground to suspect, should break the next hour, and become utterly insolvent, yet you are secure, because you can pursue the cautioner when you will, upon his engagement and bond of suretyship.

Well,

Well, just so is it here; poor broken bankrupt that thou art, there is no trusting of thy bond or engagement; God will not trust any of the race of Adam; since the time that he brake, when he violateth his first covenant-engagement. Nay, the Lord knows, you are so far from being able to pay your debt, that you are but every moment taking on more and more; but, be you never so poor and insolvent, if you once accept Christ for your Cautioner, then God will accept of any bond off your hand, that hath his name as the Engager in it; for, if you fail, your Cautioner is liable, and he is a rich and opulent Cautioner, sponable enough; and God seeks no better than his bond, though you be never so unable to pay: yea, God reckons himself secure, and that all shall be well enough paid, when Christ is the Cautioner and Engager, accepted by you. He is secured of his honour; obedience to his law is secured, satisfaction to his justice is secured, glory to all his attributes is secured: and herein lies the triumph of faith, over all charges and challenges from the law or justice of God, Rom. viii. 33, 34. What is the charge? Why, says the law, you owe me a debt of obedience; yea, says justice, and you owe me a debt of satisfaction, because of your disobedience: nay, but says bold faith, you may produce what charges you will, but there is a discharge to counterbalance it. If you had my single personal bond for payment, then I confess I would be liable; but as I can elide any law-suit against me, with the defence of my Cautioner's full payment in my room, so if you have any thing further to say against me, go to my Cautioner, who is engaged for all: he is able to answer all that you can say: and therefore let all challengers and him reckon the matter betwixt them.—In a word, right engagement is to engage upon Christ's engagement.—What is that? It is just, as it were, to lay a wager upon Christ's head. I will wager upon his head, that I will get to heaven, in spite of all the devil's in hell; I will wager upon his head, that the head of the serpent shall be bruised; I will wager upon his head, that sin shall not have dominion over me; I will wager upon

pon his head, that I shall perform duty, and do all things through him strengthening me; I will wager upon his head, that my sins shall be forgiven me; as the Jews, you know, confessed their sins upon the head of the sacrifice shadowing Christ; and what was the gospel of it? Why, when it was done in the faith of Christ, the great sacrifice, it was in effect to say, I will wager upon the head of this sacrifice, that as it is sufficient for the expiation of my sins, so all my sins shall be pardoned upon this ground. What say you, man? Will you venture all that concerns your holiness and happiness, grace and glory, duty and dignity; will you venture all upon Christ? Will you wager and engage upon his head? Then in God's name you shall gain the day. But here also is a test of right approaching to God in all duties and ordinances, and at a communion-table; why, it is just, as it were, a coming to the chamber of divine presence, so as to come in at Christ's back, setting him before you as the first Approacher to usher you in; *I am the way, and no man cometh to the Father but by me.* It is to come to God in the faith of Christ's having approached to him before you, and to come boldly, never fearing that his infinite holiness shall dash such a filthy sinner, nor that his infinite justice shall confound such a guilty sinner. Why, your Usher, that hath gone before you to the presence of this holy and just God, hath gratified his holiness, and satisfied his justice both.—Here, I say, you see the right engaging and right approaching.

4. And lastly, Passing all other inferences that might be drawn from the doctrine; hence see the *duty* of all that *bear this gospel*, and what the Lord is *calling you to this day*: it is even this, that your heart be engaged to approach unto him, whose heart was engaged to approach unto God in your room; that so, approaching heartily to Christ, you may approach confidently to God in him; for there is no approaching to God but by taking Christ by the way. O then, let your hearts be engaged to approach unto Christ; this is the very design of all that we have been saying, even to engage your hearts to the Son of God. And, O

Sirs, what in all the world will engage your hearts, if the engaged heart of Christ do it not? He is come here this day to court your hearts; the very heart of a Saviour is come down to court the heart of a sinner, and to court you with this argument, That his heart is so much upon you, that he engaged his heart to approach unto God in your room. Away with the devil's logic, *May be it was not for me that Christ engaged, nor for me that he approached unto God; for there is but a select number, that were elected from eternity, for whom he engaged and approached.* In order to shut this objection out of the way, let me tell you, man, that *secret things belong to God, but to us the things that are revealed.* Let an infinitely wise God answer for his own decrees, as well as he can; but you dare not be answerable to God for meddling with them; and you meddle too far, if the thoughts thereof discourage you from coming to Christ this day. Will it be a good answer for you, before the bar of God? Lord, I thought, perhaps, I was not elected, and therefore my heart could never be engaged to Christ. What answer can you expect from God, but the like of this, Wretch that thou art, had you not my revealed will to be a rule of your duty? And did not I reveal, That upon the peril of damnation you was to close with my Christ? And what had you to do with my secret decree? How durst you attempt to be wise above what is written? Who but the devil could suggest that to your heart, that you was not an elect? And he was a liar for saying so, for he told you what he did not know himself. How does the devil act herein like himself, while he would carry you up to the pinnacle of the temple of eternal predestination at the first instant, that you may thence throw yourself down from the battlement of heaven to the bottom of hell, which was the way himself went, and he would have you along with him? O! will you regard the ruining suggestions of a black devil, more than the kindly motions of a Saviour? O! will you rather utthoot the devil in his own bow, and draw an argument for faith from what was done from all eternity? Titus i. 2. Was eternal life promised

mised in Christ before the world began? was all engaged for from eternity? Then there is the less ado for me, when this promise of eternal life comes directed and offered; for, *to you is the word of this salvation sent*, that Christ hath engaged for all that concerns our salvation; and we have nothing ado, but, through grace, to consent that this Engager be ours, to do all for us. From all eternity the Mediator's heart was engaged to the work of our redemption; and from this infinitely high and eternal tower there are ropes of divine promises hanging down, for us to lay hold on with our hearts: For *the promise is to us and to our children, and to all that are afar off*. And when our hearts embrace any of these promises that are fastened to Christ's engaged heart, then our hearts are carried up in God's order to the knowledge of the divine counsels, and go up the scripture-stair; while Satan would have us begin at the top, that we may fall down head-long. Now, among these promises that are let down from Christ's engaged heart, for us to embrace with our heart, there is one, Jer. xxxi. 2. *I have loved thee with an everlasting love, therefore with loving-kindness will I draw thee*. O Sirs, here is a cord of love let down, and the upper end of it is fastened to Christ's heart, and the lower end of it hanging down the length of your hearts: And, O! shall not Christ's heart and yours be knit together this day? here is a cord to bind his heart to your heart, and your heart to his heart. O! strong cord of God's making! O! shall not the Saviour's heart and the sinner's heart meet together this day? Will the heart of Jesus gain no heart in this house to-day? Yea, we hope there shall be a meeting of hearts betwixt him and a remnant here. O then, sinner, come into his heart, for his heart is open; and I have a commission to tell you, that his heart is open to you, and opened so wide, that you may all go in to his opened heart.—It is not a hard heart like yours: No, no: If he had been as hardened against you, as your hearts were hardened against him, he would never have engaged so heartily to approach to God for you, nor ever sent us to tell

you his heart's love towards you. O believe it upon his word, Jerem. xxxi. 20. He is not hard-hearted; no; his heart is a melting heart, saying, *I do earnestly remember you still; my bowels are troubled for you; I will surely have mercy upon you.* From the very time that I engaged for you, which was from all eternity, I do earnestly remember you still; and now the time of love is come, the time of letting out my heart toward you: my bowels are founding for you, and my heart is melting over you, and warm drops of love are falling down from my melted heart to your hard hearts, that they may be melted and dissolved, so as both mine and yours may be melted into one, and being run together with the fire of my everlasting love, they may be engaged to each other for ever. O Sinner! sinner! sinner! O enemies! enemies to God, enemies to Jesus! O hard-hearted sinner! Words and rods, calls and threatenings, sermons and sacraments have not melted your heart; and if you go to hell, the flames of hell will never melt your heart: but here are the flames of infinite love from the heart of a God-man; what will this do? A God of love is come down, and must not the mountains melt before him? Yea, mountains of enmity and unbelief, and the hard flinty heart will melt like wax before him. A live coal from the flaming altar of Christ's engaged heart, is come down to put fire to your cold-rife heart. O! is the blessed fire kindled? Is your heart engaged to him or not? If not, will you consider,

(1.) What a *sad thing* it is, if your heart shall not be engaged to approach unto him: It says, the heart is engaged to some others than to Christ, that your heart is engaged to idols and lusts, and you cannot find in your heart to sign a bill of divorce from these.—But, O! will you tell me, if your heart be engaged to the devil, engaged to the world, engaged to the flesh, and the lusts thereof, engaged to wicked company, engaged to corrupt courses, and that you cannot be disengaged from them, nor break these engagements, nor your covenant with hell? O! will any of these lovers to whom your hearts are engaged, will any

of them engage to approach to God in your room, as Christ hath done? Will any of them engage to bring you to heaven, or to keep you out of hell? Nay, are they not engaged rather to ruin your souls for ever, if they can? And why should your hearts be engaged to your greatest enemies, that would lead you to destruction; and not engaged to Christ, who engaged his heart to approach unto God for your salvation and redemption? If your hearts be not engaged to Christ, it says you are, at best, married and engaged to the law; you are going about to establish a righteousness of your own; hoping to please God, and procure salvation to yourselves by your prayers and good duties: Your language is like that of the wicked servant, that said, *Have patience with me, and I will pay you all.* You are not yet pleased to have one to undertake for all in in your room; and therefore, O sad is your state! for you stand under a personal obligation to pay all indeed: You are *a debtor to do the whole law*; and yet, because of your failure, you are under obligation to bear the whole curse of the law. O terrible! If you stay there, you must approach to the tribunal of God, in your own person. O! how will you approach to God without him! You will find God out of Christ a consuming fire.

(2.) Consider how *sweet* it is to have your hearts engaged to him, whose heart was engaged to approach to God for you: his heart was engaged to you before ever yours were engaged to him; yea, from all eternity; and you may *rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory.* Though your debt be never so great, he is engaged to pay it; though your sins be never so heinous, he is engaged to pardon them; though your corruptions be never so strong, he is engaged to subdue them; though your enemies be never so mighty, he is engaged to conquer them; and though the promises be never so precious in themselves, and unlikely to be accomplished to you, yet he is engaged to fulfil them; only, while you are here, on this side Jordan, he will accomplish them in his own time, and in his

own measure, and according as your need, your work, and his glory do call for it. Yea, he is engaged to perform all your work, in you and for you, and to perfect strength in your weakness: he is engaged to guide you by his counsel, and bring you to his glory, and to lead you safe through the valley of the shadow of death into IMMANUEL'S land: he is engaged for your debt, your duty, your safety, and all. O what a load-stone is this, to draw the heart and engage the affections of any rational soul, to engage with one that engages for all that you can need through time and through eternity! Why, say you, But must I engage to do nothing? O that old covenant, *Do and Live*, sticks fast to you: in the covenant of works, man was engaged to do all; but O, in the covenant of grace, Christ is engaged to do all. Why, man, if you can do any thing without Christ, you may try your hand; but why will you give Christ the lie, who says, *without me ye can do nothing!* And if that be a truth, O how sweet is it to have a heart engaged to him, that has engaged to do all! You may know from your experience, how sad a thing it is to take any engagement upon yourself alone, and on your own head: for it never abides a touch; and when you break your engagement, then you are quite dispirited, as if the covenant of grace were broken; and thus you turn your covenant of duties to God's covenant of grace, and so the covenant of grace to a covenant of works; and, in that case, no wonder that you find the law a hard and heavy task-master. But the covenant of grace is Christ's engaging to do all; it is not a bargain that God is making with you; for he will not make a bargain with the like of you; God knows you are a bargain-breaker; but it is a bargain made with Christ, wherein Christ hath engaged to God to do all for you, because you can do nothing: and now he courts your heart to fall in with this device of glorious and free grace.

(3.) Consider *who* it is that is courting your heart: It is he to whom the heart of God is engaged; *Behold my Servant, whom I uphold: mine Elect, in whom*

*my soul delighteth.* God's heart was engaged to Christ from all eternity, not only because he was his eternal Son, but also because he engaged his heart to approach to him on your account. God's heart is so much engaged to him for that very reason, that he declares three times, with an audible voice from heaven; *This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well-pleased*; and all that he seeks is that you be well-pleased too. And, O you are ill to please, if that which pleases God, will not please you, and your heart is ill disposed, if it be not engaged to him to whom God's heart is engaged. God the Father put him upon this work, out of goodwill to you: he caused him to approach on your account; and he is pleased with his engagement and approach; and nothing in the world will please God so much, nor make him take so much pleasure in you, as your being well-pleased with Christ and his undertaking, so as to find your heart engaged to him for it: for then you will please him more than ever your sins displeased him; and you will honour him more than ever your sins dishonoured him: Yea, then he will get full satisfaction for all your sins; because that glorious Engager, whom you close with, hath fully contented his heart; and so you will satisfy his justice more than your eternal damnation in hell could do.— O! the heart of God is engaged to him, and the hearts of angels are engaged to him, and the hearts of all the redeemed are engaged to him: O! shall all hearts be engaged to him but yours! O there would be joy in heaven, and it would be a day of the gladness of Christ's heart, and it would give a glad heart to God, angels, and saints, if your hearts were engaged to Christ!

(4.) Consider *whose heart* he is courting: You perhaps think, surely it will be some very good heart that will please him: indeed I know none that have a good heart, by nature; and you that think you have a good heart to God, do but deceive yourselves: But, O he is even courting the love of that heart that is full of enmity against him; his love is seeking to break your enmity this day. What for a heart have you, man, woman?

woman? Be what sort of a heart it will, he is seeking it; *My Son, give me thy heart.* Is it a wicked heart, and a wandering heart, an unbelieving heart, a deceitful heart? Is it the heart of Manasseh in compact with Satan? Is it the heart of Mary Magdalene, out of whom were cast seven devils? Is it the worst heart in all the world, and the worst heart that ever was in the world? a hard heart, a stout heart, a stony heart, a heart full of hell, and a heart like the devil? It is even the heart that he is seeking and courting this day: he engages to give you a new heart and a new spirit; and if you sign his engagement with your heart, saying, Content, Lord; he will make your heart to his mind by degrees; and your heart shall be according to his heart. What, say you, is that possible, that he is courting such a heart as mine? Would it not be presumption for such an one as me, vile, filthy, black, and ugly me, to trust for so much good at the hand of such an one as Christ? What, man! when God calls, is it presumption in you to answer his call? No; it is the greatest presumption in the world to sit his call, and refuse his kind embraces, when he offers to take you into his very heart. When Christ offered to wash Peter's feet, O did it not ill become him to say, *Lord, thou shalt never wash my feet,* John xiii. 8. Be your feet never so dirty, and your heart never so black, you have the more need to let Christ wash you.

(5.) Consider, that the *present opportunity* is a *special season* of letting out your heart upon him, when he is coming so near to you in this work. It is a dangerous thing to miss the tide when it is flowing: some of your friends and neighbours are in eternity, since the last communion here; and you may never hear another action-sermon all your life: and though you may hear other sermons, yet it is but now and then that the wind blows, and that the Spirit breathes; and it is dangerous to resist the motions that blow you into the happy harbour of Christ's engaged heart: if there be a gale of heaven just now blowing, yet it may be over before an hour go about. O shall not your heart be engaged unto Christ! What if death approach to you, and snap  
the

the thread of your life in two? O! you would be more miserable than the devil to all eternity; for he never had such an offer as this. Death is approaching, judgment is approaching, eternity is approaching, and your heart not approaching to Christ: wo is me! what will come of you!

(6.) Consider, that Christ hath *fulfilled his engagement to the Father for you*, by bringing in *everlasting righteousness*; and God hath accepted it, and is well-pleased with it as the condition of the covenant, and all the promises thereof: and, upon this account, the promise is made to you, as follows immediately upon the text, *I will be your God, and ye shall be my people.* I WILL and YE SHALL, is the tenor of the promise; because Christ hath fulfilled the condition of it, so as you have nothing to do, but to say with the heart, *Thy will be done.* And if your heart be engaged to him, and made willing, the God who commends Christ so highly to you, in the words of the text, will turn it over to your commendation, saying, *Who is this that engaged his heart to approach unto me, saith the Lord?* Now, say not, that you want such and such qualifications and conditions requisite in these that give their heart and hand to the Son of God: if your heart stand off from him on this account, it argues a heart in league with the law as a covenant of works, which is but a black bargain now, for any of the fallen race of Adam; but the better testament is a better bargain, where Christ hath engaged for all fully, and you are only to take all freely: and never a good qualification will you have acceptable to God, till your heart be engaged to him whose heart was engaged to give all. If your heart be not thus engaged to Christ, to be obliged and indebted to him for all, then, though you had a thousand times more qualifications than you would be at, yet you shall go to hell with them, and perish eternally: and if your heart be once engaged to Christ, then, though you had ten thousand good qualifications, you will *count them all but dung, for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ*, as Paul did. It is said of the creditor, concerning his two debtors,

Luke vii. 42. *When they had nothing to pay, he frankly forgave them all.* So long as you think you have something to pay your own debt, or hope that you shall have something to make payment with, you are not in God's way of forgiveness; but when you have nothing to pay; not a penny in your purse, either to pay your debt of obedience and satisfaction to the law, as a covenant; or your debt of duty to the law, as a rule, and are content to take a cautioner, then he frankly forgives all. And so the best qualification is for you to see that you have nothing; no money nor money-worth, that you may be obliged to Christ for all.

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

What shall I say? O! is there any here, whose hearts are not yet engaged to Christ? O many, many! but, wo is me that there should be any! O drunkard, swearer, Sabbath-breaker, whoremonger, mocker, here is a good bargain for you, even you whom we cannot allow to come to a communion-table; yet we allow you, yea God allows you and commands you, and we in his awful name and authority command you to come to Christ, and take a full pardon of all your sins, and subscribe to Christ's whole engagement; and you shall have a title not only to the communion-table below, but to the communion-table above that shall never be drawn. Away, man, away with all objections against Christ; let your objections be ten thousand times more and greater

greater than they are, there is no room for one of them here ; for Christ's engagement to do all things for you, answers all difficulties to you : and therefore, be you never such a wretched sinner, there is no objection you can make, but it is answered here, if your heart be not engaged to some other lovers. O, say you, I have not power, I cannot get my wicked heart engaged to him. O doleful and miserable case ! What is this, that infinite love and everlasting kindness, flaming out of Christ's heart upon you, cannot engage your heart unto him ! O ! is there no power in this love ? Is not love strong as death, and the coals thereof coals of fire, which have a most vehement flame ? O ! here is a strong flame, that is able to melt the hardest heart to the sweetest compliance ; and therefore, O will you bring these strong cords of death, by which your heart is held, bring them to this fire, and it will burn and burst them asunder ! Do not resist the powerful love and precious grace of God, but be content to let it in to your heart, and it will draw and engage it. And therefore, seeing no argument will do but an argument of power ; and seeing almighty Power uses to ride in the chariot of this gospel of grace ; O then, will you join with me, and say, *O powerful arm of JEHOVAH, come and draw, come and draw ; O exalted JESUS, come and draw, by the power of thy Spirit. Awake, O arm of the Lord, and put on strength, and let the right-hand of the Lord do valiantly.* Let all the heart-leagues with lusts and other lovers than Christ be broken this day, and Christ alone have the whole heart engaged to him ; and let all the people say, AMEN, *So be it, LORD.* And if your heart say, AMEN, I hope your heart is engaged and made *willing in a day of power* : and being made willing to come to his Christ, you shall be made welcome to come to his table ; having signed his engagement to approach to God in your room to do all for you, you may approach with boldness to God in him, and expect the same welcome with your Cautioner that goes before you. *Who is this that engaged his heart to approach unto God ? saith the Lord.*

## A

## D I S C O U R S E

Upon the same SUBJECT, after the SOLEMN  
WORK was ended.

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

*First,*

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

you in the name of Jesus! And, O Jesus, may I beg thy leave to be thy spokesman, to tell them thy words? And now, since he hath set me here, and given me leave to speak for him, I must tell you some of his words to you.

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

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

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

Further, I must tell you what is his *weeping* word. O shall he weep alone, and none drop a tear with him, while he is grieved at the hardness of your heart; and with the tear in his eye, weeping over the city, and saying, *O if thou hadst known, in this thy day, the things that belong to thy peace!* but the time approaches when they shall be hid from thine eyes; the time of desolation is coming, because thou knowest not the time of thy visitation. Do ye expect that these days will always last with you, and that you will never be deprived of sermons, and ministers, and sacraments? Nay, they shall be hid from your eyes: *Your fathers, where are they? and the prophets, do they live for ever?* Nay, since the last communion here, one of our dear helpers, in this presbytery, from whose lips you used to hear the joyful sound, he is gone away to the communion-table above; and glory to God, that he got a full gale of heavenly wind, to drive him in with holy joy and triumph to the harbour of glory. But now, O sinners, have ye no regard to Christ weeping over you,

you, and saying, O if ye knew the day of your visitation, before the shadows of the everlasting evening be drawn upon you! And, O that ye knew the things that belong to your peace, before they be hid from your eyes!

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

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

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

But, because it is not come to that with you as yet; nay, it is yet a day of salvation; I would tell you next, his *expostulating* word, or his *intreating* word; he would gladly take his word of wrath again, that ye whose hearts are saying, *Away with him,* may yet take your word again: he is saying, *Why will ye die, O house of Israel? As I live, I have no pleasure in your death; O turn ye, turn ye:* Come, come, the door is yet open, the door of salvation is cast up wide to the walls, that ye all may run in; the draw-bridge of mercy is not yet taken up; the day of mercy is present; the day of judgment is but coming, and now I am looking to you, and ye are looking to me; and if ye be not looking on me, ye that are behind the pillars and  
lofts

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

2dly, To you whose hearts are engaged to the Lord Jesus, whether ye have been communicants or not ; and because some such may be in doubts, whether ever they

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

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

But let gallant faith come in and say, Christ hath engaged, and therefore I have nothing ado but to trust him

him for all, and in the use of means depend upon him : Christ hath approached before me, and therefore upon the red carpet of his justice-satisfying blood, I will go in to the holy of holies, even into the presence of a just and holy God. O have you thus approached to God at this occasion ? I know not, say ye ; I would be glad to know. Why, if ye would judge of your approach to God in Christ, judge of your approach, not by the *measure* of it ; for believers are only admitted sometimes as it were, to wash his feet with their tears, like Mary, though at other times they may be privileged to ly in his bosom, like the beloved disciple.—Judge not of your approach, by the *matter* of that which he gives you ; for sometimes you may be seeking one thing, and he may give another : It may be ye were seeking a feast of joy ; but if he hath given you a feast of godly sorrow, that is as good for you.—Judge not of your approach by your *former experiences* : It may be, some time a-day you was like a lamb in his bosom, saying, under a sense of his love, *This is my Beloved* : and now, perhaps, you must ly like a dog at his feet, saying, under a sense of sin, *Truth, Lord, I am a dog* : well, that is a token of more a-coming.—Judge not of your approach by your *own sense* and *apprehension* ; for, David was not in a desperate case when he was crying, as Psal. xiii. 1. *How long wilt thou forget me, O Lord, for ever ? how long wilt thou hide thy face from me ?* When your longings are increased, though your strength be small, yet it is a notable feast ; for, *He will satisfy the longing soul, and fill the hungry with good things.* Be thankful if you get as much as holds your soul in life, though you get not much. Know, that though he will be faithful to the accomplishment of all his promises, and to do all that he hath engaged for, yet *the times and seasons are in his hand*, and he hath his own measure of communication : if some of you received what you would be at, you would grow giddy, and be ready to cry with Peter, *It is good for us to be here*, and forget the other work that God hath for you in the world.—He is engaged by promise ; but know, moreover, that he accomplishes his promise according to your need,

and

and as it is for your good and advantage, and according as he hath work and business to put in your hand. Now, some here, I hope, have got their hearts engaged to approach to a God in Christ, upon the ground of Christ's engagement to approach to God in their room; and I hope they can say it with holy confidence, that their hearts have been drawn, and they have been caused to approach to God: and if so, then, I hope, you can say of the water of the well of salvation, O sweet, sweet! *O how sweet are thy words to my taste! sweeter than honey to my mouth!* And that all other things in a world are but empty trash, *loss and dung, in comparison of him.* O the gallant fops of the world would think shame of themselves, if they knew how much contempt the poorest saints on earth do pour upon them, and all earthly glory and gallantry, when they get near to God!—Surely, if you have been favoured with this approach to a God in Christ, it hath brought you to a great *wondering* at the grace of God. *O what am I? And what is my father's house?* Why did he pass by my neighbour, my husband, my wife, my brother, my sister, and fix his love upon me, the vilest of them all?—It hath brought you to great *humility* and abasement; *Now mine eyes have seen thee, therefore I abhor myself, and repent in dust and ashes.*—And also to a great *longing* after more fellowship and communion with him; *O when wilt thou come unto me! O when shall I come and appear before thee! O to depart in peace, for mine eyes have seen thy salvation! O to be among the four and twenty elders, that are before the throne! O to be drinking at the fountain-head!* Why, what means this language, poor soul? It seems you are just lying in his lap; *He hath loved you with an everlasting love, and therefore with loving-kindness hath he drawn you:* His heart is engaged to you, and your heart is engaged to him; the Spirit hath been sent to fasten Christ's heart and your heart together, and the knot shall never be loosed; *Him that cometh, I will in no wise cast out.*

And now, that he is engaged to do all for you, O does not *equity* and *gratitude* require, that you be *wholly* engaged to him, and that for ever? Let your *hearts* be

more engaged to him than ever; let your *affections* be engaged to love him; let your *wills* be engaged to obey him in his preceptive and providential will; let your *thoughts* be engaged to think upon him and his loving-kindness; let your *tongues* be engaged to speak to his praise; *In his temple shall every one speak of his glory*: let your *whole life* be engaged to his service, and all so engaged as to depend on him for all. He hath engaged for all, that you may depend on him for all; and all the service you perform will be vain and to no purpose, unless it be done in the faith of his engagement to do all in you and for you. The believer hath two hands, the one a holding hand, and the other a working hand; like a woman spinning at the wheel, (to use a homely *simile*) the one hand holds the thread and draws it down, and the other hand goes round and sets about the wheel; now, if she do not hold the thread constantly with the one hand; it is to no purpose tho' the other hand go round with the wheel: even so it is here, the one hand of the believer is the hand of faith, whereby he takes fast hold of Christ, and draws grace and virtue from him; the other is the hand of obedience and service, which is accepted only in Christ, and upon the score of his engaging for all, and to do all our work in us and for us. Now, if the hand of faith let go the hold of Christ, so as not to draw virtue from him, nor depend upon his engagement, it is in vain that the other hand of obedience and service doth go its round; but, when faith keeps fast hold of Christ's engagement, then there is profitable service and obedience; for, *we are accepted in the Beloved*. Let faith take a view daily of your privileges in Christ: O how strengthening for your work and warfare would it be to you, if you had the lively faith of his engagement! It would make you approach to God in every duty with boldness. Did you believe that his honour is engaged for your through-bearing, till you arrive at glory; that his faithfulness is engaged, his power is engaged, his name is engaged, his truth is engaged, his credit is at the stake; for he hath said, *I will never leave thee nor*  
for-

*for sake thee ; I will put my Spirit within thee, and cause thee to walk in my statutes :* Is he thus engaged ? Then let faith keep a fast grip of his engagement ; and when faith is like to lose the grip, remember, that he who hath engaged for every thing that concerns you, hath engaged for faith too, having promised to keep your *faith that it fail not, and to keep you by his power thro' faith unto salvation.* Therefore, in the want of faith, look to his engagement for it ; and in the weakness of faith, look to his engagement to strengthen it ; and in the trial of faith, look to his engagement to support it. Let not your faith depend upon your faith, but your faith and dependence be wholly on Christ, for all that you need with respect to work and warfare, duty or difficulty, soul or body, grace or glory, time or eternity ; then will God put your name and Christ's together, saying, *Who is this that engaged his heart to approach unto me ?*

## SERMON XXIX,---XXXIII.

The SAVING SIGHT; or, a View of  
GOD in CHRIST\*.

JOHN xiv. 6.

—*He that hath seen me, hath seen the Father.*—

**M**Y dear friends, the great, glorious, and invisible God hath been, this day, condescending to make himself visible to us, notwithstanding of the great distance betwixt him and us. There is a threefold distance that mars our sight; there is a *natural* distance, that hinders the sight of the natural understanding; there is a *local* distance, that mars bodily sight; and there is a *moral* distance, that impedes spiritual sight; all these, in certain respects, take place here.—In respect of the infinite *being* of God, there is an infinite *natural* distance betwixt him and us, who are but finite creatures, insomuch that we cannot see him.—In respect of the *manhood* of Christ, now ascended into heaven, there is a vast *local* distance betwixt him and us, that put him out of our view, who are on the earth.—In respect of the infinite *holiness* of God, there is an infinite *moral* distance betwixt him and us, that we cannot perceive him through the dark clouds of sin and corruption that over-cast our souls. But such is the condescending mercy of our God, that he is pleased to come near to us in such ways as tend to remove these impediments

\* This piece appears to be the substance of four sermons. The first was preached on the Sabbath-evening, immediately after the celebration of the Lord's Supper, at Dunfermline, May 21st, 1727. ; and the rest, at the same place, after the solemnity. It hath undergone five impressions.

out of the way of our seeing of him ; and therefore, that the infinite *natural* distance betwixt him and us may not impede our seeing of him, he is pleased to come near to us in a *natural* way ; I mean, by assuming our nature, that we may see him there ; and that the vast *local* distance betwixt God, Christ, and us, may not interrupt our seeing of him, he is pleased to come near in a *sacramental* way, that we may see him mystically and sacramentally there ; and that the *moral* distance betwixt him and us may not impede our seeing of him, he comes near in a *spiritual* way, by his Spirit and grace, enlightening the eyes of sinners, and scattering the clouds of sin and corruption.

My friends, it is our infinite mercy, that we have other ways of seeing God than the blinded nations that want the gospel. The way in which they may see God, so as to leave them inexcusable, is common to them and us both. It is now some more than five thousand years since the great and invisible God erected the pillars of heaven, and earth, that *the invisible things of him, from the creation of the world, might be clearly seen and understood by the things that are made, even his eternal power and Godhead*, Rom. i. 20. ; but because no sinner can, in this glass, get a saving sight of God, he hath been pleased to set other glasses before our eyes. It is now more than seventeen hundred years since the same invisible God, in the person of the eternal Word, came down in the likeness of flesh and blood, that his glory might be made visible to us through the glass and veil of our nature ; *The word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, and we beheld his glory*, John i. 14. But after his work on earth was finished, by his doing, dying, and rising again, he ascended into heaven, far out of our view ; therefore, the same invisible and eternal God, in such a wonderful and stupenduous manner, does farther obscure his glory, to make it evident to our dull apprehension, and visible even to our earthly senses, that he hath, this day, come down in the likeness of bread and wine, that he might accommodate himself both to our nature and necessities ; and that being thus, though spiritually, yet sacramentally and visibly

sibly present, we might see and apprehend his invisible glory, love, grace, and mercy, under these visible elements, insomuch, that henceforth we need not be at a loss to resolve that seeming contradiction and wonderful mystery, *namely*, that the infinite mercy of God in Christ is so deep, that no thought can fathom it, and yet so obvious, that every eye may see it, nor at a loss to read Moses's riddle, Heb. xi. 27. for now it is easy, especially to the believer, whose *faith is the evidence of things not seen*, to explain how one may see him that is invisible.

This gospel sacrament, we have been celebrating, is a glass, wherein we see Christ ; Christ is a glass, wherein we see God : if our eyes, therefore, have been opened, by the Spirit of God, we have seen a great sight this day. May I ask you, then, where you have been, and what you have seen about this solemnity ? Have you been at Jerusalem, and seen the King's face ? If you have seen the sacramental elements, I ask, what have you seen there ? If you saw no more but bread and wine, surely you have been blind ; for, Christ was there evidently set forth crucified before you.—But, if you have seen Christ there, then I ask again, What have you seen ? It may be you do not know what you have seen ; for, as you, that have got no sight of Christ, are at a greater loss than you are capable to know and understand ; because, having missed a sight of Christ, you have missed a sight of God, and seen nothing worth the seeing : so you that have got a saving sight of Christ, you have got a greater sight than readily you are aware of. Perhaps you have seen Christ, and yet, with Philip here in the text, do not know that you have seen the Father. Perhaps God hath been in this place, and you knew it not : but if you have got a sight of Christ, and yet do not know how much, and how far you have seen, or whether it be the true Christ you have seen, then be informed of this matter out of his own blessed lips, *He that hath seen me, hath seen the Father.* O ! what an happy solemnity might we say this hath been, if it could be said of a multitude here, as it was said of the nobles of

of Israel, Exod. xxiv. 11. *They saw God, and did eat and drink; or, that their eyes have seen the King, the Lord of hosts!* I doubt not but there are many here came to Dunfermline, with a design that they might see the King in his beauty, at this sacramental occasion, and to see the glory of God. Well, the brightest glass that ever God's glory was seen in, hath been, and is yet set before you. The great sacramental sight is, in a spiritual manner, as well as with bodily eyes, to see the sacramental elements, so as in the elements to see Christ, and in Christ to see the Father: and though the sacramental table be drawn, yet, while Christ is presented to you in this gospel, the glass is not yet withdrawn. You have a new occasion to see him again; and not only to see him, but also to see whether you have seen him formerly, yea, or not; and to see what you have seen in him; for, *he that hath seen me, hath seen the Father.*

Having, before this solemnity, spoken to the preceding part of the verse, and so to the connexion of this text with the context, I have the less ado this way; only, Christ having, ver. 6, 7. discovered himself as the only way to the Father, and as the Father's great representative, insomuch, that as there is *no coming to the Father, but by him, nor seeing of the Father, but in him*; so there is none that come to him, can miss the Father, or fail of winning to the Father by him; and none that look to him, can lose a sight of the Father in him: notwithstanding this sweet doctrine, Philip having said, *Shew us the Father*, ver. 8. the Lord Jesus here speaks to him both by way of reproof and instruction; he meekly reproves him, saying, *Have I been so long with thee, and yet hast thou not known me, Philip?* that you should talk so ignorantly, after I have taught you so plainly, that, in knowing me, you know the Father: but our Lord, who is such a meek reprove, is also an indefatigable instructor; and therefore again he kindly instructs him in the words of the text, saying, *He that hath seen me, hath seen the Father.* As it is an ignorant, so it is a needless petition for you, Philip, to ask of me, saying, *Shew us the Father*, since I have told  
you

you, that there is no way of knowing the Father savingly, but by knowing me ; and if you knew me more, you would know the Father more : let me, therefore, again tell you, Philip, and, in you, all my disciples to the end of the world, *He that hath seen me, hath seen the Father.*

In which words you have the believer's *fiducial vision*, which is much the same *specifically* with the *beatifically* vision that he will have in heaven for ever, notwithstanding of whatever *gradual* difference there will be betwixt them. Particularly,

1. You have the *act* of this vision, it is called a SEEING ; and being expressed by sight, it imports a clear and distinct knowledge.

2. You have the *immediate object* of this vision, namely, CHRIST, who is here speaking, *He that hath seen me* ; not only ME, as God co-essential with the Father ; ME, as the Son of God, the second person of the glorious Trinity ; but also ME, as God-man, Mediator betwixt God and man ; ME, as *the brightness of the Father's glory, and the express image of his person.*

3. You have the *ultimate object* of this vision, namely, the FATHER ; he *hath seen the Father* ; that is, either the Father essentially considered, as God ; one God with the Son and the Holy Ghost ; or personally considered, as the first person of the glorious Trinity, and as *the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.* And here is the farthest sight of faith's prospect in time, the far end of faith's view, even to see the Father in Christ.

4. You have here the *connexion* betwixt the act of seeing the *immediate object*, with the act of seeing the *ultimate object*, flowing from the essential *oneness* betwixt the Father and the Son, notwithstanding of their personal distinction : *He that hath seen me, hath seen the Father.* Of this mysterious *oneness* as the foundation of this connexion betwixt seeing him, and seeing the Father, the Lord Jesus insists, ver. 10. saying, *I am in the Father, and the Father in me.* And again, ver. 11. *I am in the Father, and the Father in me.* Hence the doctrine

trine I incline to treat of, for explaining this purpose more fully, is this :

DOCT. *That such is the oneness betwixt Christ and the Father, that he that hath seen Christ; hath seen the Father.*

Though believers, who have seen, and *see but through a glass darkly*, may not distinctly know that they have seen the Father, when they have seen Christ, as the context clears ; yet such is the mysterious *unity and oneness* betwixt glorious Christ, and his glorious Father, that a saving sight of Christ does necessarily carry in it a saving sight of the Father, as Christ declares, *He that hath seen me, hath seen the Father.*

And now, my friends, so great is the subject I am proposing to speak of, that frequently I have had thoughts of giving it over, as too sublime and glorious for me to handle. It is such, that if we could speak aright about it, not only *elect sinners*, but *elect angels, who pry into the gospel mystery*, might be edified by it. If we should essay to speak of the heaven of heavens, and all the glory of it, it would not be such a great subject as to speak of *seeing Christ*, and of *seeing the Father in him*. They are blind that do not see the need we have of the assistance of the eternal Spirit, who *proceeds from the Father and the Son*, when we are thus essaying to speak of seeing the Father in the Son. Therefore, O endeavour, with your hearts, to lift up a prayer, for the conduct and help of the Spirit of God and of glory, that in speaking and hearing of such a subject, we may see the glory of Christ, and the glory of the Father in him.

The method I propose to follow in clearing and illustrating this doctrine, as the Lord shall be pleased to assist, is this,

- I. To speak of that ONENESS that is betwixt the Father and the Son.
- II. To offer some *thoughts*, or *remarks*, concerning a *saving sight* of Christ.

- III. To shew in what *respects* it is, that they who see CHRIST, see the FATHER.
- IV. *How*, and in what *manner* the Father is seen in Christ.
- V. Offer some *grounds* of the doctrine, shewing whence it is, that they that see Christ, do see the Father.
- VI. Draw some *inferences* from the whole, for application thereof.

I. The *first* thing proposed is, to speak of the ONENESS that is betwixt the Father and the Son. This *oneness* is declared by our Lord Jesus ; and, indeed, it is a mystery of pure revelation, and what we could not otherwise know ; and it is what we cannot fully comprehend : yet it is the object of our faith, ver. 10, 11. *Believest thou not that I am in the Father, and the Father in me ?* It is what our Lord Jesus tells his disciples they shall more fully know afterwards, ver. 20. *At that day ye shall know that I am in my Father ; and you in me, and I in you.* Our Lord Jesus expressly asserts this *oneness*, John x. 30. *I and my Father are one.* He makes it the ground of all Christian unity, John xvii. 21. *That they all may be one, as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee ; that they also may be ONE in us.* Hence also our Lord Jesus, much in the same manner as in the words of the text, John xii. 44, 45. *He that believeth on me, believeth on him that sent me. He that seeth me, seeth him that sent me.* Such then is the *oneness* betwixt the Father and the Son, that he who *bath seen Christ, hath seen the Father.* But to explain this *oneness* a little more particularly, we must consider,

1<sup>st</sup>, *Negatively*, that we are not to understand this *oneness* in respect of *personality* ; the Father and the Son are not one person, but two persons : the Father is one person, and the Son is another person of the adorable Trinity. They are distinct in respect of personal properties, *namely*, it is proper to the Father to *beget* the Son ; and to the Son to be *begotten* of the Father ; even as it is to the Holy Ghost to *proceed* from the Father and the Son, from all eternity. I hope I need not stand

stand to enlarge upon this to you, that make use of our Catechisms, with the scripture proofs; only carry still along with you this personal distinction, the Father is not the Son, nor the Son the Father; the Father was not incarnate, nor did humble himself and die for sinners as Christ did; the Father *sent the Son*.—Neither are you to understand this *oneness* betwixt Christ and the Father in respect of Christ's *humanity*; the two natures of Christ must not be confounded; the humanity of Christ is not one with God; the humanity is unite to Christ the Son, not to the Father: it is Christ who is Mediator, God-man, in one person. Hence, when Christ says, John xiv. 28. *My Father is greater than I*, it must be understood of Christ's *humanity*, and of Christ in the *form of a servant*; who yet, in regard of his divine nature, is *in the form of God, and thinks it no robbery to be equal with God*, Phil. ii. 6, 7. Therefore,

2dly, And *positively*, we are to view this *oneness* betwixt the Father and the Son in these following respects.

1. There is an *oneness* in point of *nature and essence* betwixt them; Father, Son, and Holy Ghost are but one God; *Hear, O Israel, the Lord our God is ONE JEHOVAH*, Deut. vi. 4. *There are three that bear witness in heaven, the Father, the Word, and the Spirit, and these three are ONE*, I John v. 7. Hence it is said, *In our Lord dwells all the fulness of the God-head bodily*, Col. ii. 9. The Father and the Son, then, are *one* in essence and being with the Holy Ghost: "These three are "one God, the same in substance, equal in power and "glory"

2. There is an *oneness* betwixt the Father and the Son in point of *essential properties, and attributes*; Christ is, together with the Father and Holy Ghost, one Spirit, "infinite, eternal, unchangeable, in his being, wisdom, power, holiness, justice, goodness, and truth." Is the Father *omnipotent*? so is the Son; He is the *mighty God*, Isa. ix. 6.—Is the Father *omnipresent*? so is the Son; *Lo, I am with you always to the end of the world*, Matth. xxviii. 20.; and *Where two or three are gathered*

together in my name, there am I in the midst of them.—Is the Father omniscient? so is the Son; *Thou that knowest all things, knows that I love thee*, John xxi. 17. Christ said to Nathaniel, *When thou wast under the fig-tree, I saw thee*, Here was a token that none in the world knew but Nathaniel himself, upon which he was convinced of the deity of Christ, which made him say, *Truly thou art the Son of God, thou art the King of Israel*.—Is the Father eternal? so is Christ; *Before Abraham was I am*.—Is the Father immortal? so is Christ; *The King eternal and immortal*.—Is the Father immutable? so is Christ; *The same yesterday, to-day, and for-ever, and without all variableness or shadow of turning*.

3. There is an *oneness* betwixt them in point of work; the works that are proper only to God are ascribed to Christ. I cannot stand upon all the scriptures that are cited by orthodox divines on these subjects. In short, *My Father worketh hitherto, and I work*, says Christ.—The work of creation is ascribed to him, *All things were made by him*, John i. 3. *Thou, Lord, in the beginning hast laid the foundation of the earth, and the heavens are the work of thine hands*, Heb. i. 10.—The work of preservation also, and the sustentation of the world; *Upholding all things by the word of his power*, Heb. i. 3.—The work of redemption; Acts xx. 28. *Feed the church of God, which he hath purchased with his own blood*.—The donation of the Spirit, is his work; *When the Comforter is come, whom I will send unto you from the Father, even the Spirit of truth, which proceedeth from the Father, he shall testify of me*, John xv. 26. *And, I will send him unto you*.—The raising of the dead out of their graves, is his work, and that both in a spiritual and corporal sense; *The hour comes, when the dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God, and they that hear shall live*, John v. 25.—The government of the world, now, and the judging of the world, at the last day, is his work; *The Father judgeth no man, but hath committed all judgment to the Son*, John v. 22.; and he will judge the world in righteousness.—The institution of ordinances and offices in the church, is his work; Mat. xxviii. 19. *Go ye and teach all nations*. See Eph. iv. 11.

4. There

4. There is an *oneness* betwixt the Father and the Son in point of *worship* and *honour*; and therefore all men are called to *honour the Son even as they honour the Father*; John v. 23. *He that honours not the Son, honours not the Father which sent him.* All manner of worship due to the Father is due to the Son; therefore says Christ, John xiv. 1. *Ye believe in God, believe also in me.* And Psal. ii. 12. *Kiss the Son lest he be angry.* See Rev. v. 12, 13. and vii. 10, 11.

5. There is an *oneness* betwixt them in point of *will*. Though, as man, he hath a *will* distinct from his *will* as God, and so distinct from the Father's will, yet subject to the divine will in every thing; *Not my will, but thine be done.* But as God, his will is one and the same with the Father's will, and therefore what the Father wills Christ wills; John iv. 34. *My meat is to do the will of him that sent me:* and again, *I delight to do thy will O my God; lo, I come to do thy will.*

6. There is an *oneness* of *happiness* and *felicity* betwixt them, Rom. ix. 5. speaking of the Jews, *Of whom according to the flesh Christ came, who is over all, God blessed for ever.* Christ was from all eternity, and is the ever blessed God. There was a time, indeed, when the Son was humbled and made a *curse for us*; but his essential glory and happiness was never diminished, however it was eclipsed: as God, he was as happy on the cross, and in the grave, as ever he was.

7. There is an *oneness* betwixt them in point of *interest*; John xvii. 10. *All thine are mine, and mine are thine, and I am glorified in them.* This says, that they are both one in essence, and one in interest; there is no separate or divided interest betwixt them. O happy souls that are interested in Christ! for the Father's interest and his are one and the same.

8. There is an *oneness* of *affection* betwixt them; the objects of the Father's love, are the objects of Christ's love; and the objects of Christ's love, are the objects of the Father's love; 2 Thess. ii. 16. *Our Lord Jesus Christ, and God even our Father, which hath loved us.* John xvi. 21. *He that loves me shall be loved of*  
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*my Father; and I will love him.* Hence Christ says to his beloved friends, John xvi. 27. *The Father himself loves you.* Was it only Christ's love that brought him to die and suffer for sinners? nay, it was the Father's love also that sent him on that errand.—See 1 John iv. 9, 10.

9. There is an *oneness* of dignity and authority betwixt them. Christ is the Angel of the covenant, of whom the Father says, Exod. xxiii. 21. *Beware of him, and obey his voice,—for my name is in him; i. e. my authority is in him.* His essential dignity and authority is the same with the Father's; he *thinks it no robbery to be equal with God*: he does not rob the Father of his authority when he makes himself equal with him; for, as God, the dignity and authority of both is one and the same; and as Mediator, he hath a donative right to all the power and sovereignty; *All power in heaven and in earth is given unto me* Matth. xxviii. 18.

10. There is an *oneness* betwixt them in point of *supreme Deity, self-existence, self-sufficiency, and independency*: Hence the supreme throne is called *the throne of God, and of the Lamb*, Revel. xxii. 1. Hence says the Father to him, Psalm xlv. 6. compared with Heb. i. 8. *Thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever.* And hence says he of himself, Isaiah xlv. 21, 22. *There is no God else besides me, a just God and a Saviour; and there is none beside me. Look to me, and be saved, all the ends of the earth: for I am God, and there is none else.* Hence his name is *JEHOVAH-TSIDKENU*, Jerem. xxiii. 6. *The Lord our righteousness.* Hence also called *JEHOVAH*, Malachi iii. 1. and elsewhere. Hence Paul says, *He is God over all*, in the fore-cited Rom. ix. 5. And the apostle John, 1 John v. 20. *This is the true God, and eternal Life.* Hence also, these that get a saving manifestation of him, cry out with Thomas, *My Lord and my God*, John xx. 28. as seeing that *in him dwells all the fulness of the Godhead bodily*: though, indeed, in point of personality, the Father is the first person; yet in point of essence, or essentially considered, Christ is the same, supreme, self-existent, self-sufficient,

sufficient, independent, invisible, and eternal God with the Father and the Holy Ghost. But I must not enlarge upon this point, that I may overtake the rest.— Only thus much shall suffice for a touch at that *unction* that is betwixt the Father and the Son, that lays the foundation for the other part of the doctrine of Christ here, *He that hath seen me, hath seen the Father.*

II. The *second* thing proposed was, to offer some *thoughts* concerning the *seeing of Christ*, especially a saving sight of him in whom the Father is seen. What I would say on this head, may be laid open in the following *remarks*, for giving you a view of this matter, namely, *seeing of Christ.*

1. *Remark*, “That there are *several ways* wherein “natural men may see Christ to little advantage.” There is a *bodily* sight of Christ, that many got when he was upon the earth; they saw him who was God, though yet they did not see God in Christ, nor believe in him; *Ye have seen me, and believe not*, John vi. 56.—There is a *mental* sight of Christ, and a *rational* view of God, that natural men may have when they apprehend the *invisible things of God in the works of creation*, Romans i. 20. They may see it was an infinite power that made these visible heavens, sun, moon, and stars: and hence it is said of the heathen, *They knew God, yet glorified him not as God*, verse 21.—There is a *spiritual* kind of sight of Christ that natural men may have by the common illumination of the Spirit. Thus Balaam had his eyes strangely opened, and saw the *visions of the Almighty*. Thus the apostates, Heb. vi. 4, 5, 6. were enlightened, and some are said, *through the knowledge of Christ, to escape the pollutions of the world*; yet afterwards are so entangled therein, that their *latter end is worse than the beginning*, 2 Peter ii. 20.—Besides, there is a *wrathful* sight of Christ, that all the wicked world will have at the day of judgment; for, *Behold, he comes with clouds, and every eye shall see him, and they also that pierced, and all nations shall wail because of him.* None of these are the sight of Christ here

here to be understood : it is a saving sight of Christ we speak of.

2. *Remark.* “ That there is a *gospel-sight* of Christ, “ that is either more common to the visible church, or “ more special to the invisible.” The *more common* is that which the whole visible church have beyond the outfield of the heathen world, Titus ii. 11. *The grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men ; i. e. to all the visible church that have the gospel preached to them ; they have so far the objective revelation and discovery of Christ, and the glory of God’s grace in him set before them. Like Chorazin and Bethsaida, they are lifted up to heaven, and highly exalted with gospel-privileges, gospel-ordinances, gospel-offers, gospel-sacraments, the misimprovement whereof brings them down to hell.—The more special sight of Christ, that is peculiar to the church invisible, is that which results from the subjective, internal, saving, and powerful revelation of Christ into the heart ; he revealed his Son in me, says Paul, Gal. i. 16. Hence,*

3. A third *remark* I offer is, “ That the *light* where- “ in Christ is savingly seen, is his own divine light, Psa. “ xxxvi. 9. *In thy light shall we see light.*” As we cannot see the natural sun, but in his own light ; so we cannot see the Sun of righteousness, till he himself arise with healing under his wings : and this divine light wherein we savingly see Christ is common to Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. It is in the Father’s light, we see the Son ; in the Son’s light we see the Father ; and in the Spirit’s light we see both the Father and the Son. Hence the Father is said to discover Christ. *No man can come to me, except the Father draw him. It is written in the prophets, they shall be all taught of God : every man therefore that hath heard and learned of the Father cometh unto me, John vi 4, 5.—The Father discovers the excellency of Christ to the soul ; and the soul sees him such an excellent person, that it would give a world for him, not knowing all this time, that it is the Father of Christ that is discovering him : It pleased God to reveal his Son in me, says Paul ; and again, God, who commanded light to shine out of darkness, hath shined into our*

*our heart, to give us the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ, 2 Cor. iv. 6.—*

Again, the Son is said to discover the Father. As the Father comes and courts a bride for his Son, so when the match is drawn up, then the Bridegroom shews to the bride her friends, and particularly the Father, of which more afterwards: *No man hath seen God at any time, the only begotten Son, that is in the bosom of the Father, he hath declared him, John i. 18.—*

And then further, it is the Spirit that discovers both the Father and the Son, as he is both the Spirit of the Father and of the Son, he shews the Father in the Son, and hence is called *the Spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of Christ, Ephesians i. 17. He shall glorify me, says Christ, for he shall receive of mine, and shew it unto you, John xvi. 14.*

4. Remark, "That the eye whereby Christ is seen, is the eye of faith." As before saving illumination we are dark, and without light; so, before saving faith, we are blind and without sight: therefore, as Christ, when he discovers himself, does, with the one hand, reveal his glory; so, with the other, he gives the eye to see his glory. All men are born blind, and remain so till Christ open their eyes, and give faith; for, he is *the author and finisher* thereof. This faith is the only eye whereby Christ is now seen; he cannot be savingly seen otherwise: faith is therefore called *the evidence of things not seen, Heb. xi. 1.; and thereby we look not at the things that are seen, but at the things that are not seen, 2 Cor. iv. 18. Thereby we see and behold, as in a glass, the glory of the Lord, 2 Cor. iii. 18.* It is true, the glory of Christ did once pass before man's bodily eyes, but yet none saw it but believers by faith; *The Word was made flesh, and we beheld his glory, John i. 14.* It is true also, that the glory of Christ will appear gloriously at the great day of his appearance; but then there will be no faith either on Christ's right or left hand, such as now we see him by. The *redeemed* will have no faith, nor any use for such faith as now; for then, sight and love will put an end to faith. The *damned*, on the other hand, tho'

they shall be no more unbelievers; for sight and fear will put an end to their unbelief; yet their faith will be no saving faith then, but only such as the devils now have, that believe and tremble: but from Christ's ascending to heaven, till his coming again to judgment, faith is the only eye that can savingly see Christ. Hence,

5. *Remark* I offer is, "That there are *several periods* wherein Christ hath been, and is to be seen by faith, particularly these four."—First period was before his *coming in the flesh*: thus *Abraham saw him afar off*; thus *Isaiah saw his glory*; yea, and all the Old-testament saints, by faith, saw him in the promise and prophecy at a distance, Heb. xi. 13.—Second period was *after his coming, and before his death and suffering on the cross*; thus old Simeon saw him by faith, Luke ii. 30. *Mine eyes have seen thy salvation*. It was a great blessing to see Christ in the flesh; but many did so, that yet did not see him believably, as his true disciples did, John i. 14.—Third period was *after his death, before his ascension*; thus all the disciples of Christ saw him, and were *glad when they saw the Lord*. Indeed, while he was yet lying in the grave, their faith was like to give up the ghost; also, *we trusted that it had been he that should have redeemed Israel, but now he is crucified, dead, and buried*: they were at a loss to know, whether they should repent of their faith or of their unbelief. Indeed the eye of faith was much tried, when Christ, the object of it, was brought so low: their faith had difficulties to grapple with, which ours want now, when we see him crowned with glory and honour.—Therefore the fourth period is *after his ascension to heaven, till his second coming*; and in this period we, and all other believers, to the end of the world, remain while here; and the farther he is removed from the view of the eye of the body, the more properly is he the object of the eye of faith, which can behold him through the clouds, though he be in heaven, and we on the earth.

6. *Remark* I offer, is, "That there are *certain seasons* wherein Christ, in a special manner is seen;"  
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particularly the day of *conversion* is a day wherein Christ is first seen: when Paul was converted, *God revealed his Son in him.* If you be a believer, and would know when you was first converted, it was even when you had the first view of Christ and his glory. It is by the power of this discovery of Christ that faith is wrought, while the *gospel comes not in word only to the soul, but in power, and in the Holy Ghost, and in much assurance.*—But again, sometimes the discovery he makes of himself afterwards may be more sensible and remarkable, when, perhaps, on the back of a *long desertion*, he returns, and says, *I remember the kindness of thy youth, and the love of thine espousals. I am the God of Bethel, where thou anointedst the pillar, and vowedst the vow unto me.* Sometimes to shew his holiness and goodness, as being the *rewarder of them that diligently seek him*, he is pleased to shew himself after a course of spiritual diligence. Thus Moses prays and cries, saying, *I beseech thee, shew me thy glory;* and accordingly, *the Lord makes all his goodness pass before him*, Exod. xxxiii. 18, 19. Indeed, if there were more of Moses's spirit, it would be better with us. We receive not, because we ask not.—Sometimes again, to shew his sovereignty, and the freedom of his grace, he gives a sight of himself to a *backsliding child*, and courts him back with kindness, saying, *Thou hast not called on me, O Jacob; thou hast been weary of me, O Israel; thou hast made me to serve with thy sins, and wearied me with thine iniquities; yet I, even I am he that blotteth out thy transgressions for mine own sake, and will not remember thy sins*, Isaiah xliii. 24, 25. It is, indeed, an amazing condescension, that the Lord should please to give a glance of himself, even upon the back of hainous provocations; yet thus he is pleased many times to give them occasion to say, *It is the voice of my Beloved; behold, he cometh skipping on the mountains, and leaping upon the hills; making all the hills and mountains of sin, guilt and separation, to melt down before him.* And, indeed, nothing melts their hard heart so much as to see him thus coming.—Sometimes their *suffering season* is his time of

shewing himself, and of their seeing him: *If you be reproached for the name of Christ, happy are you; for the Spirit of God and of glory resteth on you,* 1 Peter iv. 14.—Sometimes a *dying* season is another time of their seeing him; thus Stephen, when they were stoning him to death, he *looked up, and saw the glory of God, and Jesus standing at the right-hand of God.*—There are, I say, certain seasons of their seeing Christ. But I proceed.

7. Remark I offer, is, “That there are *various respects* and *various degrees* wherein persons may be said to see Christ savingly;” particularly when he manifests himself to them, as he does not manifest himself to the world. See John xiv. 21, 22, 23. His people may be said to see him, when he makes them sensible of his gracious presence with them, and sensible of his special love towards them, and puts them in a condition to say, *He loved me, and gave himself for me*: and when, by this deep impression of his gracious presence, and sweet persuasion of his special love, through the powerful breathing of his Spirit upon them, he draws forth their graces to a lively exercise; *lifts up the light of his countenance upon them*; and *makes them sit down under his shadow with great delight*; when he clears up their interest in his love, saying, *I have loved thee with an everlasting love, therefore with everlasting loving-kindness have I drawn thee.* In a word, one may be said to have seen Christ, when he comes with a word of grace, and work of power, and opens the locked heart, and melts the hard heart, and fixes the wandering heart, and humbles the proud heart, and heals the plagued heart, and draws the backward heart, and frees the fettered heart, spiritualizes the carnal heart, raises the drooping heart, helps and curbs the unbelieving heart, and comforts the dejected heart; and when he is pleased to give his convincing, quickening, strengthening, sanctifying, and directing presence: but these things I cannot enlarge upon, only there are various degrees of seeing Christ, in whatever respect his people may be said to see him. Some have more, and some less of this sight. Some are brought

to the banquetting-house, to get a full meal; others receive but a crumb that falls from the table; and particular believers have not always, and at all times, the like measure and degree of the outletting of his favour. Sometimes the soul may be brought to the suburbs of glory, and get such a discovery of Christ, that he would be content the valley of vision were his burial-place, saying, with Simeon, *Now lettest thou thy servant depart in peace; for mine eyes have seen thy salvation.*—At other times the view and discovery is of a lower degree, when faith is not riding so triumphantly, but fighting its way through many doubts and fears, trials and temptations, and sensible presence much withdrawn.

8. *Remark* is, “That there are several *properties* of “a saving sight of Christ that tend to give light concerning it.” For instance, this sight of Christ is but *imperfect* here, and *partial*, in regard of what it will be hereafter, 1 Cor. xiii. 9. *Now we know in part; and verse 12. Now we see through a glass darkly, but then face to face.* Indeed their sight is like a not-seeing, in comparison to what one day it will be.—Again, this seeing of Christ, though imperfect, yet it is *unspeakable*. Indeed, the joy that results from a sight of Christ is unspeakable; *In whom, though now we see him not, yet believing, we rejoice with joy unspeakable, and full of glory.* Who then can utter or express the glory of Christ, the sight whereof raises that unspeakable joy?—This sight of Christ is *supernatural*; *How is the glory of the Lord seen but by the Spirit of the Lord?* 2 Cor. iii. 18. It is God that must bestow this blessing; flesh and blood cannot reveal Christ to a man; *The natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him; neither can he know them, for they are spiritually discerned; but God hath revealed them to us by his Spirit,* 1 Cor. ii. 10, 14.—This sight of Christ is an *amiable* sight; for, *He is altogether lovely.* This makes his tabernacles amiable, because they see the glory of God there; and every thing in God that they see is amiable; yea, you are not to think that the children

dren of God see only one side of God, as it were, and not another. Tho' the Lord shews but part of himself at once, now a lesser and then a greater part of himself, yet it is not to be thought as if they saw but one side of God and not another, or if he shewed his amiable side and concealed his terrible side ; no, that which is most terrible in God to wicked men, that is also most amiable and lovely in the eyes of the saints ; for a God in Christ is all amiable. His power, greatness, and justice, which the wicked abhor, appear to them in excellent glory.—Again, the sight of Christ here is frequently *interrupted*, it is only in heaven that the saints have the uninterrupted vision and fruition of God, without any cloud to darken their day ; but here, no sooner does the heart begin to open to Christ some time, than, alas ! he is gone ; *I opened to my Beloved, but my Beloved had withdrawn himself and was gone.*—Again, this sight of Christ, however short and inconstant, yet it is always *sweet and satisfying ; sweet and ravishing ; His mouth is most sweet*, says the church : O how sweet and satisfying are the smiles of his mouth ! it is enough to make a heaven in the soul. *How sweet are the words of his mouth ! sweeter than the honey and the honey comb.* When he manifests himself in a word of grace, the sweetness is such, that all sweetness is but bitterness in comparison thereof. How sweet and satisfying is it when the day spring from on high visits the soul, especially after a long dark night of temptation, desertion, and despondency, wherein the soul thought that God had forgotten to be gracious, and would never return. When the Sun of righteousness breaks out below the black clouds, even of sin and provocation, when the soul now sees the power and glory of God in the sanctuary, how is it *satisfied as with marrow and fatness*, and the mouth *praises him with joyful lips !* Again, this sight of Christ is *convincing*, powerfully convincing ; it carries so much evidence in it, as makes the soul cry out with Thomas, *My Lord, and my God ; He that believeth hath the witness in himself.* Surely we do not see Christ sleeping ; nay, it is with open eyes and an open face ; *All we with open face beholding, as in a glass the glory of the Lord.*

According to the measure and degree of the manifestation, it will have some evidence, even as a man seeing the sun, carries its own evidence along with it; though the sight be dark in comparison of what it will be, yet it is convincing in itself—And as it is convincing, so it is *affecting*. O! a sight of Christ is most affecting, when it is a saving sight; it affects with reverence, therefore it is said of the disciples, when they saw him *they worshipped him*. It affects with joy; *Then were the disciples glad when they saw the Lord*. It affects with holy fear; *When I saw him, I fell at his feet as dead*. It affects with wonder, and makes the soul cry out, RABBONI, *who is a God like unto thee?* It affects with self-abhorrence; *Now mine eyes see thee wherefore I abhor myself*. It affects with self-abasement; *O what am I, and what is my father's house, that thou hast brought me hitherto?* It affects with penitency and godly sorrow; *They shall look on him whom they have pierced, and mourn*. It affects with new vigour and courage; *They looked to him, and were enlightened, and their faces were not ashamed*.

9. Remark is, “That there are many means where-  
“by, and glasses wherein we may see Christ.”—Sometimes he is seen in the glass of his *outward works*, the visible creation shews forth his divine glory; the very *heavens declare it*, says the psalmist; and the spiritual eye will see Christ in the creatures, though *his glory is above the earth and heaven*, Psal. cxlviii. 13.; yet his glory is in the earth and heaven, and in all his works, small and great, inasmuch, that though they cannot savingly discover him, yet these that have got a saving discovery of him, may see more and more of his glory wheresoever they cast their eyes, were it but on a creeping insect, or a grass pile.

Again, sometimes he is seen in the glass of his *inward works*, more especially when he works effectually, upon the heart, implanting the graces of his Spirit there, or afterwards making grace to grow, both in the root, by the increase of a holy and spiritual disposition; and in the fruit, by a suitable gospel walk and conversation. When he works any wonderful change upon  
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the soul, whether it be yourselves or others, and that you see he hath taken a gracious dealing with such or such an one, why, then you see there the finger of God ; and that the Lord is near, his wonderous works declare.—Sometimes he is seen in the glass of his *providences* ; common providences are common glasses, where he may be seen, whether they are judgment or mercy. *As the Lord is known by the judgment that he executes, and by the mercy that he renews every moment,* so his people will see him in a rod ; they will see him in a deliverance ; yea, the spiritual man will see more of the Lord in an ordinary meal, than the hypocrite ever saw at a communion-table. But there are also signal providences, wherein they get more signal views of him. When Abraham's knife was at his son's throat, he met with a notable providence ; behold, a ram caught in a thicket by the horns, ready for him to sacrifice in room of Isaac. O ! how much of God's glory did Abraham see in that providence ! therefore he calls the name of the place **JEHOVAH-JIREH**, *In the mount of the Lord it shall be seen.* The Lord will provide remarkable provision, remarkable protection ; and this or that remarkable providence hath been sometimes the vehicle of a remarkable manifestation of the Lord's glory.—Again, he is to be seen sometimes in the glass of the word ; 2 Cor. 18. Rom. x. 6. John v. 39. *Search the scriptures, for in them ye think ye have eternal life, and they are they that testify of me.* Here then we may see him in the types, in the prophecies, in the promises, in the doctrines of the word, as the Antitype of all the types, the substance of all the shadows, the truth of all the prophecies, the fulness of all the promises, the centre of all the truths and lines of the word. In the precept, we see his holiness ; in the promise, we see his goodness ; his justice, in the threatenings ; his wisdom, in the revelations of the word. Here a believer will sometimes see Christ in a title or designation given him in the word. O the glory that is to be seen in that name **JESUS**, in that name **IMMANUEL**, in that name **KING** of **SAINTS**, **KING** of **KINGS** !—Sometimes in a *resemblance* or *simile* ; while he is re-

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sembled to a rose, for beauty ; to a rock, for strength : to a treasure, for bounty ; to a rising sun, for glory. In this glass the soul will see him infinitely beyond all resemblances. However, when any light from heaven is shining, you have no more ado, as it were, but to open your Bible, and there see Christ.—Again, he is to be seen in the glass of his *ordinances*, whether public, or private, or secret ; hence his people many times see him in a duty, they see him in meditation, they see him in prayer ; sometimes they see him in a sermon ; while the minister is opening the word, the Lord is opening their understanding to discern Christ there ; while they are hearing a sermon ; yea, sometimes while they are reading a gospel sermon they will have Christ in their hand, as it were, Christ in their mouth, Christ in their eye ; yea, Christ in their heart.—Finally, in the *sacrament* Christ is to be seen ; for, in baptism he is represented by the water, and the spiritual eye may see him there ; and in the august ordinance of the supper he is represented by the bread and wine ; there he may be seen and known in the breaking of bread. All the believing views of Christ and sights of him here-away are *mediate*, through the intervention of means and ordinances ; not *immediate*, as they shall be above : *Now we see through a glass darkly* ; but the time comes when the glasses shall be broken, and believers shall see him face to face, and see him as he is. Rev. xxi. 22. *I saw no temple there ; for the Lord God Almighty and the Lamb are the temple of it.*

The 10th and last *remark* is, “ That Christ himself, who is the object of this sight, is a most *glorious, full, and extensive* object.” There is more to be seen in Christ than all the angels in heaven can tell. This is a larger field than we shall be able to travel over through all eternity. O what glory is to be seen in his natures and person, as God-man in one person ? To see him in his mission and commission, as the Sent and Sealed of the Father ; to see him in his offices, relations, and excellencies ; in his doing, suffering, dying, rising, ascending, sitting at the right-hand of God, interceding, and coming again to judgment ; to see him in his furniture for

his work as Mediator betwixt God and man, as standing so well affected to both parties and their interests, *namely*, his Father's honour and his people's happiness both, and in whom both parties may confide : accordingly the Father trusts him with all the concerns of his glory ; and well may his people trust him with all the concerns of their salvation ; yea, so furnished, that he is able to bring both parties together, and to decide the difference betwixt them, such is his interest with God, and power with man. To see him in his fitness for us, as being a Prophet, to teach ; a Priest to save ; a King, to subdue ; a Physician, to heal ; a Friend, to help in all cases : as having merit, to justify ; Spirit, to sanctify ; blood, to wash ; grace, to pardon ; fulness, to supply ; sweetness, to endear ; and beauty, to allure. O how sweet is it to see him fitted of infinite wisdom to your need ! And, do you not need him when you are in the dark, to enlighten you ; when dead, to quicken you ; when dull, to revive you ; when in doubts, to resolve you ; when in fears, to encourage you ; when you stagger, to establish you ; when you fall, to raise you ; when you are tempted, to succour you ; when weak, to strengthen you ; when wandering, to restore you ; in duties, to assist you ; in difficulties, to guide you ; in dangers, to guard you ; when under bondage, to loose you ; when under burdens, to relieve you ! None but Christ can do all this, and a thousand times more ; and if you were always looking to Christ, when you stand in need of him, your eyes would seldom be off him, for you are still needing him in these respects. But it is the special design of the sacrament to shew him forth in his death and suffering ; there we see him as a crucified Christ, and we are to view his death and suffering, (1.) In the *cause* thereof : the *procuring* cause was sin ; *He was wounded for our transgressions* : the *instrumental* cause was the devil and his instruments : the *moving* and *impulsive* cause was love ; *He loved me, and gave himself for me* : the *efficient* or *effective* cause was God ; *It pleased the Lord to bruise him* : the *final* cause, or the fruit and effect, was God's glory, and our eternal redemption.

demption. (2.) In the *severity* thereof, while he drank the cup of the Father's wrath to the bottom. (3.) In the *sufficiency* thereof, for paying all the debt that was owing to the law and justice of God. (4.) In the *acceptableness* thereof, for it was a *sacrifice of a sweet smelling savour unto God.*—In a word, the principal glory to be seen in Christ, is, that *he that sees him, sees the Father.* And this leads me to,

III. The *third* head proposed, namely, to shew in what *respects* they that see Christ see the Father; *He that hath seen me, hath seen the Father.* I have shewed the *oneness* that is betwixt the Father and him in nature, properties, will, affection, authority, supremacy, and other ways: and therefore he that sees Christ must see the Father in all these respects wherein he is one with him. There is no need of Philip's prayer here, *Lord, shew us the Father:* for, having seen Christ we have seen the Father. It is Christ and he alone that declares, represents, and makes known to us the essential glory of the invisible God; and without him our understanding could make no approach to his divine excellency. It is in the face of Christ that we see the glory of God, 2 Cor. iv. 6. And now, if any would know whether they have got a saving sight of Christ, here is the great diagnostic and infallible evidence thereof, namely, if you have seen the Father in him; and, indeed, as there is no seeing of the Father, but in the Son; so there is no saving sight of the Son, without seeing the Father in him: here is the excellency of the glory of Christ that faith sees; here is the very foundation of our holy religion, and the ground of all our hope of life and immortality, *God in Christ reconciling the world to himself;* here is the *great mystery of godliness, God manifested in the flesh:* here is the sum of the gospel, *viz.* the glory of God represented to us in the person and office of Christ as God-man, Mediator betwixt God and us. To see this glory is saving faith; not to see it, is damnable unbelief.

But to come more directly to the question, to shew in what respect they that see Christ, do see the Father, it is needful we consider,

1<sup>st</sup>, More generally in what *capacity* CHRIST is to be considered, when we see the Father in him ; and in what *capacity* the FATHER is to be considered when we see him in Christ.

As to the former, *viz.* in what *capacity* CHRIST is to be considered, when we see the Father in him : why, in short, he is to be considered,

1. As God the SON, the second person of the ever blessed and ever adorable Trinity.

2. As MAN, or God incarnate ; God-man in one person, clothed with the offices of Mediator, Redeemer, Saviour, and Surety for a number of lost sinners.

As to the latter, *viz.* in what *capacity* the FATHER is to be considered when we see him in Christ.

1. When Christ is considered as GOD, then the Father is to be considered *personally*, for the first person of the glorious Trinity.

2. When Christ is considered as MAN, then the Father is to be considered *essentially* ; including Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, one in essence.

In both these respects Christ and the Father are spoken of in the text, as the context shews ; for, in the following context, Christ is said to be *in the Father*, and the *Father in him*, in the unity of the same divine essence, verse 10. ; in which respect, Christ being considered as GOD, the Father is taken *personally* ; so, in the preceding context, Christ is said to be the *way* to the Father ; *Ye believe in God, believe also in me ; I am the way, no man cometh to the Father but by me*, ver. 1, 6. In which respect, Christ being considered as MAN, or God-man, the Father is to be taken *essentially* : for, as God, Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, essentially considered, did constitute Christ personally considered, and so clothed with our flesh to be the way to God, and the representative of the divine glory, namely, his own glory, as God, equally with the Father's, which are essentially the same ; so Christ, the second person,

person, considered as man, is the way to God essentially considered: nor does it involve any contradiction, that thus he should be the way to himself, as well as to the Father; seeing it is as man, that he is the way to himself as God; and in him as man, we see his essential glory as well as the Father's: for, as personally considered, he is the eternal Son of the eternal Father; so essentially, he is the everlasting Father, one in number with the first person; Isaiah ix. 6. *The mighty God, the everlasting Father*; compared with Deut. vi. 4. *The Lord our God is one Lord*.

However, though the text allows us not to exclude the consideration of Christ *personally*, as GOD the SON; yet it is especially as MAN that he is to be viewed by us, or in his incarnation, for therein he becomes the representative of God to the church, 2 Cor. iv. 6.— And without him, under this consideration, we cannot either see him or his Father; for Christ's divine person, absolutely considered, is equally invisible and inaccessible to us as the Father is: in him, therefore, as man, we see the Father; *i. e.* we see God in him, he being the image of the invisible God, and the great representative of God unto us. But,

2dly, And more particularly, I proceed to shew in what *respects* they who *see Christ do see the Father*: in the utmost latitude that the text allows, it will import the following particulars.

1. That they who see Christ will see the Father's *nature and essence* in him; for, when the glory of the Godhead is discovered, then he is seen in whom dwells the fulness of the undivided essence of the Godhead bodily, Col. ii. 9.

2. They who see Christ will see the Father's *personality* in him; for, when he is truly seen, he is seen to be *the brightness of the Father's glory, and the express image of his person*, Heb. i. 3. Therefore, though the Father and the Son are not *one person*; yet, when the Son is seen, we see the Father's person in him as the *image* thereof.

3. They who see Christ see the Father's *relations* in him; I mean, his relation both to Christ, and to us in Christ,

Christ. When Christ is seen, then the Father's relations to *Christ* are seen ; that is, not only his relation to Christ by *nature*, as Christ is the only eternally *begotten of the Father* ; but also by *office*, as Christ is the *sent and sealed* of the Father to the mediatorial work. Yea, when Christ is seen, then the Father's relations to *us*, in Christ, are seen ; particularly as he is our God and Father in Christ : *I ascend to my Father, and your Father : to my God, and your God*, John xx. 17. They who see Christ, or God in Christ, they cannot see him any other way than a *reconciled God and Father in him*. To see God out of Christ, is to see him as a *consuming fire*, a Judge, and an Avenger ; but to see him in Christ, is to see him as a Friend and Father.

4. They who see Christ, see the Father's *face* in him ; *The God who commanded light to shine out of darkness, hath shined into our hearts, to give us the light of the knowledge of the glory of God, in the face of Jesus Christ*, 2 Cor. iv.

6. Christ is the fair face of God : and as we see nothing of the body of a man, that is all clothed, but his face ; so God is clothed with such robes of terrible majesty, that we can see nothing of him but his face ; and happy are they who see his face by seeing him in Christ ; for, as the best sight of a man is to see his face, so the best sight of God is in Christ ; his brightest beauty, and greatest glory is to be seen there. Hence the saints in scripture, when they sought to see God, they still sought for a sight of his face ; as Psa. lxxx. 3, 7, 19. *Cause thy face to shine, and we shall be safe*. The seed of *Jacob*, are called the *seekers of his face* : and where is the face and favour of God but in Christ ?

5. They who see Christ, they see the Father's *heart* in him. To see a man's heart is to know his mind, and see his secret thoughts that none but God and he know ; and to see this were little worth the seeing, since all hearts, by nature, are wicked ; and the *heart of the wicked is little worth* : but to see God's heart is a vast matter ; and yet when the believer sees Christ's, he sees God's heart, and some secrets there that none know but God and the believer himself. that is looking

to Christ; Pſal. xxv. 14. *The ſecret of the Lord is with them that fear him, and he will ſhew them his covenant;* or, as it may be read, and is accordingly tranſlated in the margin, HIS COVENANT, TO MAKE THEM KNOW IT. You may conceive it thus; Chriſt is given for *the Covenant of the people*; this covenant is given to make them know the *ſecret of the Lord*, the Father's heart, mind, and will; and his glorious counſels are ſeen when Chriſt is ſeen. He lies in *the boſom of the Father*, John i. 18.; therefore, they who ſee Chriſt, cannot but ſee into his boſom: and, O they ſee far that ſee there? Some look to God, but never look to his heart and boſom: ſome look to his hands, in the works of creation; ſome look to his feet, in the ways of his providence: ſome look to his head, as it were, in his unſearchable decrees: but they loſe the right ſight of him who do not look to his heart and boſom. This is another ſort of a place than that which the angels ſpoke of concerning the dead and buried body of the Lord Jeſus, *Come ſee the place where the Lord lay*, Mat. xxviii. 6. I may, in alluſion to it, ſay a greater word, *Come ſee the place where the Lord lay from all eternity; where he lies to this day; and will do for-ever*: that is, *the Father's boſom*. What! can that be ſeen? Yes; when you ſee Chriſt, you cannot miſs a ſight of the place where he lies.

6. They who ſee Chriſt, they ſee the Father's *properties* and *perfections* in him: and here to ſpeak of all theſe, would be to ſpeak for ever. I ſhall only name ſome of theſe glorious perfections, excellencies, and the properties of the divine majeſty that are ſeen in Chriſt, in ſuch a manner as they cannot be ſeen any where elſe. I paſs over the infinity, immenſity, and other ſuch excellencies of God, which yet are to be ſeen in Chriſt, that I may confine myſelf to ſome of theſe attributes of God, that are ordinarily more obvious to the believing eye of the ſoul that gets a ſaving ſight of Chriſt.

(1.) He that hath ſeen Chriſt, hath ſeen the infinite *wiſdom* of the Father in him, and in the work of redemption by him. We do not extenuate the diſplays that

that are made of the divine wisdom in the works of creation and providence ; when taking a comparative view thereof, we set them vastly inferior to the discoveries that are made of *the manifold wisdom of God*, in and through Jesus Christ, Eph. iii. 9, 10. whose name is, *Christ, the Wisdom of God*, 1 Cor. i. 24. ; and *in whom are hid all the treasures of divine wisdom*, Col. ii. 3. If the question then be, as it is express, Job xxviii. 12. *Where shall wisdom be found ? and what is the place of understanding ? The deep says, It is not in me : the sea says, It is not in me.* But, behold, here it is, even in him who says, *He that hath seen me, hath seen the Father.* As this wisdom is, in itself, an eternal, essential property of the divine nature, we can have no comprehension of it, it stands at such an infinite distance from us, but in and by Christ, and in him alone is manifested this *manifold wisdom of God*. O the many foldings of wisdom that are here ! Christ is a vast volume, a great book, wherein we may see and read the *wisdom of God in a mystery*. This book is open to us in the gospel, and if the Spirit of faith be allowed, we have no more ado, but to turn over the leaves, and in every page we will see written in capital letters, WISDOM, WISDOM, WISDOM ; INFINITE WISDOM.—Wisdom in *contriving* such a salvation of sinners, as should redound to the greatest glory of God.—Wisdom in *choosing* such a person to be the Saviour and Redeemer, even the fittest person of all the three glorious persons of the adorable Trinity, the middle person to be Midfman and Mediator betwixt God and man.—Wisdom in *furnishing* him with all the help and assistance in this work, that the other two glorious persons could give him, while he is sealed by the Father, and anointed by the Spirit : *Him hath God the Father sealed : and the Spirit of the Lord God is upon him above measure.*—Wisdom in *uniting* the most distant extremes, in joining God and man in one person, the infinite and eternal God with a piece of clay. O wisdom, wisdom shines here ! Wisdom in punishing the sin, and yet pardoning the sinner ; taking vengeance on the crime, and yet shewing mercy on the criminal. This wisdom of God shines in the  
face

face of Christ, the *Surety of the better testament*.—Wisdom in bringing the *greatest good* out of the *greatest evil* and all by the most unlikely means ; making sin itself, which tends to the greatest dishonour of God, to contribute to his greatest glory ; while salvation from it, by Jesus, brings in *glory to God to the highest* ; and while in him also is brought life out of death, and the highest salvation out of the deepest humiliation.—Wisdom in counter-acting the *policy* of the old serpent in such a wonderful manner, making the *seed of the woman to bruise the head of the serpent* ; and the babe of Bethlehem to conquer all the armed legions of hell.—But to turn over all the leaves of this book will be the work of eternity ; however, all this wisdom, and infinitely more, is to be seen in Christ

(2.) He that hath seen Christ, hath seen the Father in his infinite *power* ; for, as he is the *wisdom of God* ; so he is the *power of God*, 1 Cor. i. 24. It is no disparagement to the display of the power of God, in making of heaven and earth, and all things out of nothing, though we declare to you, that the power of God does not shine there so much as it does in Christ. Divine power is glorious in creation-work, but much more in salvation-work. It is more for God to redeem one sinner, than to make a thousand worlds. Our *help is laid upon one, that is mighty* : and, how does the almighty power of God here shine in laying such a weight upon the Redeemer's back, as should have broken the back of all the angels in heaven ; yea, under which the creation groans, and yet supporting him under so great a burden ? What burden ? Why, *The Lord laid on him the iniquities of us all* ; and, together with the burden of sin, the burden of all the wrath that was due to it, that he might *deliver us from the wrath to come*.—Power in upholding him in this great service ; *Behold my Servant, whom I uphold*, Isa. xlii. 1.—Power in enabling him to overcome all the powers of earth and hell, and making him to triumph over them on the cross, and to spoil principalities and powers openly.—Power in giving him victory over sin and death, that we might share of his triumphs, and have victory

in him: *O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory? Thanks be to God, which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ, 1 Cor. xv. 55.*—Power in saving sinners by the efficacy of his grace, the virtue of his Spirit, as well as by the merit of his blood, and in bringing them from the power of Satan unto God, which is more than to bring them from nothing to a being. In him we see that power of God, whereby *he is able to save to the uttermost.*

(3.) He that hath seen Christ hath seen the Father in his infinite holiness. He is indeed *the holy One of God*; and *holiness to the Lord*, is a title that peculiarly belongs to him, who was *holy, harmless, undefiled, and separate from sinners*. It is no disparagement to the holiness of all the angels and inhabitants of heaven, to say comparatively with him, that *the heavens are not clean in his sight, and that he chargeth his angels with folly*. God hath, in Christ, discovered most clearly, *that he is of purer eyes than that he can behold iniquity*. Yea, in giving his Son to the death for our sins, he hath declared, that he hates sin, as much as he loves his eternal Son: *He gave himself for our sins, according to the will of God, Gal. i. 4*. Thus God gave him, and he gave himself to take away sin, which is so contrary to his holiness. The Father put him upon this work, and held him to it, till he *finished transgression, and made an end of sin, by the sacrifice of himself*; therefore when we see Christ, we see infinite holiness vindicated, and may cry out, *Holy, holy, holy, Lord God of hosts; the whole earth is full of his glory.*

(4.) He that hath seen Christ hath seen the Father in his infinite justice and righteousness. Christ is set forth for this very end, to represent and declare this glorious attribute of the divine nature; *Whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in his blood, to declare his righteousness for the remission of sins, Rom. iii. 25*. Not only to satisfy his justice, in punishing of sin; but also to declare his justice, in pardoning of sin; and both, in and through Christ the propitiation. It is no diminution of the glory of God's justice, that shines in the eternal damnation of the wicked world of men

men and devils, to assert, That the glory of his justice, in executing judgment upon sin, appears more brightly in the face of Jesus, as he was a sacrifice to satisfy justice to the full, by one offering, which all the millions of the damned that are sacrificed to incensed justice, will never be able to do through all eternity.— God had a mind to save a number of sinners, *Elect according to the foreknowledge of God*; but the law, that required the death of the sinner, and that *the soul that sins should die*, stood in the way; therefore God, rather than go contrary to his own law, will take payment, according to the law, of his own Son. Christ therefore pays all the debt that the law could crave; and thus God is glorified in his most exact righteousness and infinite justice.

(5.) He that hath seen Christ hath seen the Father in his infinite *love, mercy, and grace*: *God is love*, says the apostle, 1 John iv. 8. But, where is this property of the divine nature manifested, seeing his wrath is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness of men, and we are compassed about with the evidences of his anger and displeasure at this day? Where then shall we see that God is love? Why, the same apostle tells us, verse 9. *In this was manifested the love of God towards us, because God sent his only begotten Son into the world, that we might live through him: herein is love, not that we loved him, but that he loved us, and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins.* Out of Christ, we see him a *consuming fire*; but in Christ, we see that *God is love!* O the love of God that shines in his mission, person, and offices! Love in giving him to be a Saviour and Surety! Love, in giving him for us and to us! Love, in accepting the payment of our debt from him, and substituting him in our room! Love, in accepting us in him, and love in giving out to us the great blessings promised and purchased by him! O Love! love, without a parallel! Mercy, without a match! Wonderful mercy vented through a sacrifice; sovereign grace and goodness, in setting up such a sun as Christ in the firmament of the church mili-

tant and triumphant. The natural sun runs his race, and rides his circuit from one end of the heaven to the other, and the benefit we enjoy thereby is a fruit of the goodness of God, as the God of providence; but, O the glorious race that the Sun of righteousness runs from everlasting to everlasting! His circle is from one end of eternity to the other, if eternity, that is endless, may be thus considered; for, he *was set up from everlasting* in the council of peace, and *to everlasting* will he shine, and shew forth the goodness and mercy of God, as the God of grace.

(6.) He that hath seen Christ hath seen the Father in his infinite *fai'fulness, veracity, and truth*; for, as he is the way to the Father, so he is the truth, John xiv. 6.; in whom the fidelity of the God of truth does shine. Here was the glory that the disciples saw, John i. 14. *Full of grace and truth.* To see the truth of God in Christ is a noble sight, on which our everlasting safety and security does depend; and, behold, in Christ it is to be seen most conspicuously. The truth of God in all the threatenings of the law shines in Christ, while these threatenings receive their accomplishment in him, *As the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth*, Rom. x. 4. The truth of God in all the promises of the gospel shines in Christ; *for in him they are all yea and amen*, 2 Cor. i. 20. In Christ this miracle sparkles, that God, in saving the sinner, is true to his threatening, and true to his promise both; true to his threatening, that says, *The soul that sins shall die*; and yet true to his promise also, that says, *I will love thee freely*. How gloriously do these opposites centre in Christ! And so the glory of truth, of the Father's truth, appears. He is true to his threatening in Christ, who hath endured the shock of it; and true to his promise in Christ also, who hath fulfilled the condition of it; and both by his obedience unto death, *even the death of the cross*.

Thus the Father is seen in Christ, in respect of all these, and the like divine properties and perfections, which in Christ appear to be both his Father's attributes and his own. They are seen to be Christ's di-

vine perfections, and the perfections of the Father in him; *He that hath seen me, hath seen the Father.*— I would here say further,

7. They that see Christ, see the Father's name in him; *My name is in him*, says God; Exod. xxiii. 22. God's greatest name is his name; for example, *What is his name?* Exod. iii. 13. God says unto Moses, I AM THAT I AM, verse 14. This explains his name JEHOVAH; and signifies that he is *self-existent*, having his being and essence of himself, that he is eternal and unchangeable, always the same; that we cannot by searching find him out; but that he for ever is what he ever was; and that he is the fountain of all beings. Now; it was Christ, the Angel of the covenant, that said this to Moses, when he *appeared to him in a flame of fire out of the bush*, Exod. iii. 2. He discovered himself by this name, when he was to deliver Israel out of Egypt, which deliverance was but a figure of good things to come; and therefore you may see him again taking this name three times to himself in one chapter in the New Testament, John viii. 58. *Before Abraham was, I AM*, and ver. 24. *If ye believe not that I AM he, ye shall die in your sins.* The word in the original is, *ἐγώ εἰμι*, that I AM. And so it is verse 28. *When ye have lifted up the Son of man, then shall ye know, ἐγώ εἰμι*, that I AM.—Now, Christ hath been lifted up on the pole of the cross, on the pole of the sacrament, on the pole of the gospel, and exalted on the Father's right-hand. Do we know by this time that the name of the man that was crucified at Jerusalem, is, I AM THAT I AM? Do we see his Father's name in him? *He that hath seen me, hath seen the Father.*

8. They that see Christ see the Father's glory in him; not only his name, but the glory of his name: not only his attributes, but the glory of his attributes: his name and attributes are indeed his glory; and when we see these we see the Father's glory. But what I further mean, is, that, in Christ, we see the glory of the *Father's glory*; and the glory and splendor of all these things that I have mentioned, This light is the  
light

*light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ, who is the brightness of his glory, and the express image of his person : therefore in him we see not only the wisdom of God, but the glory of his wisdom ; not only his power, but the glory of his power ; not only his holiness, but the glory of his holiness ; not only his justice and righteousness, but the glory of his justice and righteousness ; not only his love, mercy, and grace ; not only his faithfulness, veracity, and truth. When God discovers himself in Christ, then he is seen upon his highest throne, in his greatest glory. O Sirs, let me tell you, that when only heaven is his throne, and the earth his footstool, he appears infinitely more glorious, when displayed on such a lofty throne. O but a God in Christ, which is the throne of grace, is also a throne of glory ; and Glory to God in the highest, it is the throne of God and of the Lamb. If we see it, we cannot choose but sing with the redeemed, Salvation to our God that sits upon the throne, and to the Lamb for ever and ever. What shall I say ? he that sees Christ, not only sees the Father's glory, but all the Father's glory ; for he is not only the seat of his glory, but the seat and centre of all his glory ; In him dwells not only the fulness of God, but all the fulness of the Godhead, Col. ii. 9.— Tho' finite eyes can never see all that infinite fulness ; yet all that see Christ do see that all that infinite fulness, that can never be fully seen, is in him. Tho' a man cannot comprehend the whole globe of the earth in his arms, or see it all at once, yet he may see it all in a lively representation thereof in a map ; even so, though we cannot see all this fulness comprehensively, so as to comprehend it, yet we see it all representatively in Christ, who is the lively and living representative of all the divine glory, and the repository of all the divine fulness ; all the dimensions of the divine glory are to be seen in him, even the height and depth, length and breadth thereof. In his humiliation we see the depth of the Father's love reaching down to hell to lift us up ; in his exaltation we see the height of the Father's grace, raising us up to sit with him in heavenly places ; in the extent of his death we see the breadth of the Father's love,*

love, extending, by divine destination, to all the promised seed, and, by the method of application, to whosoever will. In the duration of his life, as a Priest for ever, we see the length of the Father's love, which is like himself, *From everlasting to everlasting*; and so in seeing Christ, in all his estates, we see the Father in all the *dimensions of his glory*. So in all Christ's offices we see all the Father's treasures; why, all the treasures of the Father's wisdom centre in his prophetic office, and that for our illumination; all the treasures of the Father's righteousness centre in his priestly office, and that for our justification; and all the treasures of the Father's power centre in his kingly office, and that for our sanctification; yea, all the treasures of the Father's grace centre in him, as being *All in all* for our complete redemption. Thus *he is made of God unto us wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, and redemption*, 1 Cor. i. 30. When we see Christ, then we see the Father in all his glory, in all his fulness, in all his treasures, and that for our eternal salvation, our everlasting consolation and *good hope through peace*.

Thus I have given you a short and poor hint at the resolution of that question, *He that hath seen Christ hath seen the Father*; insomuch, that I say again, there is no need of Philip's prayer here, *Shew us the Father*; for he that hath seen Christ, hath seen the Father: and, O happy they, whose eyes have seen *this glory of God in Christ*, while their ears are hearing of it! But I come now to,

IV. The *fourth* head proposed, was to shew, *how* and in what *manner* the Father is seen in Christ. Besides the light that the former head may give to this question, I shall add these following particulars.

I. In Christ we see the Father *clearly* and *evidently*, so much is implied in the term SEEING; *He that hath seen me, hath seen the Father*. To know God in Christ, is to see God, because in Christ he is clearly and distinctly known: though faith and sight differ in certain respects, yet faith is a kind of sight; for, *it is the evidence of things not seen*, Heb. xi. 1. In Christ we see  
clearly,

clearly and evidently him who *is invisible*, ver. 27.—Christ is the clearest and brightest glass that infinite wisdom could contrive to represent the glory of the Father ; and as the disciples, when Christ was revealing the Father to them, John xvi. 27, 28, 29. cried out, *Lo, now speakest thou plainly, and not in proverbs, or parables* : so the soul that sees the Father in Christ, sees him clearly and plainly, not in clouds and thick darkness. The Old-Testament church had, in types and sacrifices, a dark representation of Christ, but now we have in Christ, the antitype, a clear representation of the Father ; we now see him with *open face*.

2. In Christ we see the Father *savingly*. This is plain from the context, shewing that Christ, who is the glass, the true and living glass, in whom we see the Father, is also the true and living way by whom we come to the Father, and so enjoy him as our God and Father in Christ, verse 6.—My friends, to see the glory of Christ, and the glory of the Father in him, is such a saving sight, that salvation is inseparable from it ; nay, salvation is in it ; yea more, it is the very thing that formally constitutes everlasting life and salvation : *This is life eternal to know thee, &c.* John xvii. 3. The true and faithful witness who cannot lye, is saying this to his Father, and you may be sure he will not lye to him or you either. Further, says he, *This is life eternal, to know thee, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom thou hast sent* ; that is, to see Christ, and to see the Father in him is eternal life : to see God out of Christ is no saving, but a confounding sight to a sinner, but to see him in Christ, is to see him *savingly* ; *Look to me, and be saved, all the ends of the earth, for I am God, and besides me there is none else.*

3. In Christ we see the Father *comfortably and satisfyingly* : it is the best antidote in all the world, against all heart-trouble, therefore, says Christ here, verse 1. of this chapter, *Let not your heart be troubled, ye believe in God, believe also in me.* To believe in God, as a Judge and Law-giver, is necessary for the secure, to awaken their conscience, but this faith will never pacify the conscience, till you believe also in me, says

says Christ. I have given satisfaction to the Judge, and his law both, therefore believe also in me, that you may get satisfaction to your heart and conscience both; *Let not your heart be troubled; ye believe in God, believe also in me.* God out of Christ is the most terrible; but in Christ the most comfortable sight that ever was seen; and no wonder that the heart be pleased when it sees in Christ that God is well-pleased; *This is my Beloved Son, in whom I am well-pleased.* To see God in Christ, is to see the Father smiling in the Son's face; and surely they are unbelievers that have not seen God to be well-pleased in him. I do not love to discourage any poor drooping believer: and I shall not deny, but that there are some believers that have very little comfort, but I can hardly think, that they are believers that never had any comfort less or more. What! if ever you saw God in Christ, will you tell me, dare you say for your life that it was no comfortable sight; If so, then I truly think you never yet saw him. I ask not what comfort you feel at present. It may be you are still drooping by reason of unbelief; but if ever you saw him, and his Father in him, I am sure it was a joyful sight at the time, and afforded some satisfaction: so much is imported in Christ's assertion in the text, compared with Philip's petition in the preceding verse, *Show us the Father, and it sufficeth;* importing, that the sight and knowledge of God is full of satisfaction and refreshment, tending to give full contentment.— Well, says Christ, *He that hath seen me, hath seen the Father,* and there is the most satisfying sight of the Father that you can have. It is true, the way of seeing God by faith; as revealed in his Son, is a way not satisfactory to a carnal heart, and believers themselves have a jealousy of it, so far as they are carnal, and unbelieving, which was the ground of Christ's reproof to Philip here, upon which he also instructs him, that here is the only satisfying sight to faith; *He that hath seen me, hath seen the Father.*

4. In Christ we see the Father *applicatively*, and as near at hand. It was unbelief in Philip, that said, *Show us the Father,* as if the Father had been still at

such a distance as to be inaccessible and invisible ; nay, but says Christ, whatever God be in himself absolutely, and though he remain still in his nature invisible and incomprehensible, yet in me, and in me alone, he comes so near as that you may see him, and embrace him by faith ; *He that hath seen me, hath seen the Father.* To see God absolutely with mortal bodily eyes is impossible, he stands at an infinite distance from us. When we see him in the creation, or in any external representation of his glory, we see him at an infinite natural distance from us as creatures ; when we see him in the law, or covenant of works, we see him at an infinite moral distance from us as sinners ; yea, there we see him compassed about with flames of wrath, ready to devour us : but when, through the gospel glass, we see him in Christ, then we see him near at hand ; yea, nearly related to us as our God, Friend, and Father in Christ. And hence the sight of faith brings in Thomas's exclamation, John xx. 28. *My Lord, and my God.*

5. In Christ we see the Father *discriminatively* ; that is, so as to discern the personal distinction betwixt the Father and the Son, notwithstanding of their essential *oneness*. The very run of the text and context, both before and after it, declares the distinction. O Sirs ! the three distinct persons of the glorious Trinity, in their distinct personal properties, as it is an unfathomable mystery in itself, so it would have been for ever hidden and unseen to us, if Christ, the Sun of righteousness, had not risen ; and, in his light, discovered the same, so as we have, in Christ, a discriminative view of the Father ; for we cannot see the Son of God in the light of the eternal Spirit, but we must, at the same time, see, that he is the eternal Son of an eternal Father. The distinct œconomy and administration of the three persons, in the work of our redemption, gives us a clearer view of their personal distinction than can be had in any other glass ; nay, I know no other glass that can make it known. The glass of the creature says, It is not in me to shew that : the glass of the law

law says, It is not in me ; but the glass of the gospel saith, *Ἐγεννησα, I have found it.* And when the Spirit promised in the gospel comes to glorify Christ, then, in the glory of the Son, we see the glory of the Father : *He that hath seen me, hath seen the Father.* Hence,

6. In Christ we see the Father truly : *He that hath seen me, hath seen the Father.* It expresses the truth of the matter out of the mouth of him that is truth itself. He that hath a true sight of Christ, hath a true sight of the Father, and a sight of the true God. *We know that the Son of God is come, and hath given us an understanding, that we may know him that is true ; and we are in him that is true.* This is the true God and eternal life, 1 John v. 20. Ye that never yet saw Christ, you are yet *atheists, without God* ; you never saw the true God to this day, but only a false god ; a god of your own devising ; an image of your own brain. But as for you, believer, when you got a true sight of Christ, then you got a true sight of the true God.— We see the true Father in the true Son, by the light of the Spirit of truth testifying of Christ.

7. In Christ we see the Father, not only truly, but *gloriously*. This is plain also in the text, for notwithstanding the Lord Jesus had said, verse 7. *If ye had known me, ye should have known my Father also : yea, and henceforth ye know him, and have seen him ;* yet Philip says, *Lord, shew us thy Father,* as if there had been some other and better way of knowing the Father than by knowing and seeing Christ ; whereupon Christ reproves him, and lets him know, that this was the best, the only, and the most glorious way : *Have I been so long time with you, and yet hast thou not known me, Philip ? He that hath seen me, hath seen the Father ; and how sayest thou, Shew us the Father ?* If you would have another way of your own, might Christ say, whereby to see the Father, you shall find, that the way you would be at, is either impossible, or vastly inferior to what you enjoy ; for, whereas you say, *Shew us the Father* ; if you desire an immediate sight of him out of me, that is impossible, and would consume mortal men, so as you know not what you would be at : or, if you

desire only such a sight of God as Moses and others got of old, then know, that what they got, comes far short of what you have already when you see me; *He that hath seen me, hath seen the Father's glory*; and not only so, but the glory of the Father in the most glorious manner that can be seen by mortal eyes.

8. In Christ we see the Father *orderly and regularly*. This is imported also in the text and context; that as there is no *coming to the Father, but by Christ*; nor *seeing of the Father, but in Christ*: so the gospel-order of coming to God, is by Christ; and of seeing God, is in Christ. And here, indeed, is the true order and evangelical method of access to God, when, by the Spirit, we are led to Christ, and by Christ to the Father; *Through him we have access, by one Spirit, unto the Father*, Ephes. ii. 18. Here is the true order of communion with God, the way in which God descends unto us, is the way in which we ascend unto God. The Father sent the Son into our nature; and the Son sends the Spirit into our hearts, that, by the Spirit, we might ascend to the Son; and by the Son to the Father. Here is the true order of all right worshipping of God; it is a worshipping of God in Christ, by the Holy Ghost. It is the same with the order of seeing God in the text, where the light of the Spirit being supposed, wherein alone we can see Christ, it follows, *He that hath seen me, hath seen the Father*. So much for the manner.

V. The *fifth* head proposed, was, to offer some *grounds or reasons* of the doctrine, shewing whence it is, that they that see Christ, see the Father. The reasons of a doctrine being the great pillars which support it, and the hinges on which it turns: therefore I must mention some of these for the confirmation of faith in this matter.

1. *He that hath seen Christ, hath seen the Father*, because of the *oneness* that is betwixt them; as I shewed upon the first head. The true ground of our knowing the Father in the Son, is his unity in essence with the Father; so that though their personal properties

be distinct, yet the essence is the same in both, and the one is in the other; for thus the Lord Jesus clears it in the following words, *How sayest thou, Shew us the Father? Believeest thou not that I am in the Father, and the Father in me?*

2. *He that hath seen Christ, hath seen the Father,* because of the *agreement* that is betwixt them.—As they are *one*, so they *agree in one*; as it is said of *the three that bear witness on earth, the Spirit, the water, and the blood*, 1 John v. 8; so much more may it be said of *the three that bear witness in heaven, the Father, the Word, and the Spirit, that are one*, that they *agree in one*: and indeed their agreement in the work of our redemption is such, that though the several persons of the glorious Trinity have their distinct work, and œconomy therein, yet it is with such a complicated harmony, that the administration of one cannot be seen without seeing that of the other. He that sees, by the Spirit's shining on the word, what the Son hath done as Mediator, in the Father's name, and as the Father's Ambassador, cannot but see, in the same light, the Father as employing him in that embassy.

3. *He that hath seen Christ, hath seen the Father,* because of the *relation* that is betwixt them. In his *natural* relation, as he is the *Son of God*, we see the first person of the glorious Trinity to be his Father by eternal generation. In his *œconomical* relation, as he is the *Sent of God*, we see God to be his Father by special election, unction, vocation, ordination, and exhibition unto the mediatorial work. Both these, I think, are joined together in that word, John i. 14. *The Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us; and we beheld his glory, as the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth.*

4. *He that hath seen Christ, hath seen the Father,* because of the *likeness* that is betwixt them. Not only as *God* was he in the *form of God*, and thought it no robbery to be equal with God, Phil. ii. 6.; but also as *man*, though he came in the likeness of sinful flesh, yet he  
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had also the likeness of his holy Father about him, being *holy, harmless, undefiled, and separate from sinners*, Heb. vii. 26. The pity, mercy, and compassion of his Father ; the love, grace, and goodness of his Father, did, when on earth, and does now, in heaven, so appear in him, that whoever have a perfect understanding of Christ, will have a perfect understanding of the Father.

5. *He that hath seen Christ, hath seen the Father*, because of the *liking* that is betwixt them. Not only a *likeness* but a *liking*. Such a liking hath Christ to the Father, that he declares it is his heart's *delight to do his Father's will*, Psa. xl. 8. And if Christ's love be stamped, as it were, on the Father's heart, and the Father's love stamped on Christ's heart, he that hath seen Christ, must see the Father's love and delight. One of the capital letters of the Father's name often mentioned in scripture, is his *Love* to Christ as the Saviour of his people. His love to him, not only as his own Son, but as our Surety. Hence Christ, as Mediator, so frequently says to his Father, John xvii. *Thou hast loved me ; thou hast loved me ;* and again, *thou hast loved me*. But why three times in the close of that chapter ? Why so oft does he repeat this in his intercessory prayer ? Why, because as the Father loved him in his undertaking, from all eternity, before the foundation of the world ; and loved him in his state of humiliation here, and loves him now in his state of exaltation, and will do so for ever ; so the Father's love to them for whom Christ prays and intercedes, is founded, in all the displays of it, upon his love to him ; and he hears him always on their behalf, because he loves him ; and loves them only in him. In him they were loved from eternity ; in him, they are loved in time ; and in him, they will be loved to eternity. His *loving-kindness will be not take away from them*, because his loving-kindness he will not and cannot take away from him, Psa. lxxxix. 33. It is a matter, therefore, of the greatest moment unto us to know this great letter of the Father's name, which he repeats three times over, *Thou hast loved me*. Now, if Christ bear this golden letter on the breast-plate of his medi-

mediation, and shews himself thus clothed with the robes of his Father's loving-kindness, then they that see him, must see the Father's favour to him, and to them in him, according to the measure of faith: and this is the very thing that he does, John xvii. 26. *I have declared unto them thy name, and will declare it; that the love wherewith thou hast loved me, may be in them, and I in them.* O matchless mystery! They that have Christ in them, they have the Father's love that he bears to Christ in them. But again,

6. *He that hath seen Christ, hath seen the Father,* because he is the *image and representative* of the Father. I distinguish this from the likeness that is between the Father and him; for one may have a likeness to another, and yet not be such an one's actual representative, as Christ is of the Father, 2 Cor. iv. 4. Christ is *the image of the invisible God*, Col. i. 15.; *the brightness of the Father's glory, and the express image of his person*, Heb. i. 3. In his divine person, absolutely considered, he is the essential image of God, even the Father: but thus he is as invisible as the Father; therefore, in his incarnation, he becomes the representative image of God unto the church, that we may have *the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus*, 2 Cor. iv. 6. It is true, the saints are said to be *the image of God*, when they are renewed in a conformity to the nature and will of God; but great is the difference betwixt the image of God in *man*, and the image of God in *Christ*. The image of God in the believer, is like Cæsar's image in his coin: but the image of God in Christ, is like Cæsar's image in his son; his only son and representative. Christ is the image of the *invisible God*, but man is the image of the *visible God*; that is, of Christ, Rom. viii. 29.; in whom is made visible to us. Christ indeed, as God, is not only the *image of God*, but *the invisible image of the invisible God*; but as man he is the *visible image of the invisible God*. It is true he is out of sight now, and we cannot see him with our bodily eyes; but as he was visible on earth, and is visible in heaven in our nature; so the only saving sight of him that a sinner can have, is by faith. Suppose it were possible  
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for a sinner on earth, to see Christ in heaven, merely with his bodily eyes, it would not be a saving sight ; but now, when, by faith, we see Christ as the representative image of the Father, then we cannot but see the Father in him. He bears the image of all the Father's glorious excellencies ; and, therefore, to see his glory, is to see his Father's glory also, and that for the following reason. Further,

7. *He that hath seen Christ, hath seen the Father*, because he is *sent and sealed* of the Father for this very end, that he might represent, manifest, and declare the Father : hence, *No man hath seen God at any time, the only begotten Son, that is in the bosom of the Father, he hath declared him*, John i. 18. *All things are delivered to me of my Father*, says Christ, Matt. xi. 27. ; and *no man knoweth the Son but the Father, neither knoweth any man the Father save the Son, and he to whomsoever the Son will reveal him*. He was sealed and anointed for this very end : *The Spirit of the Lord God was upon him that he might bring forth judgment to the Gentiles*. And hence, *God, who, at sundry times, and in divers manners, spake, in times past, to the fathers by the prophets, hath, in these last days, spoken to us by his Son, who is the brightness of his glory, and the express image of his person*, Heb. i. 1, 2. Whatever Christ did, either by his preaching, working of miracles, or laying down his life, it was by the appointment of his Father, and to lead us to the Father. He is the way, the new and living consecrated way to the Father. He, therefore, that sees him as the way, does see the Father as the end to which the way leads by divine appointment.

8. *He that hath seen Christ, hath seen the father*, because the Spirit, that *discovers and testifies of Christ*, is equally the Spirit of the Father and of the Son. The Spirit of the Son is the Spirit of the Father ; and the Spirit of the Father is the Spirit of the Son ; *When the Comforter is come, whom I will send unto you from the Father, even the Spirit of truth, which proceeds from the Father, he shall testify of me*, John xv. 26.—He cannot, therefore, testify of the Son, without testifying of the Father. The Spirit of the Father testifying

of the Son, cannot be without reference to the Father; nay, when he discovers Christ, and the things of Christ, he discovers, at the same time, in the same light, the Father, and the things of the Father; *He shall glorify me*, says Christ, *for he shall receive of mine, and shew it unto you*, John xvi. 14, 15. Now, if it be asked, what things of mine he will shew? The answer is, they are the things of the Father; for, *all things that the Father hath, are mine*. The things of Christ are the Father's, and the things of the Father are Christ's. The glory of Christ is the Father's glory; and the glory of the Father is Christ's glory. The fulness of Christ is the Father's fulness; and the fulness of the Father is Christ's fulness. Therefore, he that is the Spirit, both of the Father and of the Son, when he glorifies Christ, and shews the things of Christ, he glorifies the Father, and shews the things of the Father; consequently, *He that hath seen Christ, hath seen the Father*.

VI. The *sixth* head proposed, was, to draw some *inferences* from the whole for *application*. This doctrine is so vastly great and prolific, that it is not possible for me to overtake all the purposes that ly in the bosom of it, and are deducible from it. The special inferences I design, are for *information, trial, reproof, comfort, and exhortation*.

*First*, For *information*. O how many truths ly in the bosom of this doctrine! That such is the *oneness* betwixt Christ and the Father, *that he that hath seen Christ, hath seen the Father*.—There are two great truths here that lead us into many other truths.

1. That there is an *oneness* betwixt Christ and the Father.

2. That he that hath *seen* Christ, *sees* the Father.

*1st*, Is it so, that there is such an *oneness* betwixt Christ and the Father as I have shewn? Hence we may learn the following lessons.

1. Hence learn, that the *object of faith* is very *great* and *glorious*, far beyond what natural reason, or human understanding can fathom; therefore, our Lord

Jesus here, as he makes his essential oneness with the Father the foundation of his assertion, *that they that see him, see the Father*: so he lays down this great mystery, as absolutely necessary to be believed, and apprehended by faith, though it cannot be comprehended by reason. Christ's question to Philip hereupon, is a fundamental question of the gospel catechism: *Believest thou not that I am in the Father, and the Father in me?* Without the faith of this, there is no right worshipping of God; no right apprehension of one God in three persons. This is no indifferent thing to be believed or not. Our eternal life depends upon it. God hath born witness to it from heaven, as I have already shewed.

2. From this *oneness* we may learn, that the doctrine of *Arianism* is *damnable blasphemy*, that denies the supreme Deity of our Lord Jesus, and his essential oneness with the Father. Many affronts have been offered to the crown, and dignity, and royal prerogatives of our Lord in these lands, since we first broke, and then burnt the Covenant of our God, and were ashamed of our glory. But the spreading of Arianism now, in Britain and Ireland, is like a pulling up Reformation by the roots, and a saying, *We will not only pull off the jewels of the Mediator's crown, but we will take the crown itself, and cast it into the mire*. If this error be subtilly maintained among us, pray that God may discover and destroy it, otherwise it will destroy the very foundation of our holy religion. That pernicious error strikes directly against the doctrine of our Lord Jesus here; for, if there be not an essential oneness betwixt him and his Father, then it is not true, that *he that hath seen Christ, hath seen the Father*. If he be inferior to the Father in point of essence, self-existence, independency, or any other essential perfection, then we cannot see all the Father's glory in him \* :

But

\* When this Sermon was delivered, the Arian tenets were not only getting up their head, and overspreading the nation, but there was a process commenced and depending before the supreme ecclesiastical court, against Mr Simson, professor of theology in the university of Glasgow, for teaching and propagating these tenets.—The kindly recep-  
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But let Christ, who is truth itself, be true, and every man a liar. What I have said refutes this abomination.

3. From this *oneness* betwixt the Father and the Son, you may learn the *danger of denying Christ*. To deny the Son is to deny the Father, 1 John ii. 23. *And he is Antichrist that denies the Father and the Son*, verse 22. *And who is a liar, but he that denies that Jesus is the Christ?* To deny the unity of the same undivided essence betwixt the Father and him, is to deny him to be the true Messias; IMMANUEL, *God with us*, Isaiah vii. 14. O the danger of deviating from the doctrine of Christ! *Whosoever transgresseth, and abideth not in the doctrine of Christ, hath not God; he that abideth in the doctrine of Christ, he hath both the Father and the Son*, 2 John, ver. 9. Hence he that deviates from it hath neither. Why? because of their undivided essence, notwithstanding of their personal distinction.—It is not possible to deny the one and not the other.

4. Learn hence, how *fearfully Christ was humbled*: what! one with the Father, the Father's *fellow*, and *equal*, and yet a *babe*, a *servant*, a *sufferer*, a *worm*! Psalm xxii. Should an emperor become a fly; yea, should all the glorious angels in heaven become one crawling insect upon earth, it were not to be mentioned with this humiliation of Christ. Oh! how sadly was the world mistaken concerning Christ, when they took him up to be a mere man, the carpenter's son, and did not see him to be the eternal Son of God, and essentially one with the Father.

5. See here how *gloriously adorned Christ is with all divine perfections*, and so how *infinitely valuable and efficacious all his mediatory actions are*. If he had not been God, equal with the Father, his active and passive obedience could not have profited us; for, they had not

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tion the Arian sentiments were meeting with, the many friends this propagator of them was, at this time, like to have, and in the issue really had, and the small number that appeared courageously against them, no doubt, influenced our Author, both to observe more frequently, in his discourses, the spreading of them, and to express himself more zealously upon the head, justly dreading the dismal consequences thereof.

been dignified with infinite merit, value, and virtue.— But now, being one with the Father, his divine nature is the altar that sanctifies the whole gift ; therefore, his blood, is the *blood of God* ; his righteousness, the *righteousness of God* : we may safely depend hereupon for peace with God, and acceptance to eternal life.

6. Here we may learn the *infinite ability of Christ*, to apply, by his power, what he purchased by his blood. His *oneness* with the Father declares, that as he was able to make all things out of nothing, and does still *uphold all things by the word of his power* ; so he is *able to save to the uttermost* : his arm, is the arm of God ; his power, is the power of God. It is said, *The son of man, even on earth, had power to forgive sins*, Matth. ix 6. The Pharisees had made the objection, *Who can forgive sins but God ?* Christ takes their own argument to prove that he was God, because he could forgive sins : and, indeed, to take away the guilt of sin requires omnipotency ; the guilt of sin hath the whole strength of God's law to back it ; and God's law hath the whole strength of his infinite justice to maintain it ; therefore, there must be an infinite power to take away the guilt of sin, even that power that can break the force of God's law, and satisfy the demands of infinite justice. The same power and ability also is requisite to take away the power of sin ; for guilt and power are the two great attributes of sin ; infinite power only can destroy them. It is to some a known maxim, *Ejusdem esse potestatis instruere et destruere.* “ No less power is required to destroy the world than “ there was to create it.” In the first creation, there was something made out of nothing ; yet that *nothing* did not resist : and if God should annihilate the frame of heaven and earth, and reduce it to nothing again, it would suddenly sink ; there would be no resistance. But to bring together things that are contrary ; to do away sin, and bring in grace, that are so opposite one to another, and meet one another with the utmost resistance, requires an infinite power to effect it. Sin is  
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not only an enemy, but *enmity against God*: and as the mind musters up millions of objections against Christ, when he comes to deal with a sinner; so the heart and affections oppose him, as it were, in battle array: *In the last days perilous times shall come; for men shall be lovers of themselves*, 2 Tim. iii. 1,—4. There goes the captain of *self-love*, after which follows the body of the army of *lusts, Covetous, boasters, proud, blasphemous, disobedient, unthankful, unholy, without natural affection, truce-breakers, false accusers, incontinent, fierce, despisers of those that are good; traitors, heady, high-minded, lovers of pleasures more than lovers of God, &c.* The *weapons of the warfare*, that can defeat this opposition, needs to be *mighty through God*. *Thy people shall be willing*, but when? *in the day of thy power*: this is said to, and of our Lord Jesus, Psalm cx. 3.—Being one with the Father, see his infinite ability.

7. From this *oneness* betwixt the Father and the Son, we may learn, that *Christ was not alone in the work of redemption*; John xvi. 32. *I am not alone, because the Father is with me*. How could he fail, or be discouraged, in his work? The power and presence of the eternal God-head, Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, was with him. O see and admire the joint concurrence of the Father with the Son, together with the Holy Ghost, in carrying on this great work of redemption? It was the pleasure of the Father, the pleasure of the Son, the pleasure of the Holy Ghost, that this work should be carried on and prosper.

8. Hence learn, how *glorious and ineffable is the love of the Father in giving Christ*, the same in substance with himself, to assume our nature, and die for our sins: *He took not on him the nature of angels, but the seed of Abraham*: and the Father put the robe of our nature upon him; *A body hast thou given me*. Behold, how he loves the nature of these whom he hath given to Christ, that though he hath them not all with him in heaven, yet he loves to have their picture, his Son in their nature, to see them in him, and love them in him. In the faith of this, O what ground of encouragement is there, and what foundation of confidence in coming to the Father

in him ! that our advocate is so near to the Father so nearly related to him, and yet so nearly related to us, one with the Father in nature ; and yet one with us in nature also : *Great is the mystery of godliness, God manifested in the flesh ;* and great is the mystery of divine love, in making him, that is one with himself, to be the way to himself. Surely, if you come to the Father by this way, you may be sure you come with the Father's allowance ; you may come boldly. Is there access to Christ, and yet the Father inaccessible that way ! Nay, that is impossible, if you believe this *oneness* that *Christ is in the Father, and the Father in him.*

9. Hence learn the *necessity of divine revelation*, objective and subjective : the necessity of *scriptural* revelation ; without which we had wandered in the dark without knowing Christ in his *oneness with the Father.* O bless God for the Bible, and for eyes to look upon it ; and study to improve that privilege. See also the absolute necessity of *spiritual* illumination and divine teaching, in order to our apprehending this divine mystery of *Christ's oneness with the Father.* When Peter confessed this, by saying, *Thou art Christ the Son of the living God,* Christ answers, *Blessed art thou, Simon Barjona ; for flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but my Father which is in heaven,* Matth. xvi. 16, 17. Let us be humbled under a sense of our ignorance of God and Christ, and cry for the Spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of him, and in this way.

10. Let us learn, from this *oneness* betwixt Christ and the Father, the *glorious excellency of Christ being one with the Father.* Is he not a glorious object of adoration ? *The Lord our God is one Lord.* And, O believer, *He is thy Lord, worship thou him :* crying out with Thomas, *My Lord, and my God.* Being one with the Father, is he not a fit portion for your immortal souls ? His riches are indeed unsearchable ; for they are *all the fulness of the Godhead.* It was said, *Who can count the dust of Jacob ?* but much more, who can tell the thousand part of the believer's treasure, that hath a right to say, *The Lord is the portion of my soul !* O immense and everlasting portion ! Being one with the Father, is he  
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not *the fountain of living waters*; the fountain of *all grace*, as well as the channel through which it runs? As *God* he is the fountain; as *man*, he is the mean of conveyance; that *out of his fulness we may receive grace for grace*.—Being one with the Father, is he not the fountain of authority equal with the Father? yea his law is his Father's law. They that sin against him, sin against the Father: the original authority of the law is not annulled by being put into Christ's hand. Are believers under less obligation to obedience to the law, as a rule, than before? No, by no means: see what gives authority and efficacy to the words of Christ, and what obliges us to obey him, otherwise we disobey the Father also; *The word which you hear is not mine, but the Father's that sent me*, John xiv. 24. And this he grounds upon the *oneness* betwixt the Father and him, in the preceding part of the chapter. Consider therefore, man, woman, who it is that speaks to you in the gospel. Why is the neglect of his word so dangerous? It is the Father's word. Why is his voice so efficacious, and able to make the dead to hear and live? and why should his word have weight with us, and be credited by us? O! it is the Father's word.—Being one with the Father, is he not a terrible enemy? How sadly are unbelievers, and enemies to Christ, circumstantiate, and how dreadful will their day be, when he shall say, *Bring forth these mine enemies, that would not that I should reign over them, and cut them in pieces before me?* O kiss the Son lest he be angry; for, his anger is God's anger, his wrath is the Father's wrath. It is true, he does not appear now in this gospel dispensation, clothed with the robes of wrath, but rather in his robes of grace and mercy; *He is not come to condemn the world, but that the world through him might be saved*: but if this Saviour and salvation be neglected, he will put on his robes of fury, *And come in flaming fire to take vengeance on them that know not God, and obey not the gospel*: and then his wrath will be seen to be the Father's wrath.—Being one with the Father, is he not a glorious, blessed, and amiable friend, whose friendship is worth

worth courting an interest in? How happily are they privileged that are interested in him, and united to him? What! to be his followers and favourites is a great matter; but, believers, you are more, being the body of Christ, and members in particular. O the dignity of union with Christ, what a great thing is this to be one with him who is *one with the Father!* John xiv. 20. O believer, you little know and consider the honour of this relation: *But, says Christ, at that day ye shall know that I am in the Father, and you in me, and I in you.* O what is that to be wrapt up with Christ in the bosom of a Trinity, *Being one with the Father!* Is he not a strong tower, and mighty shield! Is it possible that his church on earth can be totally ruined, let men and devils rage as they will? No, no: *The King of Zion is one with the Father.* Is it possible that the true believer can totally and finally perish and fall away? No, it cannot be: his perseverance is founded upon Christ's *oneness* with the Father: *There is no plucking them out of my hand, nor my Father's: I and my Father are one,* John x. 28, 29, 30.—In a word, being one with the Father, we need not think it strange that such glorious things are spoken of him: let this confirm our faith of all his mediatorial actings. Is it any wonder that he could *spoil principalities and powers, and triumph over them in his cross, and bruise the head of the serpent?* Could not the power and wisdom of heaven defeat and outwit the power and policy of hell? Is it any wonder that he could conquer death, and rise from the dead, being the living and eternal God? Is it any wonder that he, who is one with the Father, could appease the Father's wrath, and bring in everlasting righteousness, and that the Father is well-pleased for his righteousness sake?—Finally, being one with the Father, what a fit representative is he of the Father's person and glory? and what a native position does the Lord Jesus build upon this foundation of *his oneness with the Father?* namely, *He that hath seen me, hath seen the Father.*

2dly, Is it so, that *he that hath seen Christ, hath seen the Father?* then, in the light of this truth we may

*see*

See light clearly, and learn many other great lessons.—  
As,

1. Do they that see Christ see the Father? Hence I infer, the *gross darkness of our natural state*, and the *gross ignorance of God in all natural men*, so long as they are not enlightened in the knowledge of Christ. The mind of man is but a mass of ignorance: *The understanding is darkened*, Eph. iv. 17, 18.; *Yea, darkness itself*, 1 John ii. 9, 11.; *Under the power of darkness*, Col. i. 13. *Partial ignorance of Christ in believers*, is the reason why they *know God but in part*: therefore Christ says to his disciples here, *If ye had known me, ye would have known my Father also*, ver. 7. *Total ignorance of Christ in others*, is the reason why they are *wholly ignorant of God*: therefore Christ speaks in the same terms to the proud Pharisees, John viii. 19. *Ye neither know me, nor my Father; if you had known me, you would have known my Father also*. They that see not the glory of Christ, as the Father is represented in him, they *neither know God nor Christ*; they have neither the Father nor the Son: they know not *God*, because they know not the holy perfections of *God's nature* in the principal way designed of infinite wisdom for their manifestation: they know not *Christ*, because *they see not the glory of God in him*: whatever other notions men may have of God, they are utterly ignorant of the heavenly mystery; and *know not the wisdom of God in a mystery*. Again,

2. Hence we may infer, both the *greatness of the glory of God*, that is represented to us by such an one as Christ, and the *greatness of the grace of God*, in providing such a representative, in whom we might see his glorious perfections, as his eternal Son, in our nature. To see the natural sun shining in its strength, would spoil the sight of the strongest eye; but to look on it through a veil is not offensive. If God should manifest himself in his naked glory, we would be dazzled and confounded; but to look to God in our nature, bringing down his glory to our eye, it invites us to behold it. *God manifested in the flesh*: O Sirs, wonder and be amazed, that God will, in a manner, be

no more God, but take another nature, rather than that the brightness of his own glory should undoe us ! O how willing is he to reveal and make himself known to poor sinners that had lost sight of him, in that he exhibités Christ, *the brightness of his glory*, to us, that in him we may see all his glory ?

3. Do they who see Christ, see the Father ? Hence learn the *preciousness of Christ*. As in his oneness with the Father, we may see his infinite glorious excellency in himself ; so in his representing the Father to us, we may see the infinite preciousness of Christ, and the excellency of the knowledge of him ; and the necessity of this knowledge unto us ; as he is the notable mirror, and looking-glass, wherein God is to be seen ; such a living mirror as can discover itself, and bring men to look unto it. O wonderful mirror ! God in our nature representing God in his nature and perfections, and saying, *Look to me, and be saved ; for I am God, and there is none else !* O the preciousness of Christ, in whom all the beams of divine glory are contracted, that we may see and look upon them through the vail of his flesh, because we could not endure one glance of the immediate rays of divine glory ! O precious Christ, as he is thus the only way to the Father ! God could get glory to his justice in our destruction ; but, behold his wonderful love, in laying his Son as a bridge betwixt him and us, that we might return to God upon him : And, O the wonderful love of Christ, that he was content to stoop so low ! May not all the creation of God wonder at this ? Angels are wondering ; and what are we doing that are more concerned than they ? O precious Christ, as he is the only meeting-place where God meets with us, and we with him ! In him we see God, and God sees us ; we cannot see God savingly but in him ; and God cannot look on us favourably but in him ; for, he is the temple where God dwells, and manifests his glory. Where can we meet with God, but in a place where alone we can see God ? O precious Christ, in respect of the glory and honour that the Father hath given him as Mediator !

As he is the *Son of God, the Father, who hath life in himself, have given to him to have life in himself*, John v. 26. As he is the *Sent of God, all power in heaven and earth is given unto him*; and particularly he is crowned with this glory and honour, of being the *visible image of the invisible God*, and of all the divine glory. O the preciousness of Christ, when such beauty is in him? It is a promise of the New-Testament days, *Thine eyes shall see the King in his beauty*. What is this beauty of king JESUS, but that God is in him, and all his glory to be seen in him? God is said, under the law, to have dwelt *in thick darkness*; but now, when the Son of God hath appeared in the flesh, in the discharge of his office, the Sun of righteousness hath arisen in his strength and beauty. God himself, as to his being and manner of his existence in three distinct persons, with all the glorious properties of his nature, is illustriously manifested to believers. Thus Christ is the great light of the world; *They that follow him shall not walk in darkness, but have the light of life*, John viii. 12. O precious Christ! in that hereupon *he is the desire of all nations*, the desire of all saints, the desire of all ages! The saints of old, that did not enjoy the benefit of the New-Testament revelation, express this desire. See how David prayed for a discovery of this glory of God in Christ, though he could behold it only in types; *O God, thou art my God, early will I seek thee; to see thy power and thy glory, as I have seen thee in the sanctuary*, Psal. lxxiii. 1, 2. There was in the sanctuary an obscure representation of the glory of God in Christ; how much more should we desire and esteem that view, which we may now have *with open face, though yet as in a glass*! 2 Cor. iii. 18.—Whence is it that a hiding Christ is such matter of lamentation to believers? Why, the reason is, because when he hides himself, God is out of sight; when he smiles, the Father smiles; when he appears, the Father appears; and, O! how can he be but precious to the believer, when such a precious sight is to be seen in him!

4. Do they who see Christ, see the Father? Hence learn the *excellency of the gospel*, for there we see Christ. How highly dignified are we that enjoy gospel ordinances, and sacraments? In the gospel, Christ is presented to the ear; and when we hear him, then we hear the Father. In the sacraments, he is presented to our eye; and when we see him there, we see the Father. How sad is the case of those that want the gospel! They want the glass where Christ is seen, and so are *without God*; and much more sad is their case, that enjoy gospel ordinances and sacraments, and yet neglect the great salvation, by neglecting to look to Christ there exhibited, and are never concerned to get a saving sight of Christ there! O how near does God come to them, yet they lose a sight of him! How great are the advantages of a clear gospel dispensation? The more bright the glass is, the more may Christ be seen therein; and the more that Christ is seen, the more is the Father seen in him.—The gospel is a revelation of Christ; and herein also the difference betwixt the *law* and the *gospel* appears. The law, as a covenant, yields a terrible sight of God out of Christ; but the gospel affords a pleasant sight of God in Christ: *He that hath seen me, hath seen the Father.*—Which also exposes the malignity of a *legal spirit*, and a *legal strain of doctrine*, by the means of which Christ is hid and kept out of sight, and consequently the Father also; or, if he be seen, it is not in Christ, but, as it were, in the law; and the law not being the *ministration of the Spirit* of light, life, and liberty, this is the reason why legal doctrine is so troublesome to a gospel believer; Gal. i. 7. *There are some that trouble you, and would pervert the gospel of Christ*, namely, by their legal doctrine, which the apostle there speaks of. Again,

5. Do they who see Christ, see the Father? Then hence learn, wherein the very *nature and essence of faith* lies, even in the beholding of the glory of God's wisdom, power, holiness, justice, and mercy, in the person and offices of Christ, as our Saviour and Surety. In the ignorance of this lies the formal nature of unbelief, 1 Cor. i. 23,—25. Not to see the *wisdom of God*,  
and

and the *power of God*, and consequently all the other properties of his nature in Christ, is to be an unbeliever. But to see the wisdom, power, and other glorious attributes of the divine nature in Christ, with application, as our Saviour, and Surety, and so to see God glorifying his perfections thus, is to be a believer. Unbelievers are blinded, so as the *light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, shines not into them*; but believers are seers, as the prophets of old were called; and they *see visions*, as the prophet Joel expresses it, Joel ii. 18. What visions? O! a beatific vision indeed, to see Christ, and to see the Father in him! What a large field hath faith to travel thro'; broader than heaven and earth, *even all the fulness of God!* And what a sure footing hath faith also? for when it fixes upon Christ, it fixes upon **GOD** in him. Faith looks on Christ as a friend and helper, and so it cannot but see the Father as a friend in him. What solid ground for the *assurance of faith* is here, while faith cannot look to Christ, but it must see the love and good-will of **GOD** in him?

6. Do they who see Christ see the Father? Hence learn, whence it is that the *great design of Satan*, from the beginning, hath been to *blind the eyes of men*, and fill their minds with prejudice, *that they may not behold this glory of God in Christ*, 2 Cor. iv. 3, 4. And, indeed, this blindness and darkness is gradually cured in believers, by no less means than the almighty power of **GOD**; *God, who commanded light to shine out of darkness, hath shined into our hearts, to give the light of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ*, verse 6. And this in a conformity to that promise, Isaiah lx. 1, 2, *Arise, shine; for thy light is come, and the glory of the Lord is risen upon thee: for, behold, the darkness shall cover the earth, and gross darkness the people. But the Lord shall arise upon thee, and his glory shall be seen upon thee.* But, why does the devil raise such opposition to the gospel? and why is he raising a smoke out of the bottomless pit at this day\*, to darken that fundamental

\* See the reason of this assertion briefly accounted for, p. 466, 467.

damental gospel truth, the *essential oneness* betwixt the Father and the Son, but that people may not see the Father in the Son? Think not strange, that the devil and his instruments are at such pains to cloud and darken the truths of the gospel, wherein Christ is exhibited to us.

7. Do they who see Christ see the Father? Hence learn, what a *happy place heaven is*, and what is the difference betwixt a *fiducial vision here*, and a *beatifical vision hereafter*. Heaven will be the place of the full vision of Christ, and of the Father in him; but the difference is stated, 1 Cor. xiii. 12. *Now we see through a glass darkly*, ; or as it may be rendered, BY A GLASS, IN A RIDDLE, a *parable*, or *dark saying*; where our present sight of Christ is spoken of with a double figurative limitation, namely, *through a glass in a riddle*: THROUGH A GLASS; that is, either a *looking glass*, which yields but a representation of him; the shadow of Christ is drawn in the gospel, and we have but a representation of him there: or an *optic glass*, or a *prospective*, that helps the sight in beholding things at a distance; as men discover the stars through certain glasses, while the eye itself is not able to discern them: such a glass is the gospel, without which we can make no discovery of Christ at all. Again, the gospel displays of him are but, as it were, IN A RIDDLE; a *parable*, or so many dark things, which our weak faith understands but imperfectly. Hence, Song ii. 9. Christ is said *to stand behind our wall, to look forth at the windows, and shew himself through the lattices*. There is a wall of mortality betwixt him and us, that must be demolished before we can *see him as he is*; we see him now, as it were, thro' a glass window, through a lattice; yet when he stands looking forth at the windows of ordinances, shewing and *flourishing himself*, as the word is, through the lattices of the promise, how unspeakably glorious does he appear? And if so, O what will it be to see him *face to face*, when walls, and windows, and lattices, and all will be broken down, so as there shall be no more need of nor use for these glasses and ordinances! Angels and saints above are so ravished with his glory, and satisfied with

with his likeness, that they cannot look upon another object. It is said, Isa. xxiv. 23. *The moon shall be confounded, and the sun ashamed, when the Lord of hosts shall reign in mount Zion, and in Jerusalem, and before his an-tients gloriously.* O but precious Christ must have a fair face, when the sun blushes and is ashamed to shine before him! Though a child of God were in a hell of misery and trouble all his lifetime in this world, yet the first blink of this fair IMMANUEL in heaven would make amends for all. We may preach this wonderful Lord while we live, but we will never outpreach him; we may praise him to eternity, but shall never outpraise him: *Blessed are they that dwell in his house, they will be still praising him; yea, they will be like him, for they will see him as he is.*

8. Do they that see Christ, see the Father? Hence learn the *grand difference* betwixt the *wicked and the godly*; they differ like darkness and light, blindness, and sight: sometimes they wonder at one another as if they were monsters. The godly man wonders at the wicked, to see their carnal life and wicked temper.— Oh! how can they laugh and be merry, when they are ready to drop into hell! The wicked also wonder at the faints, and that they *run not with them into the same excess of riot*: why, the one lives upon base, visible, earthly things, the other upon invisible glory, as *seeing him who is invisible*. Give a carnal man the world at his will, he cares not though God's face be hid; he is in his element, as the fish in the water; his language is *Who will shew us any good*: a good bargain, and a flourishing trade? But the faint is of another temper; the language of his heart is, *Lord, lift thou up the light of thy countenance upon us*, Psal. iv. 6. Give him all the world, he cares not a straw for it, if God hide his face. This makes the difference also betwixt a faint and himself; to-day he is full of joy, though he hath but a bare house, and bare cloaths, and a bare prospect of earthly enjoyments; yea, and be sadly harassed with trouble and reproaches; yet he sings, and rejoices, and triumphs. At another time he is full of heaviness, even though it should be better with him in his outward worldly

worldly circumstances, he goes sighing and forrowing : why ? the reason is, one day the Lord shines, and then he is full of joy ; another day the *Lord hides his face* and then *he is troubled* : his heaven lies in seeing Christ's glory, in which he sees the Father's glory also.

9. Do they that see Christ, see the Father ? Hence learn, what an *honour it is to be conformed to the Son of God*, as it is said, Rom. viii. 29. *Whom he did foreknow, them he did predestinate to be conform to the image of his Son*: Is it the honour of Christ, as Mediator, to be the representative image of God, *in whom the glory of God is to be seen* ? What an honour then is it for the saints to be conformed to the image of Christ ? As Christ is in the *form of God*, so they are in the form of Christ, *having Christ formed in them*, Gal. iv. 19. And being renewed after his image, as the more we see Christ the more we see God ; so the more of Christ we see about a man, the more of God we see in him : *This is the honour of all the saints*, according to the measure of their sanctity.

10. Do they that see Christ, see the Father ? Hence learn, what a *dangerous thing it is to slight Christ*, and *contemn him*, who is *the brightness of the Father's glory*, and *the express image of his person*. If any despise the picture, it is an argument of their despising the person represented by it : *They that despise Christ, despise the Father*. And many despise Christ that do not consider that they are doing so ; particularly when they despise his sent ambassadors : *He that despises you*, says Christ, *despises me ? he that despises me, despises him that sent me*. See John xv. 23, 24. Why, who would be so mad, say you, as to slight Christ ? Even all you that slight his counsels, calls, and warnings given you by his word ; that slight his people ; and slight his ordinances ; that slight his worship, such as prayer and praises, whether secret or social, private or public, wherein Christ is honoured and enjoyed. In slighting these you slight Christ himself ; and in so doing you despise the Father : for, you despise his representative image ; and I will assure you, God will retaliate this treatment, and pay you  
home

home in your own coin : *O Lord, when thou awakest, thou shalt despise their image*, Psal. lxxiii. 20.

11. Do they that see Christ, see the Father ? Hence learn, the *awfulness of the day of judgment that is approaching*. Though Christ is constitute to be the judge, Acts xvii. 31. ; yet the Father will judge the world in him, and by him ; *for God is judge himself*, Psal. l. 6. Then will Christ be seen upon the throne of judgment ; *Behold, he cometh with clouds, and every eye shall see him*, Rev. i. 7. ; and when they see him, they will see the Father in him ; they will see God in him. It is true, he will not then be God's representative in the capacity of a Saviour to sinners, as now he is, but as a righteous judge of sinners and saints. A sight of God in Christ will not then be a pleasant sight to the wicked ; for, he will appear to them, not as a Redeemer, but a revenger : for, *he will appear in flaming fire, taking vengeance on them that know not God, and obey not the gospel* : but to believers, who look for him, and to whom he hath appeared graciously, so as they have now seen him, and the Father in him, and who will then be all perfect saints, *he will appear gloriously the second time without sin to their complete salvation*, Heb. ix. 28. How dreadfully awful will that day be to the wicked that shall see him, and see God in him no other way but as a consuming fire ! How joyfully awful also will it be to the saints, who shall see him then, and see the Father in him, as their *everlasting joy, and exceeding great reward* ?

12. Do they that see Christ, see the Father ? Hence also learn the *great reason and foundation of many other truths* ; such as,

(1.) Why is it that a sight of Christ hath such *virtue*, and creates such *blessed effects*, as we see in scripture spoken of it ? Even because they who *see him, see the Father*.—Why is the sight of Christ so *astonishing* ? because then the *wisdom of God in a mystery* appears.—Why is the sight of Christ so *humbling* ? why, because then God is seen in his *majesty and mercy* both.—Why, is it such a *strengthening* thing, even because then the *power of God* is discovered.—Why is a sight

of Christ so *satisfying*? because then the *grace of God* appears. The sight is *quieting to the conscience*, for then the *righteousness of God*, in the remission of sin, is declared and manifested, Rom. iii. 25.—The sight is *sweetly filling and satiating*, for then the *all-sufficiency of God* is discovered.—Why is a sight of Christ so *heart-cheering*, that the believer can never get his heart up, when prest with guilt, till he get a sight of Christ, and then he gets ease to his mind, and not till then? why, because when he *sees Christ, he sees the Father*; and he finds God is in him reconciled and well-pleased.—In a word, why is a sight of Christ so *sanctifying and transforming*, that as they that see him perfectly in heaven are like him? because they *see him as he is*, 1 John iii. 2. So they that even see him *through a glass darkly*, are more and more like him, and *changed into the same image, from glory to glory*, 2 Cor. iii. 18.—Well then, they see the glory of a holy God in him, and the sight affects the heart, both with a sense of their *disconformity to him*, and with a strong desire of conformity to him; yea, the Spirit darting in the rays of the Sun of righteousness dispels the darkness of sin, and inforces the contrary light of holiness upon the whole man gradually and powerfully, according to the measure of the manifestation and communication.

(2.) Why is it that such *honour, worship, and adoration* is due to Christ? even because he is the Father's representative image as man, even as he is his essential image as God. It is gross idolatry to worship God out of this image, or by any other image, either mental or real. Ah! shall the devil make men *worship the image of the beast*? Rev. xiii. 1,—8; and shall not we for ever honour this ever-living, everlasting image of our God? Why is it that what honour is done to Christ, is done to the Father, and what dishonour is done to him, is done to the Father? John v. 23. Because the Father hath ordered, *that all men should honour the Son, even as they honour the Father*; and declares, *he that honours not the Son, honours not the Father*. Why? even as they that see not Christ, see not the Father; and they that know not Christ, know not the

the Father ; so they that do not honour Christ, do not honour the Father. They that disobey Christ, disobey the Father ; they that displease Christ, displease the Father ; they that believe in Christ, believe in the Father ; therefore, says Christ, here in the context, *Ye believe in God, believe also in me* : which intimates this, among other things, that though one may believe in God, in some respect, without believing in Christ, yet we cannot believe in Christ, without believing in God ; for, *by him we believe in God*, 1 Peter i. 21. Again,

(3.) Why is it that the *Father honours them that serve and follow Christ* ? John xii. 26. *If any man serve me, him will my Father honour.*—Why, they that serve Christ, serve the Father. Why does the Father love them that love Christ ? John xiv. 23. Why, the lovers of Christ are the lovers of God ; and they are but haters of the Father that are not lovers of the Son.

(4.) Why, is the *anointing said to teach all things* ? 1 John ii. 27. Why, when the Spirit makes known Christ, he makes known the Father ; and surely they *know all things* necessary to be known ; they know all who know him, who is *all in all*. Thus the meanest believer knows more than the wisest philosopher that ever was in the world, if he was ignorant of Christ.

(5.) Why is it that the *Father is employed in glorifying Christ in heaven*, and the *Spirit sent to glorify Christ on earth* ? See how the Father glorifies him in heaven, Phil. ii. 9, 10. *He became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross : wherefore God hath highly exalted him, and given him a name that is above every name.* What is the reason ? see it ver. 11. *It is to the glory of God the Father* : for when the *Son of man is glorified, God is glorified in him*, John xiii. 31.—See also how the Spirit is sent to glorify him on earth, John xvi. 14. Why so ? even because when he is glorified, the Father is glorified in him, ver. 15. *All things that the Father hath are mine.* O Sirs, if the Spirit hath been sent to glorify Christ among us to day, then the Father hath been glorified in the Son,

(6.) Why is it that the faints and children of God desire sometimes to be *dissolved*, and to be *with Christ*? why, even that they may see him there, and the Father in him gloriously: for, if they that see him here, see the Father in him, how much more will all his own, and his Father's glory, then be manifested to their everlasting contentment, and full ineffable consolation through the ages of eternity! The sight of Christ that the believer gets is of such an attractive nature, that the heart affected with the glory of Christ, is just like the needle touched with a loadstone; it is in constant motion till it fix on its proper point: so is the believer's heart in a continual motion towards Christ, though yet; perhaps, like the needle, in a weak tremulous manner, the soul sighs, and sobs, and pants, and groans, in reading, in hearing, in prayer, in meditation, yet still pressing forward till it come to its centre in heaven.

13. Hence learn, what reason MINISTERS have to *preach Christ*; what reason PEOPLE have to *learn Christ*; what reason SINNERS have to *receive Christ*; and what reason SAINTS have to *love Christ*. Why, they that preach Christ, learn the Father; they that come to Christ, come to the Father in him and by him; and they that love Christ, love the Father. They who do not preach Christ, let them busk up, deck, and adorn their sermons with all the flowers of rhetoric and oratory in the world, and with all the expressions of seeming respect to God imaginable, yet they cast a cloud upon the glory of the Father, when they do not preach Christ. *As he that honours not the Son, honours not the Father that sent him, John v. 23.*: so he that does not preach Christ, does not preach the Father. Little wonder then, that honest ministers are always beating upon this string: O! let none blame them for preaching Christ; for, he is both the ALPHA and OMEGA, the first and last letter and lesson of our religion; *The author and finisher of faith*.—We cannot preach the Father's mind and will, concerning any part of our salvation, without preaching Christ. Who can learn the Father's enlightening, justifying, sanctifying

ing and saving grace, without learning Christ, as *made of God to us wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, and redemption?* Who can learn repentance towards God, which is a turning from sin to God, without learning, in order of nature before it, *Faith towards our Lord Jesus Christ*, Acts xx. 21. ? seeing there is no turning to God, but in Christ ; no coming to the Father but by him. Repentance, then, toward God is the end ; and faith, toward our Lord Jesus Christ, is the mean towards that end : and so, with respect to faith itself, there is no believing in God aright without believing also in Christ, *By whom we believe in God* : nor can there be any love to God, but in Christ ; we are not lovers of the Father, if we be not lovers of Christ ; and good reason have the saints to love Christ, because they see his glory, and the Father's glory in him. *He that hath seen me, hath seen the Father.*

*Use 2.* The *second* use might be by way of *trial* or *examination*. Have you got a saving sight of Christ at this, or any such occasion ? 'Why then, the great mark of it is, if you have *seen Christ*, you have *seen the Father* : if you have seen Christ's glory, you have seen the Father's glory in him ; for, *He is the brightness of the Father's glory* : if you have seen Christ's person, you have seen *the express image of his person* : if you have seen Christ, you have seen the Father in all these and the like respects that I mentioned in the doctrinal part. Hath the *God, who commanded light to shine out of darkness, shined into your heart, to give you the light of the knowledge of his glory in the face of Christ?* Then you have seen Christ indeed, if you have thus got the light of the knowledge of the Father's glory in his face. It is possible, indeed, that you may have seen Christ, and yet not know that you have seen the Father, even though it be impossible to see Christ and not see the Father : for, Philip here, had seen Christ, and seen the Father in him also, as Christ declares, ver. 7. *Henceforth you know him, and have seen him.* Notwithstanding this declaration of Christ, Philip's saying, *Lord, shew us the Father, and it sufficeth*, intimates the weak-

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ness of his faith, the darkness of his view, and that he knew not that he had seen the Father; upon which Christ, having reprov'd him for his ignorance, saying, *Have I been so long time with you, and yet hast thou not known me, Philip?* he again resumes the doctrine he had deliver'd, verse 7. where he had said, *If ye had known me, ye would have known my Father also:* and he resumes it here yet more clearly and expressly, saying, *He that hath seen me, hath seen the Father; how then sayest thou, Shew us the Father?* If any believers here, who think they have seen Christ, be yet at a loss to know if they have seen the Father, let them hearken to what Christ is here saying to them, as he did to Philip, *Have I been so long time with thee, and yet hast thou not known me? He that hath seen me, hath seen the Father.* But are you still in the dark, Philip? Do you not yet know, believer, that you have seen the Father in Christ, and would you have this question further opened?

QUEST. *How shall I know, if I have seen CHRIST in such a saving manner as to see the FATHER in him?*

For helping the weak believer in this matter: if he whose prerogative it is to shew us the Father, would send his Spirit to shine on a mark or two for clearing this, that in seeing Christ, you have seen the Father, there are two ways by which you may try it, namely, 1. By reflecting on the *object*. 2. By the *offspring* of this saving sight.

1<sup>st</sup>, Take a review of the *object* of this sight, namely, CHRIST, in whom the Father is seen. And if ever you have seen Christ, you may know you have seen the Father: for, there are certain relations wherein he stands to the Father, not only as he is his eternal Son, but also as he is our Saviour. He stands related to the Father, I say, in these respects so closely, that it is impossible to see him without seeing the Father. As he that sees a son cannot but know, not only that there is a father, since the son is a *relative* that must have a father; but also, if the son be so like him, the very picture of the father, then he that sees the son cannot but be said to see the

the father ; much more so it is here ; Christ, the Son being not only the Father's picture, but, in respect of his Deity, being clothed with the very same essential perfections, the same individual attributes and excellencies. Such is his personal equality in power and glory, and essential oneness and sameness in substance with the Father, that there is no seeing of him without seeing the Father. But more particularly, with a view to the relations wherein he stands to the Father, even as he is our Saviour.

1. If you have seen Christ, you have seen him to be the Father's *Choice* ; *Behold mine Elect*, says the Father of him, Isa. xlii. 1. Why, then you have seen the Father choosing him from all eternity, to be a Saviour and Surety for lost sinners.

2. Have you seen him as the Father's *Servant*, in this work of our redemption ? *Behold my Servant, whom I uphold*. If so, then you have seen the Father in his *matchless love*, putting his service in his hand, and *laying help upon One that is mighty to save*.

3. Have you seen him as the Father's *Darling and Delight* ? *Mine Elect, in whom my soul delighteth*, says the Father ; then you have seen the Father taking pleasure in him, as his faithful and righteous Servant in managing this work. And I will assure you, such views of the Father, in Christ, are no small thing — Again,

4. Have you seen him as the Father's *Ambassador*, and *as the Sent and Sealed of the Father* : and that *him hath God the Father sealed* ! Why then, to be sure, you have seen (as imported in this) the Father sending, sealing, and clothing him with a commission to this effect, *Of saving sinners, of whom you are the chief*. There is a notable sight of the Father. Again,

5. Have you seen him as the Father's *Gift* : the *unspeakable Gift of God, given for a Covenant of the people* ? This imports a *sight of the Father*, as giving him freely for that end, to be our complete salvation ; and so *you have seen the Father in him*. Again,

6. Have you seen him as the Father's *Treasurer*, *In whom are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge* ;  
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*all the treasures of divine fulness in him?* Then you have seen the Father's fulness in him. And what better sight of the Father can you have, than to see him in all his fulness; to see him in *Christ, in whom dwells all the fulness of the Godhead bodily.* Again,

7. Have you seen him as the Father's *Secretary*, sent to reveal the heart, and mind, and will of the Father to you? Then you have seen the *Father's council in him, yea, the Father's thoughts*; even though, *as heaven is higher than the earth, so his thoughts are higher than our thoughts*, yet when you saw *Christ*, you saw his thoughts towards you to be *thoughts of good, and not of evil, to give you an expected end.* While unbelief prevailed, and a legal spirit, you judged he had ill thoughts and designs against you, and a mind to destroy you; but when, by faith, you saw *Christ*, then you saw he had better thoughts, and a mind to save you. And did you not win far forward, and admitted very near, to see the Father, when, in *Christ*, you saw his very mind, and thoughts, and counsel concerning you; How can you say then, if you saw *Christ*, that you did not see the Father? Again,

8. Have you seen him as the Father's *Image and Representative*? Then surely you have seen the Father represented by him, *Who is the image of the invisible God; the brightness of his glory, and the express image of his person; his essential image as God: and representative image, as man.* And hence,

9. Have you seen him as the Father's *Equal*? the *man that is my Fellow, says the Lord of hosts, who thinks it no robbery to be equal with God?* Then you have seen the Father's *power and glory* in him; for, therein they are personally equal, and essentially one.

10. In a word, have you seen him, and the Father's *furniture* about him, qualifying him as Mediator for the great work of our redemption, both by price and power? Then you have seen the Father's *Spirit* in him, and resting upon him, as a *Spirit of wisdom and understanding, a Spirit of counsel and might, a Spirit of knowledge and of the fear of the Lord, Isa. xi. 2. For he hath put his Spirit upon him, that he might bring forth judgment to*

*the Gentiles, Isa. lxii. 1. The Spirit of the Lord God is upon me, says Christ, for he hath anointed me to preach good tidings to the meek, to bind up the broken-hearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and to open the prison doors to them that are bound. Got you never an apprehension of Christ, as being anointed with the oil of gladness above his fellows, and as having a super-eminent unction of the Spirit above measure? If you have thus seen the Spirit of the Father in him, it is one of the greatest sights that can be seen; for, to see the Father's Spirit in the Son, is to see a whole Trinity Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, with one glance of the eye of faith.—Well then, can you say, believer, but that when you saw Christ in these respects I have mentioned, you also have seen the Father?—Try it then by the object of this sight.*

*2dly, Take a view of the fruit and offspring of this saving sight. As they that see Christ see the Father, and cannot but see the Father's wisdom in providing him, the Father's love in bestowing him, the Father's grace in accepting him as the Surety, and the Father's satisfaction with him and in him, for his doing and dying in our room and stead, according to the Father's will, and council of peace that was betwixt them both; so this sight cannot but affect the hearts of all that have the happiness to enjoy it. If a prince come to a poor man's house, how shall we know whether he be still there? Though we see him not, we may know by his train, and these that attend; if we see his train, we know he is there: even so the believer may know whether Christ be revealed in him, and in his heart, though he be at present out of sight, if his train be attending: Isaiah saw the Lord upon a throne, high and lifted up, and his train filled the temple, Isa. vi. 1. Now, it is possible the train may be seen, when the Lord himself is not so discernable. There is a train of blessings that attend a saving revelation of Christ, or a saving sight of him, that you would try yourselves by. I shall name a few of them; for, if you have seen Christ, and the Father in him, then the sight was generative,*

So as to regenerate you, and beget all graces and virtues in you, John i. 13, 14, 16. There believers are said to be born, not of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God: not of their free will, but of God's free grace. Well, but by what means are they thus regenerate? It follows, *The Word was made flesh, and we beheld his glory, the glory of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth.* The great mean of their being begotten anew is, their *beholding the glory of the only begotten of the Father*; and, as it is by this sight they are begotten, so by this all graces are begotten, as you see, by comparing verses 14. and 16. together, *We beheld his glory,—full of grace and truth: and out of his fulness have we all received, and grace for grace.* A saving sight of Christ then, and of the Father in him, hath a powerful generative quality.—Would you know, believer, when you was born again, or the first moment of your regeneration? It was that moment wherein you first got a view of the *glory of the only begotten of the Father*; and if you would try it by the fruits of it, the offspring is so numerous, that we cannot undertake to speak of all. I shall mention some of the many things that this sight begets.

1. This sight begets *faith*, it ushers in believing; *He that sees the Son, and believes in him, hath everlasting life*, John vi. 40. It is by beholding him, we believe in him; *Looking unto Jesus, the Author and Finisher of our faith*, Heb. xii. 2. There is a looking to him by spiritual understanding, in order to our looking to him by faith; a looking to Jesus, the *object of faith*; and, in this way, we are made to find him the *Author of faith*. There is a looking to him *for faith*, and a looking to him *by faith*. Can you say, Alas! I could not believe, though give me a world, till he manifested his glory to me; and when I saw his glory, then I could not but believe that the first act of faith was begotten by the first view of Christ; and that all the after-acts of faith depended upon the further discoveries of Christ; *He manifested forth his glory, and his disciples believed on him*, John ii. 11.

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2. This sight begets *hope*, 1 Peter ii. 3. It is there declared, that *by the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, manifesting himself particularly in Christ's resurrection from the dead*, believers are said to be *begotten again to a lively hope*. O believer, when once you beheld this glory of God in Christ, was not then your languishing despair turned to a lively hope? Was not your fears of hell and wrath, which you was convinced was your natural inheritance, as a child of wrath, and an heir of hell, was not this fear of hell and wrath, I say, in the day when you saw Christ, turned to a *hope of an inheritance incorruptible, undefiled, and that fadeth not away?*

3. This sight begets *repentance and sorrow for sin*; Zech. xii. 10 *They shall look on him whom they have pierced, and mourn*. Was it possible, for you, O believer, to look upon this glorious Sun of righteousness without a watering eye, or a mourning penitential heart? Did not the heart, that was harder than a flint, become softer than wax, melting before the warm fire of the love of God, manifested in Christ!

4. This sight begets *love*; *Whom having not seen, [viz. by sense, but by faith,] we love*, 1 Peter i. 8.—Love to his person, as being, the *brightness of the Father's glory*; love to his people, as the *excellent ones of the earth*; love to his statutes, saying, *O that my ways were directed to keep thy statutes*; love to his ordinances, and to the place where his honour dwells. Is it possible you could see him, and yet not love him in all respects?

3. This sight begets *liberty*; for, *Where the Spirit of the Lord is, [as a Spirit of revelation, discovering the glory of Christ,] there is liberty*, 2 Cor. iii. 17.—O Sirs, did not the sight of the glory of God, in Christ, enlarge your heart, and loose your bonds, and set you at liberty from your fetters and fears; at liberty from the law and legal bondage? Got you not liberty to unbosom yourself unto the Lord; liberty to plead, and liberty to pray, and liberty to praise, and all the doors of your prison cast open?

6. This sight begets *joy and satisfaction*; *In whom,*

though now we see him not, yet believing, we rejoice with joy unspeakable, and full of glory, 1 Peter i. 8. Abraham saw my day, and rejoiced, says Christ; and then were the disciples glad when they saw the Lord. This is sweetly prophesied of, Isaiah xxxv. 1, 2. *The wilderness and solitary places shall be glad, and the desert shall rejoice and blossom as the rose: it shall blossom abundantly, and rejoice even with joy and singing; why all this? It follows, They shall see the glory of the Lord, and the excellency of our God.* O believer, did not your heart leap within you, when you saw the glory of the Lord? It is true, people may have a kind of joy, in that which will not give solid satisfaction; but here is *full satisfaction*, as well as *fulness of joy*. A man may say, when he is highest in the comforts of this world, Ah! there is no solid permanent satisfaction here; there is a want; there is a want; death and judgment trip up the heels of all that comfort: but it is not so here; the man that hath seen the glory of the Lord, may say, Now, I can trample upon all worldly joy; now, I can triumph in the view of death, judgment, and eternity; *Thanks be to God, which always causes us to triumph in Christ. Now is my soul satisfied as with marrow and fatness.*

7. This sight begets *longing*; yea, longing for more and more of the *knowledge of Christ*, and of the *glory of God* in him; *One thing have I desired of the Lord, and that I will seek after, that I may dwell in the house of the Lord all the days of my life, to behold the beauty of the Lord*, Psalm xxvii. 4. So Paul, Phil. i. 8,—14. It begets a longing to be *above*, where the vision will be full and uninterrupted; and a *desire to be dissolved, and to be with Christ*. O to be for ever with the Lord! It begets a longing to be free of *sin* and *unbelief*, and every thing that hinders the immediate vision and enjoyment of the Lord.

8. This sight begets *holiness* and *conformity* to the object discovered; *Beholding his glory, we are changed into the same image, from glory to glory*; and so thereby he becomes *all glorious within*. Notwithstanding of the remainder of corruption, and the prevalence of it; yet there

there is something within that will have the last word, so as the devil cannot get his work finished in that heart. The devil is said to work *effectually in the wicked*: that is, says one, *He finishes his work*: but in the saints he cannot get that done; for, grace comes after, and overthrows that work some way or other. Thus the devil sifted Peter, and foiled him; but afterwards Peter wept out the devil's work upon Christ's looking upon him, and his looking to Christ. Indeed, a new sight of Christ gives always a new victory over sin, and makes the soul advance in holiness, purity, and conformity to the Lord Jesus; *Beholding his glory, full of grace and truth, we receive out of his fulness, grace for grace*, as the wax receives letter for letter from the seal. This sight of God in Christ, is not dry, barren speculation, that leaves you as proud and carnal, malicious, wicked, and worldly as ever, no; you may suspect it is not a saving sight, if it did not, in some measure, leave an impression of the holiness of God upon you.

9. This sight begets *humility, self-loathing, and abasement*; other knowledge puffs up, but this presses down the soul to nothing before the Lord, saying, *Now mine eyes see thee; wherefore I abhor myself, and repent in dust and ashes*, Job. xlii. 5. The same light that discovers the greatness of God, discovers the meanness of the creature; the holiness of God seen, discovers the vileness of the creature; the fulness of God being seen, then appears the emptiness of the creature, and the baseness thereof: hence the holiest of men, upon the discovery of the Lord, must cry out, *Behold, I am vile*, Isaiah vi. 5. Then is the soul *ashamed and confounded*, when the Lord is discovered as *pacified towards it*, Ezek. xvi. 63. O! did not the sight of the glory of God in Christ, believer, make the *haughtiness of man to fall*, and the *loftiness of man to be laid low*? The fairer that Christ is seen, the viler does the believer see himself; and then self-wisdom, self-righteousness, self-love, are dashed down to the ground, and covered with shame and blushing.

10. This sight begets *holy boldness and confidence*. Notwithstanding the humbling nature of this view; yet

yet it is emboldening also, leading the soul to say, *Truth, Lord, I am a dog; but yet, be what I will, I must have a crumb.* Now, that thou hast let me know where my supply lies, I will trust and confide in thee alone for it: *They that know thy name, will put their trust in thee; for thou, Lord, hast not forsaken them that seek thee,* Psalm ix. 10.

In a word, if you have seen Christ, and the Father in him, did not the sight beget *peace of conscience* before God! *Being justified by faith, we have peace with God;* and this flowing from the sight and knowledge of God; for, *by his knowledge shall my righteous servant justify many,* says God. According to the measure of faith, was there never a *joy and peace in believing* that you found?—Did not the sight beget *patience* under crosses that you was compassed with? It is said of Moses, *He endured, as seeing him that is invisible.*—Were not all worldly troubles, trials, and reproaches made easy to you, when the Spirit of God, and of glory was resting on you?—Did not the sight beget *zeal* for the glory of God, and for the good of the souls of others, and make your heart cry out, O that all the world would come and see this glory, and admire the King in his beauty?—Did not the sight beget *strength and fortitude*, so as the *joy of the Lord was your strength;* and you could say, *I can do all things through Christ strengthening me;* for now he hath strengthened me with strength in my soul; and made me to say, *In the Lord have I righteousness and strength?*—Did not the sight beget a *cheerful gospel-walk*, according to that word, Psal. lxxxix. 15, 16. *Blessed are the people that know the joyful sound; they shall walk, O Lord, in the light of thy countenance. Thou art the glory of their strength; and in thy righteousness shall they be exalted?*—Did not the sight beget *praise and adoration*, saying, O! *what shall I render to the Lord for all his benefits?*—Did it not beget *wonder and admiration*, saying, *What am I, and what is my Father's house, that thou hast brought me hitherto: Is this the manner of man, O Lord; and what can David say more unto thee?*—Did not the sight beget *contempt of the world*, and a *selling of your ALL for this pearl of great price?* saying,

saying, *I count all but loss and dung, for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ.* Could you not trample on the world as dung, when the glory of the Lord appeared to you? Was not Christ more precious to you than a thousand worlds of gold? Hath the sight you got of God, in Christ, such a fair offspring as this? Then it looks like a saving sight.

I shall add finally, Did not this sight of the glory of God in Christ, O believer, beget in you an *indelible impression of that glory* that time cannot utterly wear out, It is prophesied, Isa. lx. 19. *The Lord shall be thy everlasting light, and thy God thy glory.* This *light of the knowledge of the glory of the Lord in the face of Jesus Christ*, is, in some respect, everlasting; while the *candle of the wicked is put out* and the candle of the hypocrite put out. Hence, Heb. vi. 4.—*Though once enlightened, they may fall away*; the apprehension and impression of all that common light may utterly fail: but it is not so here with the believer; *the Lord is his everlasting light*, even though his Lord may, for a moment, *hide his face from him.*

Perhaps some believers may now be saying, Whatever be the fair offspring of this saving sight of God in Christ, that you have been mentioning, though I sometimes think, I have got that sight you speak of, and at certain times have found some of these fruits and offspring thereof, yet have I not now reason to suspect, it is but a common light, like that of the hypocrite, and that I never got that saving sight when I find, to my experience, that all the fruit and offspring thereof is now dead and gone, dead and buried, dead and out of sight? For I think sometimes not so much as the least impression thereof remains.

O believer, if you have seen Christ, and the Father in him, examine it over again, and you will find it otherwise than you suppose, and that there is a living impression remains, whether it be lively or not: therefore, I charge you before God, believer, to be ingenuous in this matter; was there not something in Christ you saw, that took such impression on you, that you have never to this day forgotten? It may be you have  
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forgotten many friends and acquaintances, that are dead and away ; you have forgotten many sermons that you heard in your lifetime : you have forgotten many words that pass betwixt you and your neighbours some years ago ; you have forgotten some visits that certain friends made to you ; but there was a visit that Christ made to you at such a time, there was some sight that you got of him, and some word that you got from him, and that is a thing you can never forget to this day. I speak either of the first sight that ever you got of him, or of some following remarkable visits that he made to you, in displaying his glory : for a believer may get a thousand views of Christ in his lifetime, but there are some views that he gets, that if he were to live a thousand years, he could never forget them. Have you not a fresh remembrance, believer, to this day, of such a spot of ground where you saw his glory ? Was not such a place like a Bethel, a house of God ? and such another place like a Peniel, where you saw God in a manner face to face ? Whatever cloudy days have intervened since that time, yet you can never forget it ; for, so far as you can judge in the sight of the heart-searching God, it carried all the marks of a saving manifestation along with it. Why then, will you say, that all the fruits and impression of it are dead and gone ? For there is a living remembrance of it in your heart to this day, and a living wish and desire at the root of your heart, saying, O to see that glory of God again ! What is the reason, that this can never wear out of your head and heart ? Even because it is an eternal and incorruptible thing ; *The Lord is thy everlasting light* : and you will carry this impression into eternity with you ; and heaven will perfect the vision : *We shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is.*

*Use 3.* The *third* use might be for *conviction* to the wicked and ungodly ; that is, to all unbelievers that never yet have seen Christ, and consequently, never saw God the Father in him ; and, like Gallio, *care for none of these things*, and that are not concerned with such

such speculations. Why, man, have you no concern in this matter? Is it not of everlasting moment, whether you got a saving sight of Christ, yea, or not? Know you not, *that if our gospel be hid, it is hid to them that are lost, in whom the god of this world hath blinded the minds of them which believe not, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them?* 2 Cor. iv. 3, 4. And that it is *life eternal, to know God in Christ*, and consequently eternal death to want this sight? Will you tell me, if a physician should come into a chamber where there are two sick persons, and should say, the one will die of that disease, and the other will recover; would they not think it their concern to enquire after this matter? Much more is this a concern above all such concern. When I tell you that hear me, that one part of you are believers, that have seen the glory of God in Christ, and you shall live, and live for ever; the other part, and, alas! the greatest part are unbelievers, that have never seen the *glory of God in the face of Christ*; and if you live and die in that case, you die for ever, and will ly eternally under his revenging wrath: and is all this a matter of moon-shine to you? If you see him not now, you shall never see him in mercy hereafter. This sight of Christ, and of his Father in him, is no bare empty speculation; nay, it is the very root and foundation of all practical godliness: there is no conformity to his image, without beholding of his glory. Many speak of following the *example of Christ*, even as some write volumes of it, as if it were to be attained by a bare imitation of his actions; but this is impossible, without a view and intuition of his glory, which alone is accompanied with a transforming power, to *change us into the same image, from glory to glory.*—What makes one half of the generation so grossly wicked, and another so madly superstitious, but the want of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Christ? Why is the throng of the nobility and gentry of our day, besides the commonalty, running so fast to the devil? And why are ceremonies, and superstitious human inventions in the worship of God, be-

come so fashionable †? Why, people do not see the glory of God in Christ, in the glass of his own pure ordinances and institutions; therefore they make use of painted glasses: they do not see the internal glory, therefore they turn to external pomp and forms: but, as the more paint is put upon the glass window the less light is conveyed through it; so, the more people please themselves with a painted ceremonial worship, the less, in the righteous judgment of God, do they see of the glory of God; yea, the more do they run out of God's way, and *love darkness rather than light*. May the Lord pity a poor ignorant generation, that profess the knowledge of Christ, and yet know nothing of the *glory of God in the face of Christ*. But I shall not enlarge here.

*Use 4.* The *fourth* use might be for consolation to believers that have seen Christ; for, *he that hath seen Christ, hath seen the Father*. O believer, you have seen much that have seen Christ, you have seen his glory and his Father's glory too.—Here is comfort against the apprehension you have of your own *ignorance of God*: Oh! says the man that sees God in Christ, *I am more brutish than any man; I have not the understanding of a man*: so foolish am I and ignorant, *I am as a beast before God*. Indeed they that see him best, are under most humbling impressions that they cannot see, and of the impossibility of seeing him, during the state of sin and mortality; this keeps the believer's heart in awe, and causes him to walk before God with holy fear and reverence, knowing how dangerous it is to think amiss of God, and yet how difficult it is to think aright of him. However, believer, you that have got a saving sight of Christ, you have seen farther than you are apt to think you have seen, though it is but a small portion of God that at best we know; it may be, with Philip, when you saw Christ, you did not know that you saw the Father. There is

† Episcopacy, though reformed from, and abjured by our Covenants, was, at this time, in several places, meeting with encouragement: and approved by many of high rank.

more glory in the object of faith, than you are ready to take up; but the Lord Jesus is ready to teach you, and make you know better what you know. There is more knowledge and persuasion of the love and grace of God in Christ, in the act of faith, than the believer may be aware of upon reflection, till the Lord Jesus discover to him anew what his faith is, and let him know what he saw and discerned when he saw Christ; he lets you know, *He that hath seen me, hath seen the Father.*—Again, O believers, here is comfort against all *troubles* and *trials* you can meet with in this valley of tears: let me say to you as Christ said, Matt. xiii. 16. *Blessed are your eyes, for they see.* You cannot be unhappy and miserable to whom the Lord hath manifested his glory, though you be a poor man, a plundered man, a persecuted man, a sick man or woman, or whatever else can be called misery about you: if you believe Christ, who is the truth, you are a blessed man, a blessed woman. Though you were sick, and should never see health; though you were weak, and should never see strength; though you were poor, and should never see wealth; though you were banished, and should never see your own country or friends; yea, though you were stark blind, and should never see the sun in the firmament; yet if you have seen Christ, and seen the Father in him, *blessed are your eyes, for they see.* All the blessedness in the world, and that ever mankind enjoyed from the creation, put all together, is not worthy to be compared with one glance that a believer hath of the glory of God in Christ. And it may be, there are some believers here of such standing, that they have got a thousand of these glances, since the Lord began to discover himself, and reveal his glory to them. For shame then, believer, be not discouraged with every trifle in the world; *your lines are fallen in pleasant places, and you have a goodly heritage.* Never look dejected any more; envy not the wicked any more; but rather pity them, and weep for them, whatever be their outward pomp and prosperity, you have infinitely greater treasure. *We have this treasure in earthen vessels,* saith the apostle; well, what treasure?

sure? even the manifestation of God's glory in Christ, that is here spoken of: therefore you may say, believer, though I have not worldly profit, nor pelf, nor money, nor honour, let the world have all, yet I have a good bargain. O believer, pity the world that know no better happiness than good meat and brave clothes; that know no better enjoyment than cabaling, eating, drinking, dancing, roaring, dicing, carding, hunting, gaming. Alas! if they were not mad they could not be merry in that case, being *without God in the world*.—Here is comfort against *desertion*; have you seen him once, you will see him again; though he *hide himself for a moment*, yet he is the *God of Bethel*, where you anointed the pillar, and vowed the vow unto him.—Here is comfort against *death*; though you should die poor and mean; yea, though you should die distracted, yet having seen his glory, you shall see him in glory, and praise him for ever: your *eyes have seen his salvation*; and therefore though you know not in what circumstances you shall die, or how soon you shall depart, yet you may well be content to die what death the Lord will, and how soon soever he pleases, saying, *Now lettest thou thy servant depart in peace: for mine eyes have seen thy salvation*. And whenever death closes your bodily eyes, you shall see him *face to face*.—Take home all the strong consolations that God allows you who have seen Christ.

*Use 5.* The *last* use should be in a word of exhortation. And our exhortation shall consist of two branches, 1. To those who have never yet seen Christ, nor the Father in him. 2. To believers, who have already seen Christ.

1<sup>st</sup>, Our exhortation shall first be directed to *unbelievers*. Do they that see Christ see the Father? O then, you that never saw before, *Come and see; come and see this great sight!*

[1.] For *motives* consider, 1. The *excellency* of this sight. 2. The *necessity* of this sight.

1. Consider the *excellency* of this sight. To see all the great works of God is a great thing, but to see  
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God himself, who is invisible, in his own image and representative, is an excellent sight. O the excellency of the knowledge of Christ, in whom we have the knowledge of the Father! The holy properties of the divine nature are not only represented to our faith in Christ as to their own essential glory, but as they are exerted for our salvation: for in him we see infinite wisdom, power, justice, holiness, and mercy exerting themselves, in the contrivance, constitution and efficacious accomplishment of the great work of our redemption and salvation. This gives, as to our view, an unspeakable lustre to the native amiableness of these divine attributes. As they are eternally resident in the divine nature, and absolutely the same with it, we cannot so comprehend them as to have any endearing, fascinating view of their glory; but as they are exerted to our salvation, these beams of glory shine with unspeakable ravishment; *O the depths of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God? how unsearchable are his judgments, and his ways past finding out!* Rom. xi. 33. Here is a great privilege, and a great mystery both; a privilege to be valued, as it is a dawning of heaven; and a mystery to be viewed with spiritual wisdom; wisdom from above is absolutely necessary; for, flesh and blood cannot reveal it. How blind were the greatest philosophers in comparison with the meanest disciple of Jesus, that sees this great sight? But then,

2. Consider the *necessity* of this sight. There is no seeing of Christ above, if we get not a begun sight and view of him here; yea, you cannot so much as desire the glory of God in heaven, whatever you pretend, if you never saw the glory of Christ here. If a man pretend he is delighted with, and desires greatly what he never saw, nor was ever represented to him, he does but dote upon his imagination. The pretended desires of many to behold the glory of Christ in heaven, who have no view of it by faith while on earth, are nothing but self-deceiving imaginations. Therefore, let none deceive; they that see not Christ here, shall never see him, nor the glory of God in him hereafter. Now, they that do not see the glory of Christ, have no grace; for all grace

is begotten only by this sight, as I have shewed already. *He that sees the Son, and believes in him, hath everlasting life ; but they that see not the Son are unbelievers and heirs of everlasting death.*

[2.] For *direction*, if you ask, Where shall we see him ? and how shall we see him ?

I. If you ask, *WHERE shall we see him ?* God the Father hath given Christ to be the glass wherein you may see him : Christ hath given the gospel to be the glass wherein you may see him ; say not then, *Who will ascend to heaven and bring Christ down ; or descend to the deep, to bring him up that we may see him ?* You may see him in this *word of faith that we preach*. O see him in that word, ver. 6. *I am the way, the truth, and the life ; no man cometh to the Father but by me*. If you take a view of him in that word, you will see the Father in him. If you see him as the *way*, you may see the Father in him leading you to himself ; if you see him as the *truth*, you may see the Father in him, teaching you his mind and will ; if you see him as the *life*, you may see the Father in him quickening you that are dead in sins and trespasses. If you see him in that word, *No man cometh to the Father, but by me*, you may see the Father in him, determining the necessity of coming to Christ by faith, in order to your attaining the enjoyment of God.—O see him in his sweet *command*, lined with gospel-grace ; *Look to me, and be saved all the ends of the earth : for I am God, and there is none else*, Isa. xlv. 22. There he is to be seen, and his Father in him ; his call is the Father's call ; you see it is the call and command of him that is essentially one with the Father ; *I am God, and there is none else*.—O come and see him in his sweet *promises*, all lined with love ; such as that, Psal. lxxii. 17. *Men shall be blest in him, and all nations shall call him blessed*. And again, *Surely shall one say, In the Lord have I righteousness and strength*. Men shall be blest in him ; and surely, one shall say, in the Lord I have all. O what encouraging promises are here, even to them that think they cannot see him ; they cannot look to him ! for the very strength to look to him,

him, and the eye to see him, is put in the promise they shall be blest in him; they shall say, *In the Lord have I righteousness and strength. They shall look on him whom they have pierced, and mourn.* As the command makes it your duty, so the promise gives you encouragement to look to him in both; and to see him in a promise, by faith, is as safe a way of seeing him, as if you saw him in heaven; and better than if you saw him with your bodily eyes in the pulpit, and heard him preaching to you; for many saw him thus, that never got a saving sight of him by faith.—O come and see him in his purchase that he hath made by his obedience unto death; a purchase of grace and glory for you, sinner. But, say you, was it not for the elect only? It may be he did not make the purchase for me; that was not his design. My friends, we preach the doctrine of election in its own place, and declare, that the *elect only shall obtain*; and that *as many as were ordained to eternal life shall believe*: but it were impertinent to bring it in upon the general call of the gospel; it belongs so little to that purpose, that we could not mention it therein any other way, than to ward it off from that point, when the devil and the wicked unbelieving heart bring it in as an objection against, and an obstruction to your seeing Christ with application to yourselves. I only ask therefore, whether is his secret counsel, or his open command your rule? Whether is his hidden purpose, or revealed promise to be your encouragement? What have you ado with his secret? you are not excluded in his word; and, why then will you exclude yourselves? As I call you, therefore, to see him in his purchase that he hath made of grace and glory to you, sinner, declared in his promise, that he is come to save sinners: so I would warn you to beware of a trick of the devil and unbelief here, in turning that to a discouragement of faith, which is really an encouragement thereof. Hath Christ said, *All that the Father hath given me, shall come*: why then, come and see him, and then you will see the Father giving you to him from eternity. Would you desire to get into the very heart of God, and read his electing love? You may

may do it by opening this book of the gospel-promise, and reading it with application to yourself ; and there you may see it.—O come and see him in his *robes of grace and salvation* ; see him in his garments rolled in blood : behold how *he comes from Edom, with dyed garments from Bozrah*. See him on a throne of grace inviting you to come to him, and kindly declaring, that it is his greatest quarrel with you, that *you will not come to him that you might have life*, and salvation from all your sins, and all the wrath that is entailed upon them. Are you afraid to look to him, thinking he hath a quarrel with you for your sins ? Nay, but know it, no sin that ever you was guilty of is to be mentioned as the ground of his quarrel, but only for this one, that you will not come and look to him for salvation and deliverance from all sin whatsoever. O see him then, and welcome him in his kindly offer, and say no more, where shall we see him ? for he is here present dealing with you in this gospel.

2. If you ask, *How shall we see him, and the Father in him ?* I gave many motives and directions also, with reference to the knowledge of Christ, on the doctrine raised from the former part of the text ; therefore, I need enlarge the less here. I shall offer you these two or three *advices*, with reference to your seeing of Christ, in order to your seeing of the Father in him ; or with reference to your getting a saving sight of God in Christ.

(1.) Be convinced, that unless he *manifest himself*, you can by no means in the world see him. Even as all the candles and torches in the world cannot discover the sun to you, when under a cloud, till it come forth itself : so all the means in the world cannot discover God in Christ to you till he manifest himself ; *I will manifest myself*, John xiv. 21. It is his prerogative to do it when he pleases ; therefore, give him the glory of his sovereignty, saying, Lord I cannot see thee ; and all the world cannot let me see thee ; but O manifest thyself to me. Be convinced that you cannot possibly see him, till he open your eyes and shew himself.

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(2.) Be convinced of the *necessity* of a *powerful regeneration*, ere you can see God; *Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God*, John iii. 3.; and a God in Christ is the chief thing, if not the only thing in that kingdom. The eyes of flesh and blood cannot see this great sight: these eyes of flesh may see the natural sun; but you must have other eyes to behold the Sun of righteousness, otherwise though his glory be shining about you, your blindness and darkness comprehends him not. Therefore,

(3.) Be convinced of your own *gross darkness* and *ignorance of God*. A conceit of your own knowledge, and high esteem of yourself, and your own wisdom, will both be an evidence that you know nothing as you ought to know; and also be a hinderance of your knowing and seeing the Lord: therefore you must *become a fool that you may be wise*. For judgment am I come into this world, says Christ, *that they which see not might see, and that they which see might be made blind*, John ix. 39.

(4.) Be convinced, that it is your *sin* and *misery* both, that you *do not*, and *cannot see this glory of God in Christ*.—It is your *sin*, your leading sin, and mother of all your other sins: for herein lies the formal nature of unbelief, that you do not, you cannot, you will not look to Christ and be saved.—And it is your *misery*: for, while unbelief reigns, you are under the power of the devil, hiding this light from you; *And, if our gospel be hid, it is hid to them that are lost, in whom the god of this world hath blinded the minds of them which believe not, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them*, 2 Cor. iv. 3, 4. This darkness and blindness is the strength of the devil's kingdom.—Whenever light shines into the heart, his power is broken: but darkness and ignorance is the chain wherein he leads you to the place of utter darkness, to which you will be sentenced with him, if that chain be not loosed in time. What will be the sentence of the great Judge? will he give one to the devil, and another to wicked men? No: he will make one to serve them both; *Go, you cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil*: you joined with the devil in loving darkness, and therefore

depart with him ! Oh ! be convinced, poor soul, that the devil is cutting your throat in the dark ; and that it is both your sin and misery that you do not see.

(5.) Be convinced, that there is a promise of *divine illumination* left to you to rely on ; *They shall be all taught of God. Every man, therefore, that hath heard and learned of the Father, cometh unto me : no man can come except the Father, which hath sent me, draw him,* John vi. 44. Cry, therefore, for the promised teaching, the promised drawing ; and seeing his powerful drawing is just his effectual teaching, O cry for the powerful promised illumination of his holy Spirit in the knowledge of Christ, in whom alone you can know the Father : be restless in the use of all appointed means, till the Spirit be sent for this end. It is his sweet counsel to you, that you *buy of him eye-salve that you may see.* Beg his enlightening Spirit : the Spirit is both the promise of the Father and of the Son ; *I send the promise of my Father upon you ; but tarry at Jerusalem till you be endued with power from on high,* Luke xxiv. 49. Stay about his hand, in the use of ordinances of his institution, till the promised Spirit be poured out ; and *when he comes, says Christ, he shall testify of me, he shall glorify me,* John xv. 26. and xvi. 14. Plead the promise that is left to you of this powerful illumination.

(6.) Be convinced, that however unable and unfit you are for yielding to his call, yet it is both your *indispensible* duty to see and behold this glorious object Christ, in whom you will see the Father ; and your *present* duty to essay it with a view to his enabling grace. O Sirs, is not the Father calling you to look to his Son ? saying, *Behold my servant, whom I uphold ; mine elect, in whom my soul delighteth,* Isa. lxii. 1. And is not the Son calling you to look to him and be saved ? *Behold me, behold me,* Isa. lxv. 1. And does not the *Spirit and the Bride say, Come ?* Rev. xxii. 17.— Is a whole glorious Trinity crying to you, Come and see ; come and see the Son, and see the Father in him ? Why then, unless you dare say, it is your duty to trample under foot the authority of God, Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, to look to Jesus is your indispensable duty. And since he is dealing with you this mo-

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ment, it is your present duty: *Now is the accepted time, now is the day of salvation*: now he is saying, *Behold me, behold me*. Now you may see him in mercy; and if the opportunity be slighted, you may never get another occasion to see him, till you see him in wrath, *coming in the clouds of heaven, and coming in flaming fire to take vengeance on them that know not God*, because of their not obeying the gospel-call of seeing God now in the face of Christ. O sinner, then he will be seen upon a throne of judgment; a dreadful sight to his enemies! But now he is to be seen upon a throne of mercy and grace, calling sinners and enemies to be reconciled to him, and to see the Father reconciled in him, that so you may find your justifier; for now, *Christ is set forth of God to be a propitiation through faith in his blood, to declare his righteousness, for the remission of sin, that he might be just, and the justifier of them that believe in Jesus*, Rom. iii. 25, 26.—

O Sirs, see and behold him then, as the propitiation and atonement; and there take rest to your guilty soul; and see the Father in him well-pleas'd and satisfi'd. O see and behold him as the true Jacob's ladder, reaching between heaven and earth, that you may ascend by, and see the Father at the top of the ladder, with open arms ready to embrace all comers, and you among the rest. O see and behold him as the helper, since you cannot ascend the ladder, or get up of yourself; and see the Father constituting him to be the helper, saying, *I have laid help upon one that is mighty*. Behold this mighty helper standing in the Father's name, at the foot of the ladder, saying, Man, woman, would you gladly be up? would you have my help? There is my helping hand, take hold of it; *Take hold of my strength*, Isa. xxii. 5.

But, say you, he must take hold of me, and draw me up, otherwise I cannot take hold of him. Well said, man; therefore, see him as the *author and finisher*, as well as the *object of faith*; and see him as the *all of your salvation*, and the Father making him so; for, *he is made of God unto us wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, and complete redemption*. If you think you can do any thing without him, you are not worthy of

him; and you go cros to this revelation made of him. But if you can do nothing, and have nothing at all, and would have one to do all for you, and to be all to you; then see him, and take him as God all-sufficient, to *do all your works in you and for you*; and to be your all for grace and glory: and thus to see him, is to see the Father and all his fulness in him; and thus to take him into your heart, is to take him indeed, and his Father's blessing with him.

O Sirs, shall we hope he hath come and discovered himself to any soul here in this offer? O! *blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord*, and lets himself be seen; for, *he that hath seen Christ, hath seen the Father*.

2dly, I should now close with a word of exhortation to *believers* that have seen Christ. *Have they that have seen Christ, seen the Father*, in regard of the oneness between the Father and him? Have you seen this great sight? Then I exhort you to prove it, and improve it.

[1.] *Prove it*: How do you prove, believer, that you have *seen Christ*, and the *Father in him*? May I ask you, as the Pharisees who once asked the man whose eyes Christ opened, John ix. 15. *How did you receive your sight?* Why, says the man, *he put clay upon mine eyes, and I washed, and do see*. Can you say in allusion to this, whatever was the clay vessel, the poor, contemptible, and unlikely mean the Lord made use of, yet he put to his invisible hand, and led me to the pool of Siloam; I mean, to the blood of Shiloh, the *Sent of God*; and no sooner did I, through grace, essay to wash there, but I saw; I saw the Son of God as the Saviour and Surety; I saw the face and favour of God in him: can you say, *One thing I know, whereas once I was blind, now I see?* I see a glory in him that darkens the glory of sun, moon, and stars; I see a beauty in him, that eclipses the beauty of all the world, and makes it seem but trash to me; I see an excellency in him, *that makes me count all but loss and dung, for the excellency of the knowledge of him*. Though I see that I am blind, and cannot see, yet I see what some time a day I saw not. Can you not say, that the sight you got of Christ, at least in the day of believing, did dispel your darkness, and dissipate the gross mists

of ignorance, and make them fly away as dark clouds before the rising sun? Did not the sight break the power of your enmity, and make you, like Paul on his way to Damascus, when he saw Christ, drop the rebellious arms, and fall down before the Lord, saying, *What wilt thou have me to do?* Did not the sight dash unbelief out of countenance on that day, and with holy shame for your harsh thoughts of Christ, and make you with Thomas, after his unbelieving jealousy, to cry out, *My Lord, and my God?* Did not the sight loose your heart from all your lusts and idols, and make you to say with Ephraim, *What have I to do any more with idols?* O believer, was it not a wonderful sight, and a marvellous light? was it not a heart-piercing, a soul-humbling, a faith-strengthening, and joy-exciting sight; the most desirable sight out of heaven?

Again, if you ask, how shall I prove, that I have *seen the Father in seeing Christ?* Besides what was formerly said, you may enquire,

1. Have you seen the Father's  *blessing* in him? We read of the Father's blessing him, Psalm lxxv. 2. He hath blessed him in all his offices as Mediator: and, as *God's blessing makes rich*; so, by virtue of the Father's blessing, he is, as Mediator, enriched with all communicative fulness, and store for our supply; and never would we have been blessed, if God had not blessed Christ, and *in him blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places*, Eph. i. 3. The question then is, have you beheld Christ as the blessing of the Father? Then, of consequence, you have seen the Father blessing him. It is a great sight of the Father, to see the Father's blessing on Christ, and in Christ upon you. Many speak of God's blessing, that never saw how his blessing comes, and on whom it principally descends: for, Christ is made of God a public blessing.

OBJECT. How is Christ made a blessing, when it is said, *God made him to be sin for us*, 2 Corinth. v. 21. *And made him a curse for us*, Gal. iii. 13.?

Why, man, for this very end was he made *sin* and a *curse*, that he might be made a *blessing*. He was made sin by imputation; sin was imputed to him, that it might not be imputed to us; and the curse fell upon

pon him, that it might not light upon us ; and God, in the very act of making him to be sin for us, and a curse for us, in doing so, he made him a blessing to us, and blessed him to be a sacrifice for sin, and to bear away the curse, and bring back the blessing.—Now, this mark excludes all who never saw themselves to be, by nature, under the *curse of God*, and never saw the gospel-way, wherein the blessing of God comes to any sinner, *viz.* through Christ ; for, all that are blessed of God, are blessed of him, in Christ ; *Men shall be blessed in him* : and to be blessed in him, supposes that he is first blest, and then men in him. However, they who have seen Christ as the Father's blessing, have so far seen the Father. To see God out of Christ, and in the law, is to see him cursing us : and this is the sight all Christless sinners will get of God, sooner or later ; either mercifully here to their awakening, that they may flee from that curse ; or wrathfully hereafter, when they shall ly under it for ever. But to see God in the gospel-glass, and in Christ, is to see him  *blessing us with all spiritual blessings, in heavenly places in Christ* ; and this is the believer's sight of God in Christ, or of the Father in the Son : *He that hath seen me, hath seen the Father.*

2. Have you seen the Father's *promise* in him ? 2 Cor. i. 20. *All the promises of God are in him, yea* ; none of the Father's promises are made out of him : and if we have seen Christ as the centre of the Father's promises, in whom they are all affirmed and confirmed by him, being in him, *YEA*, in point of affirmation ; and *AMEN* in point of confirmation ; then you have seen the Father as a promising God in him ; and that you have no right to any promise, but by virtue of union to him ; and as the the promise is first made to him, and in him to you ; and as it comes running through the channel of his blood and righteousness. Now, this mark excludes and shuts out all who have not seen themselves to be heirs of all the *threatenings of the law*, by nature, and God to be a threatening God, ready to execute the law-threatening against them, because of their sin ; and all that have not been brought to acquaintance with the promises of the gospel, and seen them to be the pro-  
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mises of God in Christ ; for they only that have seen this, have seen God in Christ : *He that hath seen me, hath seen the Father.*

3. Have you seen the Father's *work* in his hand ? the Father's business committed to his management, according as he says, Luke ii. 49. ; particularly the work and business of our redemption and salvation. This imports, and carries with it a sight of the Father, as employing Christ in that great work. They that have seen Christ, as the Father's Agent in this affair, have seen the Father in him, which is indeed a great sight ; to see the Father intrusting him with such a work, and Christ discharging his trust in the Father's name.— This mark excludes, and cuts off, all those that never saw the *work of salvation* to be any other, but what themselves are capable of, either by their own natural power, or some little divine assistance. Many declare themselves ignorant of God, and under *the law of works*, by their gross notions of salvation ; thinking that God still stands upon the old-covenant ground with them, calling them to work for life ; and so they reckon, if they do their best, God will pity them ; or, though they come short, yet with some of God's help and assistance, their own doing will be sufficient ; not knowing that salvation work is God's work, and that God's work is put in Christ's hand, and that there is no work, pertaining to the law as a covenant, that belongs to us now at all, nor can possibly be performed by us ; Christ's everlasting righteousness answers that completely. And for any other work that he works in his people, it is not for salvation, or to be saved, but a part of salvation, *when he works in them both to will and to do of his own good pleasure* : those whom God saves, he saves them to work, but not for them. Works of holiness, are a part of the salvation to which we are saved ; but we are not saved either *for* our works, or *by* them, or *according to* them. Not *for* them ; Ezek. xxxvi. 32. *Not FOR your sakes do I this, saith the Lord God, be it known unto you : be ashamed and confounded for your own ways, O house of Israel.* Nor *by* them ; Titus iii. 5. *Not BY works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us, by the washing of*  
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regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost. Nor according to them; 2 Tim. i. 9. *He hath saved us, and called us with an holy calling, not ACCORDING TO our work; but according to his own purpose and grace, which was given to us in Christ Jesus before the world began.* The scripture then declares, we are not saved either by, or for, or according to our works; for though men are to be judged according to their works, yet not saved according to their works. The rule of judgment, and the rule of salvation are vastly different.—The rule of judgment will be the law: and therefore men will be judged according to their work, and according as they have a law-biding righteousness, yea, or not. The wicked will not have it; and so will be adjudged to eternal death: believers will have it in Christ, even a righteousness of merit and spirit, both for justification and sanctification; and so will be adjudged to eternal life. Men will be thus judged according to their works. But the rule of salvation is not the law, but the gospel, and the free grace of God in Christ; and therefore, though men will be judged according to their work, yet let none expect to be saved according to them, or by them, or for them. The works that will be available to salvation are not our works, or any thing either wrought in us, or done by us; but the work of Christ, his perfect obedience: *As by one man's disobedience many were made sinners, so by the obedience of one many shall be made righteous,* Rom. v. 19. Now, have you seen Christ's obedience to be the Father's work in his hand, and his righteousness to be the righteousness of God? Then you have seen God in him; God fulfilling his own law in him; God satisfying his own justice in him; and God bringing in everlasting righteousness in him.

4. If you would try if you have seen the Father in Christ, try if you have seen the Father's wages bestowed on him. Christ, as Mediator, did not work without wages and a reward; nay, having drunk of the brook in the way, he was to lift up his head. *Ought not Christ to do and suffer these things, and then to enter into his glory,* Luke xxiv. 26. See the wages and reward given him, Phil. ii. 9. *Wherefore God also hath highly exalted him,*  
and

and given him a name above every name. Heaven then is to Christ, and to all that get into him, the reward of Christ's *obedience unto death, even the death of the cross*; so it is also declared, Heb. xii. 2. Now, they that have seen the Father's wages bestowed upon Christ, as Mediator, then they have seen the Father in him; or they have seen the Father rewarding him for his service, and exalting him to his right-hand on the account of his work. Heaven is called the *recompence of reward* to Christ, it is a reward of debt; for, it is justly due to his obedience. But to believers in Christ, it is a reward of grace: because to them it is the *gift of God*, through Christ.—Now, this mark excludes, and shuts out all those that expect heaven and eternal life, as the *reward of any good deed done*, or to be done by them. This declares they never saw the glory of the Father in the Son, nor the Father conferring heaven and glory on Christ, as the reward of his everlasting righteousness. Mercenary workers, that expect proper wages for their work from God, are yet under the law, and so under the curse of God.—In this manner many work all their days, and may work very earnestly at a multitude of duties, and work their own ruin and damnation, and yet think they are safe, and never dream that they are under the curse of God, notwithstanding all they do. See Luke xiii. 24. *Strive to enter in at the strait gate; for many shall seek to enter in, and shall not be able.* Why that? Is it not said, *Seek, and ye shall find?* Yea, but they shall seek to enter, and shall not be able, because they seek in a legal way; not by faith, but, as it were, *by the works of the law.* And this is indeed one of the great things that makes the way strait.

5. Try if you have seen Christ, so as to see the Father in him. Have you seen the Father *glorified* in him, as Christ says, John xiii. 31. ? Have you seen his wisdom glorified in contriving, his power in accomplishing; and more of his wisdom and power here than in the whole creation? Have you seen the holiness of God, the justice of God, and the mercy and truth of God glorifying themselves in him, and exerting themselves in Christ unto salvation? Do you see

the wisdom of God more glorified and glorious in Christ, than in contriving the sun, moon, and stars? His power more glorified in Christ, than in making a world? His holiness more in Christ's obedience, than it is by all the holiness of men and angels to eternity? His justice more glorified in Christ's satisfaction, than in the punishment of all the damned in hell for ever? His mercy more glorified, and gloriously displayed in Christ, and venting itself through his blood and merit, than if he had shewed mercy without exacting the debt of Surety, while he freely provides the Surety, and thereby provides both for his own honour, and our happiness at once? And, do you see his truth and faithfulness more glorified in Christ than any other way? For, if Christ had not been set forth, God behoved to have glorified his truth, in executing the threatening of the law upon all the sinners of Adam's family.— But now he glorifies his truth, both as a threatening and promising God, towards all whom he saves in Christ, who both bears the shock of the threatening of the law, and fulfils the condition of the promises of the gospel; and both by his obedience unto death. Have you seen this glory of God in Christ?—Surely this mark cuts off thousands of blind souls, that cannot behold this glory of the Lord, whose minds *the god of this world hath blinded.*

6. Have you seen the Father *reconciled* in him? Here is an evidence of seeing the Father, if you have seen God reconciled in Christ. Here is a threefold reconciliation to be seen in Christ, 1. God reconciling himself with himself. 2. Reconciling himself to the world. 3. Reconciling the world to himself.

(1.) In Christ you will see God *reconciling himself with himself.* What do you mean by that, say you; I do not mean, as if God were ever at variance with himself; but upon man's fall, and the proposal of man's recovery and salvation again, there was, in the apprehension of all creatures, men and angels, a seeming inconsistency betwixt some things in God, that spoke for man's salvation, and other things in God that spoke for man's damnation; but yet in Christ they are reconciled; particularly, there are some irreconcilable like names,

names, attributes, words, and works of God, that are in Christ reconciled.

1. There are some irreconcilable like *names* of God, that in Christ you will see reconciled; for example, these names, Exod. xxxiv. 6, 7. *The Lord, the Lord God, merciful and gracious, long-suffering, and abundant in goodness and truth; keeping mercy for thousands, forgiving iniquity, and transgression, and sin; and yet that will by no means clear the guilty.* How will that name of *merciful and gracious to sinners*, agree with that name, *he will by no means clear the guilty*, since all sinners are guilty? Why, have you seen Christ to be the propitiation? then you can see these names reconciled: he will not shew mercy to the dishonour of his justice; but justice hath got a satisfaction in Christ, therefore mercy will vent, not to the prejudice, but to the honour of justice.

2. There are some irreconcilable like *attributes* of God, that in Christ you will see reconciled; *Mercy and truth are met together, righteousness and peace have kissed each other*, Psalm lxxxv. 10. Men and angels could not contrive how *mercy and truth should meet together*; how *righteousness and peace should kiss each other* in the salvation of a sinner; yet in Christ they harmoniously conspire for our redemption, as I have formerly cleared upon the text\*, therefore I insist not.

3. There are some irreconcilable like *words* of God, that in Christ are reconciled, such as Exod. xxiii. 7. where God says, *I will not justify the wicked*, and yet, Romans iv. 5. he is said *to justify the ungodly*. In Christ you will see these words of God reconciled, as you may observe, Isa. xlv. 25. *In him shall all the seed of Israel be justified, and shall glory*; justified in their sins they cannot be, nor justified in themselves, but in Christ they shall be justified.

4. There are some irreconcilable like *works* of God, that in Christ are reconciled; for example, his work of *rooting the law out of the heart, and writing the law in the hearts of his people*. Do you understand this, man? that the law as a covenant must be razed out of

\* See Sermon XX. intitled, *The Harmony of the Divine Attributes displayed*, pag. 133, &c.

the heart. Christ is *made of God to us righteousness*; and God, in this word, razes the foundation of the old covenant, and roots out all hope of life by the righteousness of the law in our own persons. Christ is also *made of God to us sanctification*; and, in this work, he *writes the law in the heart*, as a rule of holiness, and the transcript of the divine image, and so makes the person conformable to the law upon gospel grounds, and in a gospel manner. And this is the root of a gospel-becoming conversation.—Now, have you ever seen any thing of this glory of the Father in the Son, or of God in Christ reconciling himself with himself, in all these things wherein he seemed to be at odds with himself? If you have never seen God reconciled in Christ, even in this sense, you are but a stranger in Israel.

(2.) In Christ you will see God *reconciling himself to the world*. O! have you ever seen any thing of this glory, even the great and glorious God, in the person of his Son assuming our nature; and in that nature have you ever beheld God satisfying his own justice, fulfilling his own law, appeasing his own wrath, quenching the flames of it with his own blood? *Awake, O sword, against the man that is my fellow, says the Lord of hosts*. And thus glorifying his own name, and laying a foundation for revenues of praise to be brought in to his crown by men and angels for ever. To see this glory by faith of divine operation, is to see the Father in the Son; where this is not seen neither Christ nor the Father is seen.

(3.) In Christ you will see God *reconciling the world to himself*; 2 Cor. v. 19. *God was in Christ reconciling the world to himself, and not imputing their trespasses to them*. This is the *word of reconciliation*; and it is further explained, verse 21. *For he hath made him to be sin for us, that we might be the righteousness of God in him*. How does God reconcile any sinner in the world to himself? even by not imputing their trespasses to them, but imputing their sins to Christ, and imputing Christ's righteousness to them, and discovering this by the gospel, that he does thus reconcile the heart of the sinner to God, and kill the natural enmity. The faith

faith of this mercy is the root of peace and reconciliation; *Being justified by faith, we have peace with God*: when God in Christ is seen, he is seen to be reconciled in him. And when I see God is reconciled to me, I cannot but be reconciled to God: his mighty love destroys the mighty enmity that was in the heart; this sight of God in Christ cannot be without some persuasion and confidence, and particular application: for hence comes that peace and satisfaction, upon a sight of Christ, and of God as reconciled in him. If faith had no particular assurance or persuasion of divine favour to the soul in it, the man could have no peace nor pleasure: but so much hope, peace, and joy in believing that a man hath, so much assurance is at the root of it; I mean, the *assurance of faith* founded upon the word of God. It is said of the forgiven woman, *She loved much, because much was forgiven her*. They that have the faith of the forgiveness of their sins, and that much is forgiven them, will love much: they that have little faith of forgiveness, or think little is forgiven them, will love but little, and are hardly reconciled at all to God. They that have no faith of forgiveness, and believe not that any sin is forgiven them, they will love none at all, they are not reconciled at all to God. Indeed it is impossible for a man that hath no faith of God's forgiveness, to love God: for he believes that God is his enemy, imputing sin and guilt to him unto condemnation; that man cannot but hate God. Indeed, many pretend to be lovers of God, that yet have no true love to him: but yet that pretended love of theirs is founded upon a false faith and ignorant fancy, that God loves them, and will not send them to hell for their sins. But when that refuge of lies is destroyed, and that they see God in arms against them, as they will see it in hell, then will they hate him like the devil; and their enmity will be perfect and at its height; but, *true faith works true love to God*.—Thus you may *prove* whether you have seen this great sight or not. And as you would prove it, so,

[2.] *Improve* it. O have you seen him, and the Father in him? O improve this privilege.

1. Improve it as an *evidence of your interest in him* : for, you may be sure, that *this God is your God for ever and ever, and will be your guide even unto death*. There is no better evidence of it under the sun than this, *that you have seen his glory in the face of Christ*. It is a solid mark of grace, and a sweet spark of glory.

2. Improve it as an *antidote against all temptations*. When the devil, and the world, and the vanities of time, would draw away your hearts and eyes after them, you may say, “ *O mine eyes have seen the King, the Lord of hosts ; I have seen Christ, and the Father in him ; and therefore, with disdain, I turn away mine eyes from beholding vanity.*” Think shame, O believer, after this to feed your eyes with these base objects, that a blind and sensual world is taken up with.

3. Improve it as a *cordial against tribulations and difficulties*, whether temporal or spiritual. When *deep calls unto deep, and all his waves and billows pass over you ; you may remember him from the land of Jordan, and of the Hermonites, and from the hill Mizar ; you may remember him from the place where he shewed you his glory, and that he is the God of Bethel : and will be for ever the same to you at your worst times, that ever you saw him to be to you at your best times.*

4. Improve it as a *confirmation of your experience, and of his having loved you with an everlasting love, and drawn you with loving-kindness*. I seek no better experience than *a sight of the glory of God in Christ ; and every new sight is a new confirmation thereof : and when you saw him with an eye of faith, it is an argument he saw you with an eye of love and mercy*. It may be, it was in a corner that you got a remarkable sight of him, or under the shadow of an ordinance ; but where-ever it was, now he is saying to you as to Nathanael, *When thou wast under the fig-tree I saw thee ; when in such a place I gave thee a kindly blink of my beauty, and laid my hand upon thy heart, and made it glow with holy fire from my altar*. Something past betwixt you and me that none in the world knows of : *I saw thee.*—

Again,

5. Improve it as a *spur to all the duties of religion*. O! have you seen his glory, and do you not love that glorious object you saw? Shall not then the love of Christ constrain you to duty? This is gospel-service, gospel-holiness, when love makes you to read, and love makes you to pray, and love makes you meditate, and love makes you to wait on ordinances, and love influences your whole practice. Hath he manifested his glory to you? then he hath begun to glorify you; and, O does it not well become you to glorify him? *O let your light so shine before men, that others, seeing your good works, may glorify your Father that is in heaven.*—Again,

6. Improve it as an *encouragement to your fellow brethren*; you ought to meet together and encourage one another, saying, *Come hither all ye that fear God, and I will tell you what he hath done for my soul*. And as an *excitement to your graceless friends and neighbours*, you may excite them, by telling them now the Lord convinced you, enlightened you, and shewed you his glory, to the quickening of your soul, and killing of your corruption; you may excite them not only by your talk, but by your walk: your conversation should be such as they may take notice of you, that you have been with Jesus, and that you have seen him, and the glory of God in him, so as to *change you into the same image*. As you have seen God in Christ, so what an honour will it be to you, if any shall see God in you; if they see the grace of God, the love of God, the fear of God, and the image of God in you? It may be, they will long to see God as you have done; and may go and seek him with you as the daughters of Jerusalem, Song vi. 1. upon the back of the spouse's commending her Lord to them.—Again,

7. Improve it as an *argument to prove the supreme Deity of Christ*, and his *oneness with the Father*: that whenever you saw him, you saw the Father in him; you saw God in him; and all the glory of God in him; thus you have an antidote against damnable Arianism in your own bosom. Let your faith, therefore, be confirmed in his being *God over all, blessed for ever*; and let your zeal for his glory be thereupon strengthened and

and inflamed; your zeal for his precious gospel-truths; your zeal for his royal prerogatives. In a word,

8. And *lastly*, Improve it as a *ground of hope*, that you shall see him for ever face to face, because now you have seen him, though it was *through a glass darkly*. Though grim death were staring you in the face, you may say, The sight of you, O death, shall not trouble me, for I have got a sight of Christ; I have seen his glory, and the Father's glory in him; and this being eternal life to know God in him, death needs not be matter of grief and trouble, but matter of joy and triumph to me, since eternal life is begun. What is heaven, but the everlasting vision of the glory of God in the face of Christ, to *be for ever with the Lord*, and to *be like him*, by *seeing him as he is*; and seeing all the glorious attributes of God, in their brightest splendor, shining in his person! Then shall you have the happiness of the perfect knowledge of that mysterious oneness betwixt Christ and the Father, which is the reason, why they that see him, see the Father; yea such a close view, as to found a perfect oneness also betwixt Christ and you. O wonderful word, John xiv. 21. *At that day you shall know, that I am in the Father, and you in me, and I in you?* O! who can express the thousand part of that happiness which is imported in that word? For it says Christ will be in your arms, and you in Christ's arms, and Christ in the Father's arms; you will be in Christ's bosom, and Christ in the Father's bosom, where he lay from eternity; there will he and you ly together to eternity. O the near and immediate sight and fruition of Christ, and the Father in him, that then you will have? O *rejoice in the hope of the glory of God*: it is heaven to see him, and to see the Father in him, this is the best sight in all heaven, and your Lord declares, believer, that this heaven, this beatifical vision is begun in you. *He that hath seen me, hath seen the Father.*









