

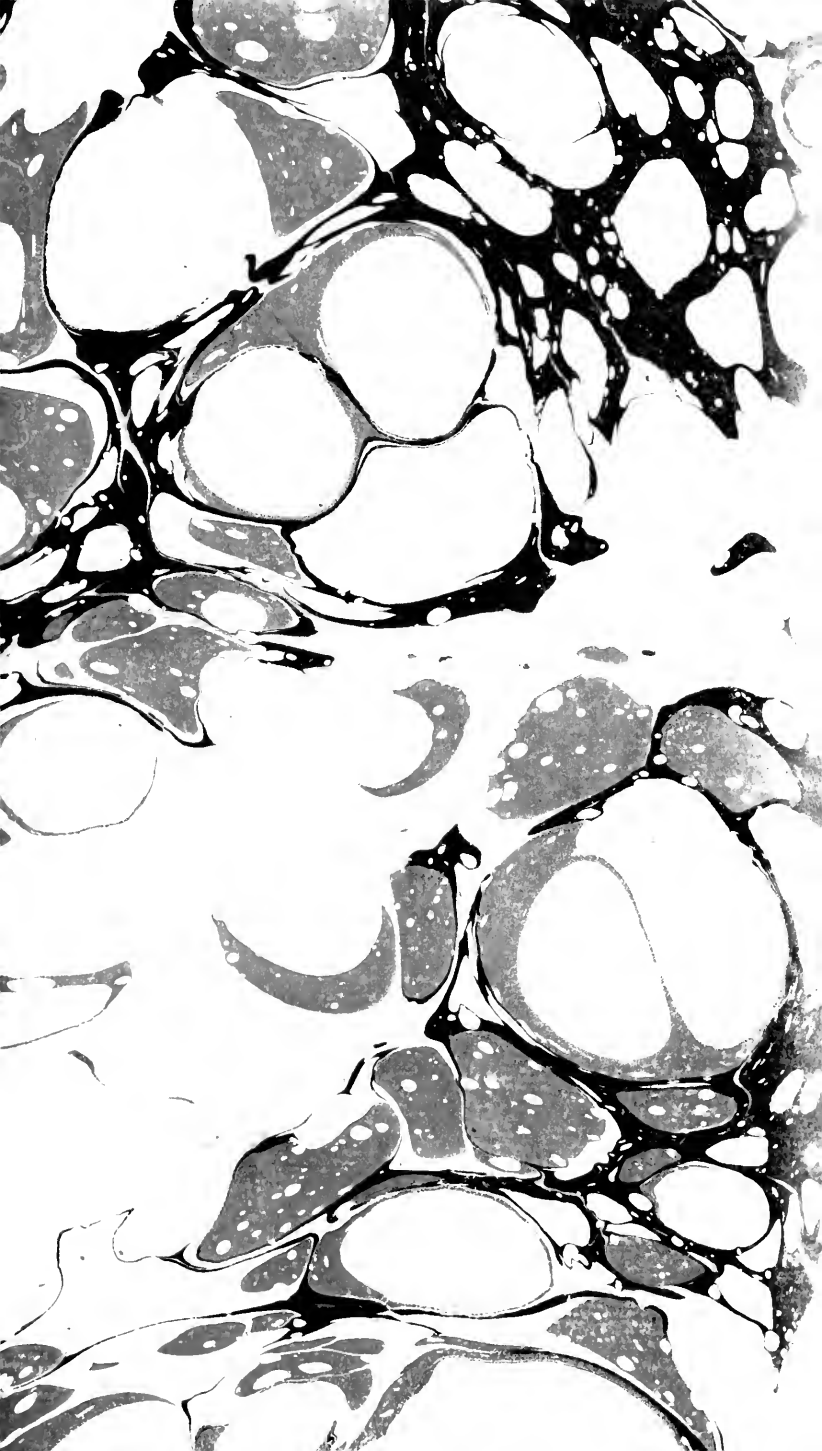


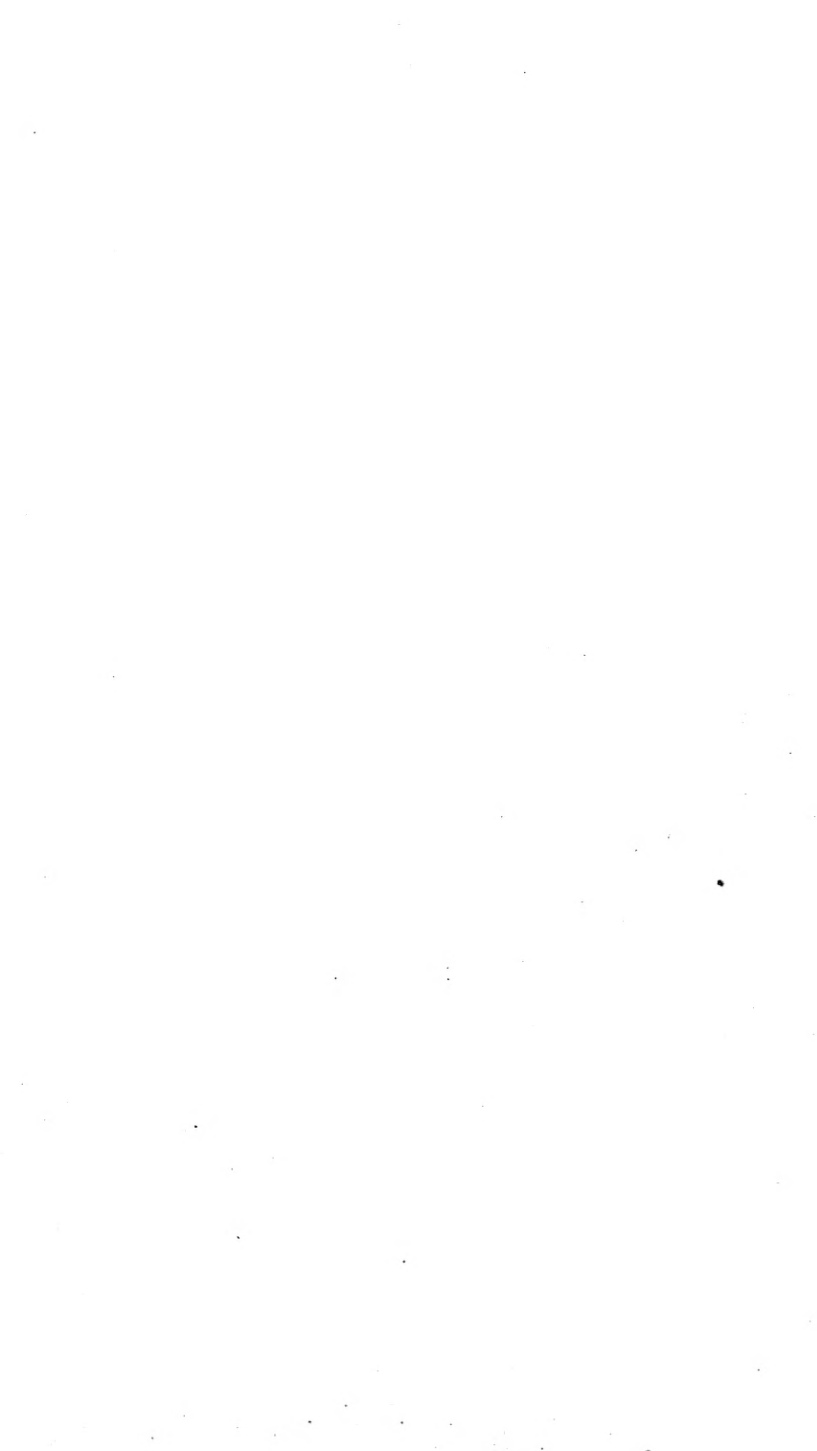


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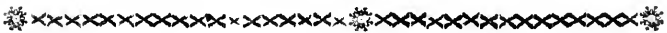
Professor Henry van Dyke, D.D., LL.D.







T H E
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OF THE REVEREND
RALPH ERSKINE, *A. M.*
CONSISTING OF HIS
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IN TEN LARGE VOLUMES OCTAVO.
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A N D O T H E R
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MR. R A L P H E R S K I N E,
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An ACCOUNT of the AUTHOR'S LIFE and WRITINGS,
with an ELEGIAC POEM, and large CONTENTS.

Christ is all, and in all. COL. iii. 11.

V O L. III.

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M D C C L X X V I I.

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S E R M O N XXXIV,—XLVI.

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S E R M O N XXXIV:

GOSPEL-PRINCIPLE, the *Foundation* of GOSPEL-PRACTICE; or, the great Duty of *Receiving Christ*, and *Walking in him*, opened *.

COLOS. ii. 6.

As ye have received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk ye in him.

YOU have here such an ordinary text, that perhaps there are few present but have heard sermons preached upon it: and yet it is such an extraordinary text that we can never hear enough upon it, nor ever reach to the bottom. There is more in it than ever yet we saw or felt. It contains a sum of heart and life religion, and of all that concerns either faith or manners; a GOSPEL-PRINCIPLE, which is *believing in Christ*; and a GOSPEL-PRACTICE, a *walking in him*. *As ye have received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk ye in him.*

The apostle here, in this epistle, gives a good copy to all the ministers of Christ to follow in their preaching and teaching. 1. To *inform the judgments* of people, and lay a good foundation in the knowledge of Christ. 2.

* This subject was entered upon on a thanksgiving-day, after the celebration of the sacrament of the Lord's supper at Kinglassi; and afterwards finished in a series of discourses, in his own church in Dunfermline, in the year 1724.—This is the third impression.—These discourses are to be had in a volume by themselves,

To *excite their affections* after Christ, and to rouse and awaken them to a walk and conversation suitable to their knowledge and faith; knowing that there can be no sure building erected in a gospel-walk, unless there be a sure foundation laid in a gospel-principle. That the believing Colossians were well informed and instructed, the apostle observes, to the condemnation and praise of free grace; and he exhorts them to persevere in the doctrine wherein they were taught by Epaphras, *a faithful minister of Christ*, chap. i. 7.: However, there were false teachers that had crept in among them who were ready to *beguile them with enticing words*, chap. ii. 4. and that had actually seduced and carried away the Galatians from their true faith which they formerly professed, Gal. i. 6, 7.: yet he would have the Colossians to stand fast in their faith, and in that doctrine which had been truly and honestly delivered to them. The apostle commends the Colossians for their *steadfastness*, as you see in the verses preceding our text; and yet he exhorts them more and more to this duty, as you see from the verse following the text; which may let us in to something of the intent of the text itself; intimating, that the doctrine of Christ had been brought to them, and they had believed it, and received it, and Christ in it, and that though this was well, yet it was not all; they were therefore, thro' grace, to persevere in that doctrine, to walk forward in the knowledge of Christ, and his gospel, and in the practice of what they knew.

The verse that goes before the text sets before us two things, that denote the good constitution and temperament of a right church, such as the church of the Colossians was.

1. The first is its *order*; O but it makes a beautiful church when all things in it are *ordered according to the pattern seen in the mount*, with respect to the doctrine, worship, discipline, and government! When the doctrine is sound and lively; the worship, pure and spiritual; discipline, powerful and impartial; and the government, beautiful and regular: but it is a very unpleasant appearance in a church, when *confusion*, with respect to all these, doth take place.
2. The second was *steadfast in the faith*. The apostle rejoiced to behold, in the church of

of Coloss, not only their order, but their stedfastness in the faith of Christ, in the doctrine of the gospel; for, when a church fails in this, then all goes to wreck. If the apostle Paul were on earth, and to write an epistle to the church of Scotland, would any think that he would have this to commend us for, *Our order and stedfastness in the faith?* O for such a prospect of affairs in this island, that we who have been Corinthians, in respect of our *disorders and divisions*, and Galatians, in respect of our *unstedfastness* in the right faith of Christ, and the revolt of many from Reformation-truth, may become Colossians in respect of our order and stedfastness in the faith; *I joy to behold your order and stedfastness*, saith the apostle.

Now, as there are two things in that preceding verse that shew the good constitution of a church in general; so, in this text, there are two things that show and set forth the good state of any church-member in particular, or of a true Christian; the first is, the *receiving of Christ Jesus the Lord*; the second is, a *walking in him*. And we may conceive these two as having a reference to two things mentioned in the preceding verse, namely, *order* and *stedfastness*: for, as there is no order, but all in confusion in that soul where there is no faith, or receiving of Christ; so there is no *stedfastness in faith*, where there is no *walking in him*. And as the text stands properly connected with the former verse by the particle THEREFORE; *As ye have THEREFORE received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk ye in him*: From the connexion of these two verses, I say, you may observe, “That
“ churches of the best constitution, both for the order
“ and stedfastness of their faith, had need to be exhort-
“ ed to hold fast their principles and to keep their way.” This observation, I think, may be obvious to you at the first view; it is the scope of the apostle all along in the chapter to fortify this church against swerving and declining from the truths of Christ; and why does he so? even because truth is but *one*, and when received is all reducible to this one word, *the receiving of Christ Jesus the Lord*, who is the centre of truth. Truth, I say, is but *one*, let all the men of the world say what they can

about it, or the several branches of it, truth is *simple* and *one*; but error is *many*. And the apostle, in order to fortify them from swerving from the truth, offers several caveats in this chapter.—One is verse 4. *And this I say, lest any man should beguile you with enticing words*: ENTICING WORDS are the bait wherewith the credulous and simple sort of people are taken; such as the apostle notices, Rom. xvi. 17, 18. The simple are they that are caught with this bait of enticing words, like merchants that put off slight and corrupt wares with the finest words.—Another caveat is verse 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*: and as the former is a bait to the simple; so here is a bait to the more learned, where human philosophy, and natural reasonings are set in opposition to scriptural truth, as it is in Christ Jesus.—A third caveat is verse 16. *Let no man therefore judge you in meat or in drink or in respect of an holy day, or of the new moon, or of the Sabbath-day*. Where he cautions them against all legal ceremonies, the error of Judaizers, and these that are symbolizers with ceremony-mongers.—A fourth caveat he gives, even to this church of Coloss, is, verse 18, 19. *Let no man beguile you of your reward, in a voluntary humility, and worshipping of angels, intruding into those things which he hath not seen, vainly puffed up with his fleshly mind: and not holding the head, from which all the body, by joints and bands, having nourishment ministered, and knit together, increaseth with the increase of God*. Where the apostle cautions against strange paradoxes and opinions in religion. Although some, for maintaining the faith of their forefathers, have been calumniate as if they were bringing in *new schemes* of doctrine *, we could show how some, in opposition to them, have brought in *strange opinions* that were never before heard tell of in this church; such as, *gospel-repentance before faith and justification*; a new scheme and principle that may be charged with not holding the Head, Jesus Christ, and faith in him as the head of all other gospel graces.

* Those who espoused the Marrow doctrine, at this time controverted, were thus unjustly accused. See Vol. I. p. 238. Vol. II. p. 304, 305.

Of the like nature is that of maintaining, the *believer's obligation to take the law out of the hand of a God out of Christ*. How is this, and many other points that I could name, chargeable with *not holding the Head Christ, from which all the body by joints and bands, having nourishment ministred and knit together, increaseth with the increase of God?*—A fifth caveat is against all superstitious ordinances of men, verse 21, 22, 23. These superstitious ordinances of men are but a tempting of God, Acts xv. 10. *Why tempt ye God to put a yoke upon the neck of disciples, which neither we, nor our fathers, were able to bear?* The apostle there speaks of legal ceremonies that were instituted of God, after they came to be abolished; and the argument is the stronger: for, if it was a tempting of God to make use of these ceremonies that God himself had instituted of old, then what prodigious tempting of God is it to bring in such a superstitious and ceremonial service into the worship of God, as is intirely of human invention?—In a word, the sixth caveat is against all deviations whatsoever from Christ and his truth, and this is the scope of the whole chapter: He fortifies them against all deviations and declinings; and how does he that? just as you would do a house that leans to the one side; what would you do? surely you would labour to get it upright and perpendicular to its foundation: Even so, the apostle strives to make the church here perpendicular, and upright upon their foundation, and that is Christ and his doctrine; exhorting them, under the phrase of *holding the head*, verse 19. and getting a *full assurance of understanding to the acknowledgment of the mystery of God*. And so in the text, and immediate context, it is expressed by a *walking in him*, a being *rooted and built up in him*, and *established in the faith as ye have been taught*.

The apostle here useth similitudes; and there are these three comparisons couched here. 1. That Christ is the *way*; and this is implied in these words, *walk ye in him*. 2. That Christ is the *root*, and this is implied in these words, *rooted in him*. 3. That Christ is the *foundation*, and that is implied in these words, *built up in him*. Why, say you, how can a man stand rooted and

and stable, and yet walk? Why, you may walk, and yet keep your way stedfast; you may build, and yet build high in Christ; you may be rooted in Christ, the true vine, and yet *grow in him*. And hence that emphasis, in the 6th and 7th verses, *As ye have received, and as ye have been taught*. Why, some may think they cannot grow unless they change and over-grow their principles, as a child does over-grow his old clothes. But why cannot a man mend his pace, and yet go on in his right path still? Cannot a man build high, and yet build upon the foundation still? Cannot a man *grow in grace*, and in the *knowledge of Christ*, and of the truth of Christ, and yet grow upon the everlasting root still? Yea, surely: we are to walk as we have received, and to be established as we have been taught. And here is comfort to believers that are of the lowest form, such as have no great stock of knowledge to trade with in difficult questions; here there is comfort, that fundamental points are few and clear; so few, that a weak capacity, in any measure divinely spiritualized, may bear them; and so clear, that a dim eye, in any measure divinely enlightened, may see them. Would you know what is the field where all the flowers of truth grow? it is the word: therefore says Christ, *Search the scriptures, for these are they that testify of me*. The scripture is God's word, God's field; and Christ is the treasure hid in the field: search in that field till you find the treasure, and then you will find all truth treasured up in them. Hence the apostle, 1st Eph. ii. 20. sums up all fundamental truths in two words to believers; *We are built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the head corner-stone*. There is the sum-total of doctrinal fundamentals, or fundamental doctrines. Yea, the very same apostle hath learned us to sum up all in one word, *πᾶσι καὶ ἐν πᾶσι Χριστῷ*, *Christ is All, and in all*. God can, with one glance of Christ's glory, in the light of his word and Spirit, give you a view of all. Why, the scripture is to be believed, because it is inspired by God, it is a garden of God's planting; but there is a garden within that garden; the gospel is the
paradise

paradise of the whole scripture, and Christ is the tree of life in the midst of that gospel-paradise.

But besides the doctrinal fundamentals, there are what we may call practical fundamentals, which pertain to the state and being of a true Christian, and these are two, and they are both in our text; the one is a *receiving of Christ Jesus*, and the other is a *walking in him*. The former, *viz. the receiving of Christ*, is necessary to the essence and being of a Christian; the latter, *viz. walking in Christ*, is necessary to the progress, growth, and well-being of a Christian.

Now, in the words, you may notice these four things. 1. The believer's *character* and *privilege*; he is one that hath *received Christ Jesus the Lord*. 2. The believer's *duty*, namely, to *walk in him*. 3. The *rule* of his duty, which is to walk in him *as he hath received him*. 4. The *connexion* betwixt the character and the duty, the one being supposed to the other, gospel-faith being the ground of gospel-practice; no walking in Christ unless there be a receiving of him: *As ye have received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk ye in him*.

Now, I shall, as the Lord may assist, explain these parts of the text in the prosecution of this doctrine.

OBSERV. *That as true believers are these that have received Christ Jesus the Lord: so they ought to walk in him as they have received him.*

The method may be according to the several parts of the text.

- I. To speak of the believer's *character* and *dignity* as a receiver of Christ Jesus the Lord.
- II. To speak of the believer's *duty*, namely, to walk in Christ.
- III. To speak of the *rule* of his duty, and the *proportion* it should bear to his reception of Christ, namely, that he is to walk in Christ *as he hath received him*.
- IV. To speak of the *connexion* betwixt the character and the duty, or between receiving Christ and walking

walking in him; where we may inquire into the order of this connexion and the reason of it.

V. Draw some *inferences* for the *application* of the whole.

I. The *first* general head is to speak of the believer's *character*, he is one that receiveth Christ Jesus the Lord. Receiving Christ and believing in him are equivalent terms; John i. 12. *To as many as RECEIVED him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that BELIEVE in his name.* And as they have *power*, or *privilege*, to become the sons of God by believing in him, or receiving him; so they have power to receive him by virtue of their receiving the spirit of faith, by the means of the doctrine of faith, or the gospel-doctrine, Gal. iii. 2. *Received ye the Spirit by the works of the law, or by the hearing of faith?*—But that I may speak more closely to this point, *the receiving of Christ Jesus the Lord*, the text leads me to enquire into three things. 1. The *act* of faith as it is a *receiving*. 2. The *object* of it, *Christ*. 3. The *capacity*, or *respect*, under which this object is received, namely, as he is *Christ, Jesus, the Lord*. These points being very great and momentuous, I would touch at them severally.

First, The act of faith, it is called a *receiving of Christ*. Now, to explain this act of receiving Christ, as distinctly as, through grace, I can, you may notice that it hath something *supposed* that it relates to, and something *imported* that it consists in.

1st, It hath something *supposed* that it relates to. This *receiving* then does refer or relate unto some *offer* or *tender* that is made of Christ to him that does receive him. For Christ is unknown to nature, he is unknown to reason, and unknown to the wisdom of the wisest men upon the earth, until he be revealed and offered, there being no footsteps of the gospel in the heart or nature of man; whatsoever there may be of the law, there is none of the gospel. Now, therefore, receiving relates to offering; a receiving-hand hath relation to an offering-hand, holding forth Christ to be received, and that is the hand of God's free grace in the dispensation of

the gospel. And this offer of Christ unto sinners in the gospel, in order to their being believers, is sometimes in scripture called a *giving of Christ*, John iii. 27. *A man can receive nothing unless it be given to him from heaven*; and therefore we maintain, that as it is the duty of all that hear this gospel to receive Christ, and believe in him; so it is the privilege of all that hear the gospel, that Christ is given to them in the offer thereof. It is true, the giving in *possession* follows faith; *My Father giveth you the true bread*. The taking-hand of faith, presupposes the giving-hand of God. God's promise in the gospel is the offering-hand, that offers Christ; a saving faith of God's operation, is the receiving-hand which goes forth to the hand that offers; and when these two hands meet together, then the work is done, there is a receiving. But that you may the better understand this point of receiving Christ, by considering this *offer* that *receiving* relates to, there are three things that may be observed. 1. To what kind of *persons* the gospel offers Christ. 2. Upon what *grounds*. 3. For what *ends*. Mark these three then in the offer of Christ.

1. To what *kind* of *persons* the offer is made. To whom doth the hand of the promise hold them out? The person to whom he is held out is no other than a *lost sinner*, a lost soul; *Christ came to seek and save them that were lost*; I mean not only these that are sensible of their lost state, but these that are in a lost state, whether they be sensible of it or not: if the gospel comes to them, the offer of Christ comes to them: *To you, O men, do I call; and my voice is to the sons of men*. We are warranted to *preach the gospel to every rational creature*, Mark xvi. 15. The offer of Christ comes to you. Why, may not *sin* exclude us from the offer? By no means; for, *Christ came to save sinners*, 1 Tim. i. 15. If sinners were excepted, all mankind would be excepted; for, *all have sinned*. But is it to *gross sinners*? Yea, Isa. i. 18. *Come let us reason together, though your iniquities were like scarlet, I will make them white as snow; though they be red like crimson, I will make them as wool*; —to murderers of the Lord of glory was the offer made,

Acts ii. 41. But are *mockers* and *scorners* under the offer? Yea, they are, as you see, Prov. i. 22, 23. But what if a person cares not for the offer, and thinks himself happy enough without Christ, and believes himself well enough as he is without him; is the offer of Christ to such? Certainly it is; *Wherefore do you spend money for that which is not bread? and your labour for that which satisfieth not? Hearken diligently unto me, and eat ye that which is good, and let your soul delight itself in fatness,* Isa. lv. 1, 2. But if a man be neither convinced of sin or misery, nor see any need of Christ, is Christ offered to him? Yea, undoubtedly he is; Rev. iii. 18. *I counsel thee to buy of me gold tried in the fire, that thou mayest be rich; and white raiment that thou mayest be clothed.* Let them venture to shut the door of the gospel-offer who will, we must open it in God's name to all who hear this gospel, and tell them that Christ is offered to them, that he may be received by them; and if there were no offer, it would not be their duty to receive, and so unbelief would not be their sin.—Again, let them shift the offer of the gospel who will, and think Christ is not offered to them, this offer will rise up in judgment against them, if they do not answer it; for, *he that believeth not, shall be damned:* and one of two shall take place upon this universal offer, either ye shall receive him as offered, or ye shall all be made inexcusable that receive him not: I am pretty sure, though we reach not the first, yet the second shall take place, though I should say no more than I have said. The gospel-offer does not tell *who will* come; for many get the offer who will never receive the gift offered to them: but it tells *who should* come, and that is *all*: but though all should come, whether they be sensible of their lost state or not: yet these that see themselves lost, are in the fairest way to receive the offer of a Saviour; and none will come till God make them see themselves lost and undone without Christ, as all of you are lost indeed, though few are sensible of their lost state. However, ' say to lost souls, Christ is offered to these that are spoiled by the sentence of the law, arraigned, convicted, condemned, and accursed; the hand of the gospel promise holds out Christ

to you ; for, where Moses leaves you, there Joshua finds you ; where the law ends, there the gospel begins : the law ends in the shipwreck of the sinner, in splitting him upon the rock of its terrors and curses, drowning him in the ocean of divine wrath, and sinking him into the depths of despair ; and just there the gospel begins ; it comes to the bottom of the pit of sin and misery, and offers a Christ, a Saviour. Thus, where Moses leaves you, there Joshua finds you. When the law ends Christ begins ; and when the soul is so shipwrecked by the law, that he is, as it were, all to pieces, to such an one is the gospel-offer most welcome ; for the hand of grace holds forth Christ, like a plank after shipwreck, a plank to swim ashore upon. Such a soul is encouraged to see no other qualification required of him to come to Christ, and receive him, but just that he is lost, which he finds himself to be ; and there is no other condition or qualification required, but that you be a lost man, a sinful miserable person. Some will offer Christ upon such and such terms, saying, you must be so and so *humbled*, so and so *penitent*, before Christ can be offered to you ; so that a man that finds himself a lost, sinful, unhumbled, impenitent, wretched creature, can never come to their hand, or meddle with what they offer : just like a man holding out a cup of excellent wine to his friend, and offering him a drink, but in the mean time he hath made the wine scalding hot upon the fire, so as the man, to whom it is offered, dare not touch it with his lips : even so, many offer Christ, and hold forth the cup of salvation to the people, but they heat their gospel-liquor, as it were, red hot upon the fire of the law ; I mean, with so many legal terms, conditions, and qualifications, that the poor soul, that finds himself a lost sinner, every way sinful, destitute of all good qualifications, dare not come near, and thinks he may not, he ought not to come near with his lip to taste it. We need be at no pains to hinder sinners from coming to Christ, to receive the offer, for they are unwilling enough of themselves. Besides that, they will never have a good qualification till they come to him and receive him, and all good in him ; all grace and glory, all holiness and happiness.—Thus

you see to what *kind of persons* the offer of Christ is made, which the receiving of Christ doth relate to.

2. Upon what *ground* is the offer made? or, what is the ground upon which Christ is offered? To this I answer, only in general, It is just upon the ground of free grace; sovereign grace in Christ crucified. And hence the gospel is called by the name of GRACE, Tit. ii. 11. *The grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men; or, as in the margin, The grace of God that bringeth salvation to all men:* it brings the offer of Christ, and so of salvation to all men to whom the gospel comes; and it is grace that does it, without the consideration of any condition, or qualification in us. Sovereign grace is a thing that can neither be promoted by our goodness, or hindered by our badness. Free grace, that makes the offer, looks neither to the worthiness, nor unworthiness of the receiver; neither to his merit, nor demerit; neither to the merit of his virtue, nor the demerit of his vice. It is the hand of the promise that offers Christ to the lost sinner, upon the ground of free grace alone: and here is the most inviting encouragement to a lost sinner that can be, that as he hath no worthiness to plead for him, [which if he had, grace would be no grace:] so his unworthiness is no bar against him; for, if it were, then grace would be no grace also in this respect: for if your worthiness did work it, then it would not be the work of grace; or, if your unworthiness did hinder it, then it would not be the doing of grace: yea, grace would never do any thing at all; for all are unworthy. Here there is encouragement to all sinners to receive an offered Christ. But what is the obstruction? Why, when a man should take hold of Christ, then his heart goes about to mar the freedom of grace, before he dare venture his soul upon it; and how is that? Even by seeking some qualifications in himself that Christ should be offered unto him: why, I should be so and so holy, before I meddled with Christ; so and so humble and penitent, before I reckon the gospel-offer belongs to me. Thus a man naturally would be looking after something in himself, and he would gladly find it, that he may thus build the gospel upon the law;

law; God upon the man; Christ upon self; and free grace upon works; for it is no better than so: and thus the soul will not come to free grace; he will be obstructing himself; and in this mire he lies till free grace teach him how to come to the market of free grace, *without money, and without price*; till then all is but nothing: the ground of the offer is free and sovereign grace. What a great deal of latent obstructions are there that hinder our receiving this offer of Christ made by free grace! Why, when a lost sinner comes ever to find himself a lost sinner, then he stands aback, because he thinks either he is too much lost, or too little lost. Either,

(1.) He thinks he is *too much lost*, his sins are so very great; and so the man secretly says, that he would buy his pardon with his own goodness, if he had it, and will not be obliged to free grace for it; or by this means he magnifies the demerit of his sins, above the merit of the blood of Christ, which is a great affront poured upon the infinitely glorious bargain that is in his offer. Or,

(2.) He thinks he is *too little lost*, his sense of sin and humiliation is so very little; and this is another obstruction. He would be more broken and more humbled before he thinks the offer belongs to him; and this shews the fulness of his heart, that though he thinks he cannot buy Christ at the gospel market, with his good works, yet he would buy and purchase Christ with his humiliation, deep down-casting, and the like. Now, this cannot be, it is but a rotten excuse; for, what though you should sink as far into the deeps of legal conviction, as despair itself; yet, will that despair merit any thing at the hand of God, or yet make God better pleased with him? No: to despair is to displease him, as well as to presume. And as you cannot presume, if you come to take him in the tenor of our text, namely, as a *Christ*, as a *Jesus*, as a *Lord*, (of which afterwards;) so you cannot despair, if you know that the ground of the offer is free grace. Would you be humbled to despair in yourself, and of all your excellencies, and of recommending yourself to God by any good, any humility of yours, it were a good despair; but if you would

would be humbled for sin, so far as to expect thereupon the favour of God, and forgiveness of sin, this can never be. But here a question may be proposed, *What measure of humiliation should I have?* We answer, So much humiliation as makes you see your want of humiliation, your want of all good, all grace, all conditions, and qualifications; so much as shall oblige you to relinquish your own fancied goodness, and make you come to Christ for all, and accept of him upon gospel terms, and the term of the gospel is free grace. I will tell you, by a comparison the true level of humiliation: when is the metal sufficiently melted in the fire? It may be burnt in the fire, and it may be melted too little; but when is it enough? Why, it appears to be melted enough when it runs easily into the mould: but now, it is not the melting that gives it the shape, the form, or fashion; but the melting makes it run into the mould, and the mould gives it the form or shape: so I say here, When is the soul melted enough? It is when it runs into the gospel mould. There are some that have, as it were, too much of the fire; there are these that apprehend themselves such great sinners that they dare not come to Christ. There are others that have too little of the fire; these are they that only think they are not so good as they ought to be, and therefore they should not come. There are others that have nothing of the fire at all; and these are they that think they are good enough already, and they need not come to receive Christ. But then only is the soul melted enough in the fire, when it runs into the mould. What is the gospel mould? It is even Christ. And when the melted soul, like melted lead, or other metal, runs into this mould, then, and not till then, does it get a good shape: it is not the melting that gives it the shape or fashion, or form, but it is the mould that gives the form. And so never expect to have any good form, any good shape, any good qualification, till your soul run in to this mould, by receiving Christ Jesus the Lord, thus offered to you upon the ground of free grace.—And thus you see the ground of the offer.

3. For what *end* is the offer made? Why, Christ is offered

offered to the lost sinner, upon the ground of free grace, to be both a *Jesus* and a *Lord*. As he is to be *received* as such, (of which we may afterwards speak,) so he is *offered* as such, even as a Saviour and a Lord; that is, he hath coupled the salvation of Christ, and the dominion of Christ together; and it shows that all whom he saves he will sanctify; that whom he saves by the price of his blood, he will conquer by the power of his Spirit; he being the Christ of God, Anointed of God, Sealed of God, to be both a Saviour and a Lord; and he is offered for this end to be both. This shews what a suitable offer it is to the poor sinner that is both under the wrath of God, the curse of the law, condemned to hell-fire, which makes him stand in need of Christ as a Saviour; and also, he is under the power of sin, the slavery of lusts, the bondage of Satan, which makes him stand in need of Christ as a Lord; and here is encouragement to the poor soul, that would be sanctified as well as justified, Christ is offered for wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, and redemption: he is not offered as a Saviour only, to save from hell; but as a Lord also, to deliver from sin. Now, what is the great obstruction here, that hinders the receiving of the offer? Why, it is even the false heart that would divide salvation from dominion; would be content to have his soul saved, but not to have the sin conquered; would have Christ as a Jesus, but not as a Lord: the man would be under his garment, and yet not under his government. In this case, the man is not so much out of love with sin, as out of love with hell; not so much in love with Christ, as with his benefits: while his guilt craves Christ's salvation, his lusts oppose Christ's Lordship. If Christ were offered as a cloak to your lusts, then the false and bloody calumny of some would be true, that we call men to believe, and then live as they list. Why, if Christ were offered as a Jesus, a Saviour, and not as a Lord, then such a thing might be supposed; but let the mouth of calumny be stopt: we offer Christ to sinners, upon the ground of free grace, both as he is a Jesus and a Lord; and I defy any man in the world to receive this offer, and yet desire to live as he lists. It is not possible in nature: For if the language of man's

heart be, *Lord let my soul be saved, but let my lusts reign*; in this case the offer is not received; for then the man says, Let me have Christ as a Saviour, but not as a Lord: and so, the offer not being received, it is not faith, but a fancy, a delusion; for, at the same time that he desires such a latitude, he refuses the offer of Christ as a Lord; yea, and betrays the rottenness of his faith in him as a Saviour, while he would divide salvation from dominion, and Christ's priesthood from his lordship.

When God brings a man therefore to receive his offer in the gospel, he makes him to pass under three convictions, which three you read of, John xvi. 8. *When the Spirit is come, he will convince the world of sin, of righteousness, and of judgment.* 1. He passes under the conviction of *sin*; both of his general sin, in rebelling against and contemning the authority of a commanding God in the law; and of his particular sin of unbelief, in despising the grace of a promising God in the gospel. 2. He passes under the conviction of *righteousness*; that is, of the righteousness of Christ as a Saviour, a Priest, a Sacrifice, and as the *Lord our righteousness*, for justification: he is convinced that he is lost for ever without an interest in this righteousness. 3. He passes under the conviction of *judgment*; that is, of the government of Christ; making the man willing to be subject to him, as well as justified by him; to be under the dominion of his grace, as well as under the covert of his blood. Now, till a man have passed these three convictions, he is still blocked up, and concluded under unbelief.

There are two things, which when they do appear, tend mightily to draw out the heart toward the gospel-offer; the one is in us, the other is in Christ. The first is, the necessity of the sinner; and the second is, the excellency of the Saviour. The necessity of having Christ upon pain of death, and the excellency of the knowledge of Christ. The one makes the man willing to be saved by him; the other makes the man willing to be subdued by him. Such is my necessity; Oh I must have him for a Jesus to me! Such is his excellency: Oh I must have him for a Lord to me! And thus he is brought to go in

to the proper ends of the gospel-offer, namely, to receive Christ as Jesus the Lord.

Thus I have shewed you somewhat relative to the offer which this *receiving of Christ* relates to. And from this manner of offering Christ, it appears, that though the offer be to sinners, and grounded upon free grace, yet what a hard thing, yea, how impossible it is, without the almighty power of God, to receive the offer, or to believe in the Lord Jesus Christ. What a mighty hard work it is, when there are such obstructions in the way! Many think it is an easy thing to be believers; and so it may be said indeed of a multitude of ordinary, superficial, dogmatical believers in the world. But saving faith, though it be the easiest and sweetest thing in the world, under the conduct of divine grace, and the drawings of the divine Spirit, yet, without that, it is the hardest thing in the world. Why?

1. For a lost sinner, under the curse of the law, to believe that God should be as good to him, as the promise of the gospel tells him, is hard; nay, he is afraid the promise be too good to be true, and this argues his want of faith; for whatever unbelief does, faith never questions the truth of God's promise.

2. For a proud man to be beholden to free grace, when he hath been building his hope all his days upon some good work or deed of his own; for such a sinner to strip himself of his own righteousness, and look upon it as a filthy rag; how hard is this! nay, publicans and harlots go to heaven sooner.

3. For a sinner filled with self-love, self-ease, self-will, self-wisdom, self-sufficiency, self-estimation, self-justification, to deny himself, his sinful self, his natural self, moral self, worldly self, religious self, and go wholly out of himself, and wholly in to Christ for all; all this is very hard: and yet for this end Christ is offered that he may be thus received, even for *wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, redemption*, and all; for *wisdom*, that is, as a Prophet to teach you; for *righteousness*, that is, as a Priest to justify you; for *sanctification*, that is, as a King to sanctify you; and for compleat redemption, that is, for your *all in all*; even the whole of your salvation,

in time and through eternity. Now, the hardness and difficulty of believing and accepting of this noble offer, does not ly in some great work that you have not power to do, for faith and works are opposite here; believing is not working; *He that believeth, is he that worketh not, but believeth on him that justifies the ungodly*, Rom. iv. 5.: but the difficulty rather lies in some great worth, and apprehend good, that you have no will to quit, till a day of power make you willing; such as, your own wit and wisdom, which you oppose unto Christ as a Prophet; your own works and righteousness, which you oppose unto Christ as a Priest; your own strength and power, together with your own self-love and sin-love, which you oppose unto Christ as a King. In receiving this offer, the man not only quits his sin and lust, which is very hard; but quits his righteousness and works, which is yet harder. Need I to explain this, for preventing mistakes, in this critical age and day of reproach? When I speak of quitting our works; I mean, a quitting them, not in point of *performance*, but in point of *dependence*; it is a quitting of the law, not as a rule of *obedience*, but as a rule of *acceptance*, or as a *covenant of works*. Now, I say, it is the hardest of all for a man to quit his works and righteousness, and have no hope of any favour or acceptance with God for them; for the light of nature will tell him, that he should quit his sins; but the light of nature, and the remainders of the legal covenant in him, will never tell him that he should quit his works and righteousness; nay, it will tell him, on the quite contrary, that he must *do, or be damned*; that he must *do and live*; and work so and so well, and God will accept of him. This is the way of the covenant of works, the natural way; and to quit that way is right hard, so as to venture all upon the works of another, the righteousness of another: Indeed it is not so hard for a camel to go through the eye of a needle, with his bunch of his back, as for a rich man; I mean, one that is rich in his own conceit, *rich and increased with goods, and standing in need of nothing*; nay, it is impossible for him with his bunch of duties and works of righteousness on his back, to enter into heaven. Some by the *needle-*

eye understand the wicket of the gate of Jerusalem, no camel with his burden could go in ; so it is here. Others, by the *camel*, understand a *cart-rope*; as they think the word we translate *camel* may be rendered ; and as a cart-rope cannot go through the eye of a needle, unless it be untwisted, and put through the needle's eye, thread by thread ; neither will any get to heaven, unless the cart-rope of his righteousness be untwisted and dissolved piece-meal ; for otherwise his cart-rope will be fit for nothing, but casting anchor on the sandy bank of the law, where his vessel will be broken to pieces, and his soul will sink into the sea of God's wrath : for, *By the deeds of the law, no flesh living can be justified.*

So that, I say, the difficulty here lies not so much in some great thing that you have not *power* to do, but in some great thing that you have not *will* to undo : and so the greatest knack of true religion lies in being made willing ; and the great power of God is necessary for that end ; *Thy people shall be willing in the day of thy power* ; and when this day of power comes, then, to receive the offer of Christ for the ends for which he is offered, becomes as easy as ever before it was hard ; why, the offer takes hold of the man's heart, and the offering hand takes hold of the receiving hand : like a child, that never had a pen in his hand, and cannot write a word, the father takes the child's hand within his, and leads it ; so here, the Lord takes the man's hand, and leads it to write down his name, to sign the offer, saying, *I accept*

Now, what shall we say ? Is there any here to whom the offer is come with power ? The external dispensation of this gospel, and revelation of this offer, make it the unquestionable duty of every one of you to accept and receive it ; but it is the internal effectual revelation of it only, that will determine you actually to accept and receive it freely, *without money, and without price* : without terms and conditions on your side ; renouncing all the good qualifications you dreamed of having to recommend you to him, and coming to him for all ; like a black and ugly monster coming to accept of an offer that can make you fair and clean. It is an offer of all

things in Christ; and nothing makes it hard and uneasy but yourself, that you will not quit an *all*, that is *nothing*, and take an *all*, that is *all things*. The natural man finds it hard, because it is a quitting all the good that he has; but the enlightened soul finds it easy, because it is just a taking all the good that he wants; and when he is taking all things in Christ, he does not find it hard to quit all in himself: why, he sees *all things lost and dung, for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ*; and when he sees that, he finds it is not hard to relinquish a heap of jewels, and a pearl of infinitely great price in the midst of them. O! is there any here welcoming God's offer? Here is his offering hand, where is your receiving hand? Here is the hand of grace offering, where is the hand of faith accepting? Is any here taking God's offer off his hand? Do you see the offer is to you; to you, man; to you woman; whether young or old? *To you is the word of this salvation sent.* The greater gift it is that is offered to you, the less will you be ready to take, as long as you think, it cannot be to me. But to you, I say, it is, man, woman; whoever you are, *the promise is to you*; the offer is to you, be who you will.—Now, are you receiving, are you taking God's offer? Why, if you be doing so, it is easy, through grace, to know that you are doing so. How do you know when you are taking a gift that a man offers you, in an outward sense? The man holds it out in his hand, saying, Take it; and if you receive, then you hold out your hand to his, saying, Content, I will take it: or, if your hand be short, and cannot reach his, yet you will hold it out in testimony of your acceptance, saying, Well, come and give it. So here, in a spiritual sense, if you be taking God's offer off his hand, then your heart will be determined to say, Content, Lord; even so I take the unspeakable gift that thou offerest: or, if your hand be short, or withered, that you think you cannot get the offer embraced as you would, yet you will be stretching out heart and hand as you can, saying, Come, Lord, and give what thou offerest; even a whole Christ to be wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, redemption, and all to me. O! is this the language

guage of your soul, I have nothing, but let Christ come and be all to me; I can do nothing, but let Christ come and do all for me; I have a world of self-enmity, and innumerable evils, that oppose Christ within me, but let Christ come in and put all to the door that hold him out; I cannot take him, but let him take me, and take my blessing for ever? Why, if that were the language of your heart and soul, I hope there hath been some secret power working in you to make you thus far to receive the offer of God.—And thus I have considered the offer which the receiving of Christ relates unto. Now, I told you that as to this act of *receiving* we would consider what it *relates to*, and what it *consists in*. Having then shewed what it relates to, namely, the offer, I come to shew,

2dly, What it *consists in*. Here I need not tell you, that *receiving* and *believing* are all one, according to John i. 12.; and this believing is not a mere notional persuasion, or dogmatical opinion concerning Christ; for that is too slight a thing to be accounted a receiving of Christ: but this receiving of Christ,

(1.) *In general*, to express it in a word, if possible, it may be called (as one of our renowned commentators expresses it) a *fiducial knowledge*; that is, such a knowledge of Christ as leads the soul to an assured confidence in him. Our Shorter Catechism defines faith to be, a *receiving of Christ, and resting on him, for salvation, as he is offered in the gospel*. And this *resting* is not so much a different act from that of *receiving*, as it is a continuation of that act of receiving; for when we receive him for salvation we begin our resting on him; and when we rest upon him for salvation, we continue our receiving of him, or believing in him. The reception, is the rest begun; and the resting, is the reception continued. And therefore whatever application of Christ is imported in *resting on him*, the same is imported in *receiving of him*. And as Christ is offered to every one in particular, that hear the gospel; so it is the duty of every one to receive the offer by applying Christ to himself, for his own particular good, benefit, and salvation. I could here lay before you several terms or expressions whereby this faith,

or receiving of Christ, is held forth in the scripture, but I confine myself to the text. Receiving of Christ is, “a going out of the whole soul, to close with Christ for complete salvation to a man’s self, as he is offered in the gospel;” and so the language of faith is, Here is an offer made by God to me myself; and therefore I receive Christ for salvation to myself, according to the offer, and that with my whole heart and soul; for, *With the heart man believeth unto righteousness: My heart trusted in him, and I am helped*, said the psalmist. Some make faith to be only an act of the *will*, that they may exclude from the nature of faith that persuasion which yet cannot be excluded. In opposition to such we assert, That, according to scripture, faith is an act of the *whole soul*; the *understanding*, *will*, and *affections*: and hence these, and the like scriptures, make faith to be an act of the soul, Psalm lvii. 2. *O my God, my soul trusteth in thee.* Psalm xvi. 2. *O my soul, thou hast said unto the Lord, Thou art my Lord. O my soul, wait thou only upon God, for my expectation is from him. My soul maketh her boast in the Lord. My soul thirsteth for the living God. Return to thy rest, O my soul.* All eminent expressions of faith. Now, I say, this receiving of Christ is the soul’s closing with him; the soul’s going out toward him; or going in to him as offered, so as to become one with him. As you see how grafts are knit to the stock, so as to become one with the stock, and one in the stock, or else it cannot live in a vegetative manner; so the soul is by faith knite and unite to Christ, the root, to be one with him, and one in him: for true faith so closes with Christ, as not merely to have a Christ without the man, but a Christ within him; and therefore the soul, by faith, goes in to Christ, so as not only to unload his debt, and leave his sin and guilt upon him, but also to surrender himself into his possession and property.

But that I may further open up this *act* of receiving Christ, I would,

(2.) And *more particularly* consider the nature thereof, in the following *qualities* of it.

1. This act of receiving Christ is a *spiritual* act, in opposition to all natural acts done by natural wit and strength:

strength : men may believe that way with a cradle faith, a natural faith, a common faith, and believe unto perdition ; but will never believe to the saving of their souls. True faith is a spiritual act, under the conduct of the Spirit of faith ; and therefore faith is called a *fruit of the Spirit*, Gal. v. 22. ; and of the power of the Spirit, even *the exceeding greatness of his mighty power*, Eph. i. 19. It is a fruit and effect of the day of God's power, and the revelation of his arm, Isa. liii. 1. It is the *gift of God*, and a fruit of his free grace ; and hence we read of some that *through grace believed*, Acts xviii. 27. The power of the Spirit of Christ creates it where it is not ; and that same power of the Spirit excites it where it is. It is a spiritual act.

2. This act of receiving Christ is a *judicious* act, in opposition to darkness and confusion. The man being acted by the Spirit of faith doth act judiciously and distinctly, as in a matter of the greatest concern, with judgment and understanding, saying, as John vi. 68. *To whom shall we go, thou hast the words of eternal life ? We believe and are sure, that thou art that Christ, the Son of the living God.* The man believes the promise, and the doctrine of grace and salvation so judiciously, that, as his judgment approves it as a *truth*, so the will accepts it as a *good* ; *This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptation, that Jesus Christ came into the world to save sinners, of whom I am the chief*, 1 Tim. i. 15.

3. This act of receiving Christ is a *warrantable* act, in opposition to presumption and delusion. True faith acts upon a sufficient warrant. It acts upon the warrant of an *objective sufficiency* ; there is a sufficient Christ presented to him. O the sufficiency of his person, being God-man, in one person ! the sufficiency of his offices, whether his general offices, as a Mediator, a Surety, a Redeemer ; or his particular offices, as a Prophet, Priest, and King : the sufficiency of his righteousness, his doing and dying, his obedience and satisfaction ; the sufficiency of his power, being *able to save to the uttermost* ; the sufficiency of his will, while he proclaims his *good-will towards men*, and that *God is in Christ reconciling the world to himself*. Besides, faith acts upon
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the warrant of a general dispensation of grace, through Christ, in the external revelation of the word, where the elect are not characterized more than others, but life and salvation through Christ held out to sinners of mankind, without distinction of nation, state, or condition, and so in an indefinite way. Thus run all the promises, except these that are made to believers, or such as have grace already; to them indeed the promises are definite, as also they are definite to the elect in the purpose of God; but in the external dispensation of the gospel, they are indefinite and general, Acts ii. 32. Rom. ix. 4. And as the promise is indefinite, so the call is universal, whether by exhortations, invitations, counsels, or commands, to all and every one to come and receive Christ, and all his sure mercies, freely. And upon such-like warrants as these does faith act.

4. This act of receiving Christ, it is an *adventuring* act, in opposition to dispondency, diffidence, and distrust: hence it is called a *boldness*; *We have boldness to enter into the holiest, by the blood of Jesus*. It is a venturing our souls, our life, upon the blood of the Son of God, and upon the promise of God in Christ. To receive Christ, and believe, is in effect to say, I adventure my soul upon nothing in the world, but upon the promise of a God that I have provoked, and been an enemy to all my days: I have nothing but the word of this God, and yet I must venture upon it my everlasting all. It is an adventuring grace, like Peter upon the boisterous water, with this in his mouth and heart, *Master, save me*, Matth. xiv. 30. To venture upon the promise of a provoked God, and to believe him to be a God in Christ reconciled, according to his word, upon the account of the *ransom he hath found out*, and the *propitiation he hath set forth*; here is the boldness of faith. It is a venturing act.

5. This act of receiving Christ, it is an *evangelical* act, in opposition to a legal faith. It is evangelical in the ground of it: legal faith acts upon the ground of a legal inherent strength, and personal righteousness; but true faith upon a borrowed strength, and an imputed righteousness of another, saying, *Scarcely in the Lord only*

only have *Righteousness and strength*; and it is a self-emptying grace, stripping the man of his own righteousness, of his own strength, and taking him intirely off his own bottom. It is evangelical in the order of it, receiving him as a *Jesus*, and then as a *Lord*; first for justification: legal faith perverts that gospel-order, seeking sanctification first, that upon that bottom it may build its justification; *Seeking righteousness, as it were, by the works of the law*, Rom. ix. 32. It is evangelical in its fruit; legal faith is a fruitless faith, it brings forth no acceptable fruit, either from a right principle or to a right end; and so all its fruits of good works are rejected, as unprofitable and vain: but true faith brings virtue and good from its object; such as, ease to the conscience, quiet to the mind, holiness to the heart, and holy lustre to the whole life: when faith touches, if it were but the hem of Christ's garment, virtue comes out, and heals the soul; grace comes forth, and purifies the heart; yea, it brings forth all the good fruit of gospel-grace; *Out of his fulness have we all received, and grace for grace*, John i. 16. Faith is the receiving grace, and other graces are received by it; it fetches them out of Christ's fulness; it brings out repentance, and then it is a penitential faith: gospel repentance is in it, and with it, and after it, but not before it. As true faith is a penitent faith; even so it is a humble faith, a joyful faith, a thankful faith, an obediential faith, a working faith; yea, faith is the root of all these fruits that natively grow upon it, and go along with it.

6. This act of receiving Christ, it is a *particular, appropriating, fiducial* act, in opposition to the general doubtful faith of the Papists, which we have abjured in our National Covenant. The man that believes, truly believes *applicatively*. The man that receives Christ rightly, receives him with a particular appropriation to himself; just as a man eats and drinks for his own particular benefit; and hence faith is called an *eating of the flesh, and drinking of the blood of the Son of God*; that is, he takes home Christ, his merit, righteousness, mediation, and the benefits thereof to his own soul. And thus it is also a *fiducial* act, importing an assured confidence,

dence, according to the measure of it, in opposition to an uncertain faith. A doubtful, wavering faith, is not the faith that receives Christ; nay, it is a faith that receives nothing, if we will take God's word for it, James i. 5, 6, 7. *If any man lack wisdom, let him ask it of God;—but let him ask in faith, nothing wavering; for he that wavereth is like a wave of the sea, driven with the wind and tossed; for let not that man think that he shall receive any thing of the Lord.* Why then, a doubtful faith receives nothing, far less such a prize as Christ. I know how some have been reproached on this head, notwithstanding of this plain scriptural doctrine, as if they asserted, that they had no pity upon doubting believers. Really we should have no pity upon ourselves if we should say, that no believers have their doubts. Well, say you, may not a man that hath faith have doubts? Yea, to be sure he may; but his doubts are not his faith, but his unbelief; and who ever said but a believer may have much unbelief? I would ask such persons, May not a man that hath grace, have corruption? And yet you will own that his corruption is none of his grace; nay, it is the direct opposite of grace: even so, a man that hath faith may have doubts, but yet his doubts are not his faith; but his sin, his unbelief, and the quite opposite of faith: there is no doubting in his faith, even as there is no corruption in grace; they are antipodes. And it is not by his doubting, but by his believing, that he receives any thing from God. The Lord deliver us from justifying a doubtful faith which Christ reproves; *O thou of little faith, wherefore dost thou doubt?* Some make doubting a mark of faith; but it is such a mark of faith as corruption is a mark of grace, as in the following sense; Why, say you, there is a notorious profligate sinner, that says he never doubted all his days, but still had a good hope; that is indeed a sign that he hath no faith: whereas the poor soul that finds a world of doubts may yet be a true believer. Very true; and therefore I say it is such a mark as corruption is a mark of grace, in this sense; there is an impenitent wretch that says he never saw what they call corruption within him all his days; nay, he blesses God he is a good Christian, a
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good neighbour, and hath always had a good heart to God; there is an evidence that he hath no grace: whereas the poor soul that finds corruption working, and sin raging within him, may yet be a true faint. Thus as corruption felt may be a mark of grace, because grace fights against corruption; even so, doubting felt may be a mark of faith, because faith fights against doubting, and opposes it, as being quite contrary to its very nature. But will any therefore put doubting into the nature of faith, as if it were essential to faith to doubt? Or, will any therefore exclude persuasion from the nature of faith, as if it were not essential for faith to be persuaded, because the man that hath faith is sometimes doubting? Just as if it were not in the nature of the eye to see, because the man that hath eyes is sometimes sleeping: nay, we say, it is in the nature of faith to see, and be assured, and persuaded, because it is a fiducial act; hence these and the like scriptures, Rom. iv. 20, 21. *He staggered not at the promise of God, through unbelief, but was strong in the faith, giving glory to God; being FULLY PERSUADED, that he that had promised was able to perform.* And Heb. xi. 13. it is said of all the old-testament believers, to whom notwithstanding the revelation of the object of faith was not so clearly made as under the New-Testament, that they *received the promises*: well, but what sort of an act was that receiving act of theirs? Why, it follows, *they were PERSUADED of them, and embraced them.*

The common sense of mankind usually takes faith, or believing, for a *persuasion*: I believe such a thing; that is, I am *persuaded*, or assured of it; I do not doubt it: I believe such a man; that is, I am *persuaded* it is truth that he says: if the honest man give me his word, his oath, his bond, this fortifies the persuasion, and certifies the person that hath ado with him. So here, to believe, is to be persuaded, assured, and certified upon the word, the oath, the bond, the promise, the covenant, yea, the blood and righteousness of God; and he that believeth upon such a ground, as all true believers do, must believe with persuasion, according to the measure of faith: if it be a weak faith, it is a weak persuasion;

if a strong faith, a strong persuasion. And it is not a natural persuasion, a man's persuading himself, and so on more of it; nay, it is supernatural, and comes of God, which the former does not; Gal. iv. 8. *This persuasion cometh not of him that calleth you; intimating, that right persuasion cometh of God.*

This act of receiving Christ then is a *fiducial* act, a *fiducial persuasion*, which some call a *fiducial assurance*. I know that one great ground of mistake in this point is, the confounding of *fiducial* assurance with *evidential* assurance. The former is the assurance of faith, and in the nature of it; the latter is the assurance of sense, and the effect of faith; and is not properly faith at all, but sense:—They differ in their *acts*; by *fiducial* assurance, we *receive* Christ as ours; by *evidential* assurance, we *know* him to be ours: the former every believer hath, when he acts faith; the latter, many believers want, even when they act faith; because, though they may be conscious that they are acting, yet they may not be conscious of the quality of the act, if it is saving or not.—Again, this *fiducial* and *evidential* assurance differ, as in their *acts*, so in their *order*; we first *believe* by a *fiducial* persuasion, and then we are *sure* by an *evidential* persuasion; the one is the cause, the other the effect: the persuasion that is in faith, is like heat in the fire; the persuasion that is after faith, is like fire in the room, that is the effect of the other.—They differ in their *object*; the object of *fiducial* assurance is *without* the man, and looks to the promise of God, and righteousness of Christ; but the object and foundation of *evidential* assurance is *within* the man, and looks to the work of God within; such as, graces, attainments, and experiences.—They differ in their *effects*; the effect of *judicial* persuasion is *justification*, the effect of *evidential* persuasion is *consolation*: a man is not justified by his *evidential* knowledge, or by knowing that Christ is his; but he is justified by his *fiducial* knowledge, or his receiving and resting upon Christ for salvation, as he is offered in the gospel. *By his knowledge, shall my righteous Servant justify many.* Faith is a *fiducial* act.

7. In a word, It is an *interesting* act, whereby a man

is interested in Christ and all that he is worth; infomuch, that upon his believing, all his debts are paid: as a woman that is in debt, upon her marriage to a rich man, all her debt is paid; because, by her marriage, all her debt is transfered upon the husband that hath married her: so the soul, being married to Christ, hath all his debt paid; the soul being now under the covert of its husband, is not answerable for his own debt, nay, hath not his own sins to answer for, but Christ the husband answers for them.—And thus much concerning the *act* of faith in receiving Christ; it is a spiritual act, a warrantable act, a venturing act, an evangelical act, and a fiducial act, as also and interesting act. I come now to consider,

Secondly, The OBJECT of this act, namely, *Christ*; As ye have received CHRIST: which admits of a double interpretation. 1. By Christ may be meant Christ *doctrinally* considered; or the doctrine of the gospel of Christ. 2. By Christ may be meant Christ *personally* considered; or Christ himself received in and by that doctrine.

1. I say, by *Christ* may be meant Christ *doctrinally*, or the doctrine of the gospel of Christ, as Eph. iv. 20. *Ye have not so learned Christ*: that is, ye have been otherwise taught the doctrine of the gospel. And whoever views accurately the context here, both the verse preceeding the text, and the verse following, as formerly explained, will find, that by *Christ* here may evidently be understood the doctrine of Christ, or the gospel. And indeed none can receive Christ, and reject his doctrine; but, in receiving Christ, must first receive his doctrine, and so Christ therein; and so he that receiveth Christ is said to *believe the gospel*; and every true receiver of Christ is a receiver of his doctrine, because that is the *feed* by which he is conceived and born; and it is the milk by which he is brought up and nourished to eternal life, 1 Pet. i. 23. chap. ii. 2. I need not here stand to commend the gospel doctrine: It is enough to say, that by the Lord's blessing upon it, it is the feed to conceive, and the milk to nourish all the children of God. Why? it is the *channel* in which the Spirit runs;

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Received ye the Spirit by the works of the law, or by the bearing of faith? Gal. iii. 2.—It is the organ of the almighty power of God; *I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ, for it is the power of God to salvation, to every one that believeth*: his power in working faith, his power in measuring faith, and his power in saving sinners in a way of believing, is put forth in the gospel; Why? *For therein is the righteousness of God revealed from faith to faith*, Rom. i. 16, 17. The law hath convinced many, but never converted one to this day; and a gospel minister may preach the law for many good ends, but it is the gospel part of preaching that doth the business, if the power of God be going along with it; for the gospel only is the channel wherein the converting power of the Spirit runs; *Faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the word of God*: Christ is revealed therein in order to his being received. It is not the gospel of itself, but Christ revealed therein that heals the sinner. It is like the serpent lifted up upon the pole in the wilderness; the pole did not heal, but the serpent upon the pole, that healed the sting; but the pole held it up to be seen: Even so, it is not the pole of the gospel that heals, but Christ lifted up upon the pole. It is Christ that is to be received, but he is to be received as offered in the gospel; and the gospel holds out Christ to the eye of faith: it is with respect to Christ what the pole was with respect to the serpent: and therefore they that pull down this pole of the gospel, in any respect, they take away Christ from the eye of the wounded soul, the stung sinner: they that pull down the pole, they take away the serpent out of view that the sinner cannot see it. Cast down Christ they cannot, but they will pull down the pole, and so take him out of sight. They that are concerned to have, or to give others a sight of Christ, will be concerned to have the pole straight that holds him up; I mean, the gospel sound and clear that holds him forth.

Now, there is no good merchant for the kingdom of heaven, but, for the treasure's sake that is hid in the field, will buy the whole field; Matth. xiii. 44. *The kingdom of heaven is like a treasure hid in a field; the which, when a man*

a man hath found, he hideth ; and for joy thereof, goeth and selleth all that he hath, and buyeth that field. Well, did the man buy the treasure only and not the field ; as many think they can take Christ, and reject the gospel ? No ; he went and bought the field where the treasure was. The treasure is Christ ; the field is the gospel ; and he bought, he received the gospel ; and so had the treasure in it. Every true believer values the gospel at a very high rate ; and the reason is, because it is the field where the treasure is hid, where Christ is to be had. And yet withal many may receive the gospel-doctrine by a dogmatical faith, an opinionative faith, and not receive Christ himself. This is a faith that thousands perish by ; but true faith receives the gospel, and Christ in it. Therefore,

2. By *Christ* here, as the object of faith, we are to understand Christ *himself* to be received ; Christ *personally* considered. The object of faith is Christ the Son of God, not excluding the Father, and the Holy Ghost, for each person of the glorious Trinity is the object of faith ; Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, one God ; but this God would be as inaccessible to us as to the fallen angels, were it not through Christ. Christ, you know, signifies ANOINTED, and to receive Christ is to receive him as the *Messiah*, the Sent, Sealed, and Anointed of God, Isa. lxi. 1. His anointing signifies his singular ordination to be our Redeemer, and to perform the work of our redemption ; for, *Him hath God the Father sealed*, John vi. 27. ; SEALED, by the superminent unction of the Holy Ghost, and authorized of the Father to it : he did not undertake this work presumptuously, without a call, but by the ordination and appointment of God. His being the Christ, points out his eminent qualifications for the work of our redemption ; as he is a Redeemer of God's sending, so of God's qualifying ; *He hath laid help upon One that is mighty* ; One that is able of himself, and enabled of his Father to work out our salvation and redemption-work : and so to receive Christ, is to receive God's Sent, God's Anointed, God's Sealed One. And here faith views the divine authority of his commission, in that he is given of the Father to be a
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Prophet, Priest, and King; and came from the Father in his name and authority. And hence there is nothing that Christ commends more in the New-Testament than this faith that believes his divine mission, his divine ordination to this mediatory-work; as John xvii. 8. *I have given unto them the words which thou gavest unto me, and they have received them, and have known surely that I came out from thee; and they have believed that thou didst send me.* To receive Christ then, is to receive God's Ambassador, God's Anointed; and that is a noble faith.

But again, to consider the *termination* of faith upon this glorious object: the man that receives Christ, receive him as a living root, and as a glorious head: as a living root, in whom he is implanted; and as a glorious head, to whom he is united. Faith goes in to him; and so by faith there is a saving implantation in him, a spiritual union to him; and so this receiving of him makes all that is in Christ yours. If a man should look for life and righteousness from Christ, without union to Christ, it is as if a woman should look for an estate from a man by conveyance, and not by marriage: now, God gives not any saving benefit to sinners by conveyance, but by marriage and union with Christ. Many indeed have a great deal of gifts, parts, and abilities; and such knowledge as per-adventure you may call it revelation; these things are given to men through Christ, but with this difference; some, they receive these things from Christ as a steward, that may dispense them; but not from him as a head, flowing in to them as members. To natural men, and wicked men, these things come from Christ as a steward; but they come not from him as a head of union; for these only that are united to him by faith have spiritual blessings flowing to them from Christ, as the head, to them as members. It is true, that unions are great mysteries; the union of God and man, into *one Christ*, is a great mystery; the union of Christ, and all his members into *one body*, is a great mystery; the apostle calls it a *great mystery*, saying, *I speak concerning Christ and his church*, Eph. v. 32. The believer receiving Christ, is in him as a member is in the head, and as a branch is in the root;
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and in him so as that he lives by the life of Christ, and is righteous by the righteousness of Christ, and is acted by the Spirit of Christ. Neither is this union to Christ by receiving him lessened by this, that Christ is in heaven, and we upon earth; for, as the union between man and wife is not lessened, the one towards another, though they be a thousand miles asunder, (though the communion is not so much :) so here, the union that we have to Christ, by receiving him, is not lessened by his being in heaven, and we upon the earth: It is true, the communion is not so close, nor so intimate, as it would be, if we were in the same place with him; but the union is not lessened: they are united and married to the person of Christ by receiving him.

Now, the *object* of faith being Christ's person, and the receiving of Christ, a closing with this person, here is the honour of all the saints. What a comfortable and honourable station is it to be a member united to this glorious Head! And therefore, before I pass this, I would acquaint you with a thing which you will find true in your experience, namely, many are very much troubled and tried in seeking this and the other benefit from Christ, such as the pardon of sin, and mortifying of corruption; they seek and are never the better; and what is the reason? Even because they begin at the wrong end of the gospel; at the wrong end of religion and Christianity: they seek the things of Christ but not the person of Christ; they look out for his graces and benefits, without closing with his person. O! says one, for such and such a benefit from Christ, and such and such graces of his Spirit; very well: but would you have them from Christ without union to him? Would ye have blessings from Christ without Christ himself? Why, what though you should get some blessings from him, if you live and die without him. O, says one, that goes to a sacrament, O for some communion with Christ! very good; but here is the falsity: you would have communion without union to him, and that cannot be. Union to his person is the foundation of true communion with him in his benefits; and therefore you may seek communion with him, and yet neglect the

foundation. You cannot have true communion without union by faith, receiving Christ himself; for as the graft cannot have sap from the root, unless it be set into the stock; if it be not ingrafted, it cannot have communion with the root: so, neither can you have these graces and comforts that you would have in a way of communion with him, unless it be first in a way of union to him. And therefore, let it be your great business, through grace, to close with Christ himself, the person of Christ, as he is handed to you in the doctrine of the gospel: never rest till the offering hand of the gospel, and the receiving hand of faith meet together; for when Christ is received, then, and not till then, is there a real union: and this is the foundation of all true and spiritual communion.—Thus much shall suffice concerning the object, namely, Christ *doctrinally* and *personally* considered.



S E R M O N XXXV.

COL. OS. ii. 6.

As ye have received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk ye in him.

[The second Sermon on this text.]

IN the illustration of the first head of method, which was to speak of the believer's character and dignity as a receiver of Christ Jesus the Lord, we proposed to consider the *act* of faith, as it is a receiving of Christ; next the *object* of it, Christ; and then the *capacity* or *respect* under which this object is received, *viz.* as he is *Christ, Jesus, the Lord*. We have considered the first two, the act and object. It remains,

Thirdly, That we consider the CAPACITIES or *respects* in which Christ is to be received, namely, as a **JESUS**, and a **LORD**; which will still farther clear the object. There are three letters of Christ's name here that point
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him out beyond all other names in the world. I have formerly told you, that Christ is offered in these capacities, and I have just now spoke of the first letter of his name, *viz.* CHRIST, the *Anointed* of God; and indeed it is not found faith that doth not take him as the Sent of God, and qualified of God for the whole redemption work. But the other two letters of his name remain yet to be touched at. And you may consider them under this view as the two-fold capacities in which we are to receive Christ, namely, as *Jesus the Lord*. 1. As he is *Jesus*. 2. As he is the *Lord*.

1. As he is JESUS, that is, a *Saviour*. This is the first name given to Christ in the New-Testament, Mat. i. 21. *His name shall be called JESUS, because he shall save his people from their sins*; and it is the best name that sinners can hear tell of: it is a name above all names, both for the glory of him that bears it, and the comfort of them that hear of it. Now, to receive Christ as a *Jesus*, is to receive him as a singularly mighty Saviour, that is able to save to the utmost, as appears by his doing, dying, suffering, satisfying, conquering; and surely, he that was able to atone God, and conquer the devil, is able to save sinners. To receive him as a *Jesus*, is to receive him as an universal Saviour; I mean, not only in the apostle's sense, 1 Tim. iv. 10. that he is the *Saviour of all men, but especially of them that believe*; but I mean in respect of the salvation that he brings to them whom he makes to believe in him: and so I mean, in the sense of the same apostle, Acts xiii. 39. *By him all that believe are saved and justified from all things, from which they could not be justified by the law of Moses*. What law of Moses? Why, as his ceremonial law could not do the business; for, *It was impossible that the blood of bulls or goats should take away sin*, satisfy offended justice, or pacify a wounded conscience; so his moral law could not justify; for we, having broken and transgressed it, instead of justifying us it condemns us: therefore. *What the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, that Christ by the gospel does: he justifies from all things; from all guilt, so as the believer can never become liable to the sanction of the law.* Some would have the be-

never justified only from *some things*, as it were, and still liable to the lash of the law; but we maintain the apostle's doctrine, that the believer is justified *from all things*, so as nothing can be laid to his charge: and seeing, *It is God that justifieth, who is he that can condemn*, or make him liable thereunto? To receive him as a Jesus, then, is to receive him as a complete Saviour, a perfect Saviour; that saves meritoriously, by the price of his blood and his mediation for us; and efficaciously, by the power of his Spirit and his effectual operation in us; that saves from the law as a covenant both in its commanding and condemning power; that saves from death, hell, and wrath. But SALVATION is a great word that we cannot now enlarge upon; only, to receive Christ as a Jesus, is to receive and rest upon him alone for salvation, and all the salvation that we need, temporal, spiritual, or eternal, in a suitableness to his promise and offer in the word.

2. As he is the *Lord*; which imports a desire to be subject to him, as he is a King; and to be conquered by him, as well as saved by him. *Christ hath upon his vesture and thigh this name written, KING of kings, and Lord of lords*: He is the King and Head of his church; the government of all is upon his shoulder, particularly the government of Zion, where he hath left officers to rule under him, according to the laws of his kingdom, and in a suitableness to the liberties of his subjects, pointed out in his word; and to have any hand in marring the beautiful order of his government that he hath appointed, or inroach upon the liberties of his people, doth ill become any that profess to receive him as a Lord; as little doth it become them to say in effect, *Our Lord delays his coming*, and so begin to smite their fellow servants, and so fall out with one another, especially when a common enemy is creeping in that would subject the government of Christ's house intirely to a secular power, whether it be patrons or prelates, princes or popes. Surely they that receive Christ as a Lord and King over themselves will not be careless or indifferent about his lordship and government over Zion, as a King and Head of his church; for if they be careless about his govern-
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ment that way, whether it stand or fall, they give evidence of their never truly receiving him as a Lord.

But more particularly, to receive him *as a Lord*, is to close with him for *sanctification* as well as *salvation*, and to welcome him in his kingly office, to subdue sin, conquer Satan, and destroy the works of the devil. A true believer does receive Christ not only as he is a Saviour, but as he is a Lord. Consider both these capacities jointly, and they may search every corner of your heart. The eye of a lost sinner is first upon Christ as a Saviour; so God propounds him, and so we may come to him; but observe, there may be much self-love in seeking Christ, a Saviour, for salvation; for salvation may be desired merely out of self-love, which is evident, if we are for dividing Christ, for taking the *Saviour*, and leaving out the *Lord*. Many would divide between his salvation and his dominion; they would have Christ as a Saviour, to save from wrath; but not as a Lord, to destroy their lusts and sins. But herein true receiving of Christ will discover itself; the Lord makes the man as weary of his load of corruption, as he is weary of his load of condemnation. The man that is weary of condemnation only, would have Christ as a Saviour; but he that is weary of corruption also, would have Christ as a Lord. But when the heart would have water as well as blood, then it is in a right temper; when the man would have water to purify the heart, as well as blood to pacify the conscience. Our desire of Christ for salvation, may be tried with this touch-stone, whether we have the same desire for Christ, *the Lord*; as for Christ, *the Jesus*.

I think it is utterly impossible there can be any more uprightness in your desire after the salvation of Christ, than there is of a desire after the dominion of Christ. Faith, whatever it is, will bring a man out from under the commanding power of sin, as well as from under the condemning power of it. And however a believer may lie in darkness, yet I conceive, that soul is out of danger who is made willing to receive Christ both as a Saviour and a Lord; and so, willing to receive, out of his hand, poison to kill his lusts; as well as pardon to
remove

remove his guilt: the desire of pardon of sin, and the desire of purification of heart, bear proportion; none can truly take Christ, as a Saviour for justification, but they will also truly take him, as a Lord, for sanctification. This we maintain, let calumny say what it will; as if our doctrine were an *enemy to holiness* *! What can be the ground of the calumny, I cannot know, unless it be that men cannot distinguish betwixt *saving* faith, and *justifying* faith; for saving faith (of which we are now speaking) respects Christ in all his offices, as a Prophet, Priest, and King: but when we speak of faith merely as it is justifying, we maintain against all the subtil Popery in the world, that it respects Christ only as a Priest, as a sacrifice, and propitiation; but not Christ as a King. For, to make that act of faith, that receives Christ as a Lord, to be the justifying act of faith, is the very soul of Popery, that builds justification upon sanctification, or upon sanctifying faith: whereas it is the receiving of Christ as a Priest, that alone justifies before God. It is true, faith in Christ as a Saviour and a Lord, go hand in hand together, they are inseparably connected; even as the eye and ear are both joined together in one head; yet it is not the office of the eye to hear, or of the ear to see; no, but it is the office of the eye to see, and of the ear to hear: even so, though faith in

* It hath been the fate of the witnesses for the truths of God, in every period of the church, especially since the commencement of Christianity, to be traduced and reproached with the most scurrilous epithets and opprobrious names. The blessed Author of the Christian religion himself did not escape the obloquy, contumely, and censures of the world; and his disciples were accused with being *turbulent* and *pestilent fellows*, and such as *turned the world upside down*. When it fared so with them, we need not be surprized that their successors should be flouted at, mal-treated, and evil spoken of by those who do not favour the truth as it is in Jesus — About the time when our Author delivered these discourses, an irreligious disposition, and legal spirit was like to spread universally, and had arrived to such a pitch, that *many could not endure to hear sound doctrine*; and the teachers and defenders thereof were the objects of the resentment both of the infidel and legalist. As our worthy Author was sincerely attached to the doctrines of the gospel, he could not but be sincerely affected and truly alarmed at every encroachment upon the sacred truths of his ever glorious Master; so this led him frequently to notice, in his public appearances, the aspersions cast upon him and others, in inculcating the most important truths of the gospel of Christ, particularly their being derided as *favourers of Antinomianism*, and *enemies to holiness*, for their bespeaking the freedom of the doctrine of grace, in asserting the necessity of sinners *doing to the law*, in the point of JUSTIFICATION, in order to their *living to God*, in point of SANCTIFICATION. See Vol. I. p. 238. Vol. II. p. 304, 305.

Christ as a Jesus and as a Lord go together in one and the same believer, and at one and the same time, yet they have their different offices: Christ as a King and Lord is not the object of justifying faith, but only Christ as a Priest and Saviour. It is not Christ as the Lord, subduing my sin, that is the *matter* of my justification before God; but Christ as a Priest paying all my debt: it is not my personal righteousness, even in my gracious subjection to Christ as a Lord, that can be the ground of justification; but it is the righteousness of Christ alone as a Priest, his doing and dying, that is the ground of justification. And therefore it is not faith dealing with Christ as a Lord that justifies, but faith's dealing with Christ as a Priest, a Saviour, and a complete Righteousness. This is the doctrine of the word; which, when our Reformers began to publish, they were branded as enemies to holiness and good works: and if something of this be not at the root of many reproaches in our day, I know not what it is; and if this be the ground of these reproaches, we may gladly bear them as our glory.

But now, we are speaking of the *object* of faith, more largely taken, in its latitude, as it is saving faith; which, we say, hath a respect to Christ in all his offices, and particularly, as in our text, it receives him as a Saviour and a Lord both; and truly, the receiving of Christ as a Lord, for sanctification, is the best mark imaginable of right receiving of Christ as a Saviour, for justification. You may measure your faith and interest in Christ, not by the degree of your persuasion concerning him as a Saviour, but rather by the degree of his virtue and power in you as a Lord: it is better to measure it by the depth of his work in you, than by the height of your confidence in him, which may be too proud and bold. If you should meet a man travelling upon the way, and should ask him how many hours high the sun is, you need not marvel, if instead of looking up to the sun to see how high it is, he should look down to your shadow to see how short it is; for he can tell that way better than looking upon the sun itself: even so, if a man would judge how much of Christ is in him, the best way to try is rather

to look downward than upward: look in to your heart and see what dath your pride hath got, and what abatement your corruption is brought under; for the shorter these dark shadows are in you, the higher is the Sun of righteoufness. Now, the grand corruption of the heart of man, the great root-sin, which sets itself against Christ, as a Lord, I will tell you what it is, it is that lord of all mis-rule, SELF; that is the lord that lords it over you; and all other sins are but the brats of Self: they are but sub-servants, under-servants to this great lord of self-love, self-pride, and self-righteoufness. Now, a true believer is righteous by the righteoufness of another; he lives by the life of another; he is acted by the spirit of another; and therefore he, of any man in the world, should have least of self in him; because Christ, as Lord, doth absolutely set himself against this great corruption. And therefore, if you would know one excellent way of judging of Jesus Christ the Lord, his being in you, it is by the breaking and casting down of self; for the more full that a man is of self, the more empty is he of Christ; and the more full he is of Christ, the more empty he is of self; for the Lord-Self, and the Lord-Christ, cannot stand together: the lordship of Christ and the lordship of Self are inconsistent: when you receive the Lord-Christ, then the Lord-Self is unthroned and thrown down.—Thus much of the believer's *character* and *dignity*, as a receiver of Christ Jesus the Lord.

II. The *second* general head is, To speak of the believer's *duty*, having received Christ Jesus the Lord, then to *walk in him*. You have heard of the two tables of the law, and if you never heard of the two tables of the gospel, you may see them in our text; the first is to *receive Christ*, and the second is to *walk in him*. Tho' I make not the gospel, strictly taken, to be a doctrine of commandments and precepts; yet, where the law is in the hand of Christ, and where Christ is the ALPHA and OMEGA, there we will find the two tables of the gospel: *Christ is All in all*; and these two ALLS make the two tables of the gospel. Or, if the two tables of the gospel must answer to the tables of the law, then consider

consider the law as a covenant, or as a rule, and we get both fulfilled in Christ; the law as a *covenant* is fulfilled by *receiving Christ*; the law as a *rule* is fulfilled by *walking in him*: and so the two tables of the law, in either of these respects, are answered by these two tables of the gospel; for, *Christ is the end of the law for righteousness, to every one that believeth.*

I must only here touch a little, 1. At the *denomination* of the duty, it is a *walking*. 2. The *qualification* of it, it is a *walking IN CHRIST*. As to the

First, The *denomination* of this duty, it is a *walking*. I know many things might be said in running the parallel; but I do not design to squeeze the metaphor beyond the scope of the text, but just to observe what is intended therein. And there are these three things that I apprehend are intended. It plainly denotes, 1. Practice; 2. Progress; 3. Permanency.

[1.] It denotes *practice*, or practicalness. And this is opposed to a dogmatical faith, where there is no practical religion. These that have received Christ they ought to be practical Christians, practical believers; *As ye have received Christ Jesus the Lord, so WALK ye in him*: let your faith be a working faith. As by the same hand that we receive a thing, by the same hand we work; so your faith, if it be saving, then as it receives Christ in the promise of the gospel, so it will work by love in the precept of the law: if it receives Christ in the covenant, it will work by love in the commandment; Gal. v. 6. *In Christ Jesus, neither circumcision availeth any thing, nor uncircumcision, but faith that works by love*: Why? *his commandments are not grievous.*

QUEST. *If we have received Christ, what need we more; Christ hath done all, and therefore we need do nothing?*

ANSW. Indeed many good principles are abused in the world; e. g. Christ hath done all *for* his people in point of *merit*, and he does all *in* his people in point of *power*; and so *without him we can do nothing*: here is a good principle; but thence to infer, that the duty and lawful use of means is not ours, is to abuse this good principle to licentiousness.—*When sin abounds, grace much*

more abounds; there is a good principle: but thence to infer, *Let us sin, that grace may abound*, is to abuse that good principle, and a *turning the grace of God to wantonness*.—We are *justified by faith, without the works of the law*; there is a notable gospel principle: but thence to infer, that a justified man needs not be conform to the law, here is a good principle abused; for, *Do we make void the law, through faith? God forbid; nay, we establish the law*.

There are two things concerning a justified person, which call for practical religion; the one is, *God glorifies him*, and the other is, *he is to glorify God*. God glorifies him; for, *Whom he justifies, them he also glorifies*, Rom viii. 30. But then God is to be glorified as well as he, and will be glorified by all that are justified; and therefore, that they may glorify God, they are to bring forth good fruit. And, on this account, may the Lord deliver us from a dead, unfruitful, and unprofitable faith.

There are four great reasons why they that have *received Christ*, by a gospel-faith, should *walk in him*, by a gospel-practice, namely, because hereby the power of faith is seen; hereby the trial of faith is made; hereby the beauty of it appears to others; and the comfort of it accrues to ourselves.

1. Hereby the *power* of faith is seen, in that it leads to a gospel-practice. How is it that its power is thus seen? Why, even in opposing many and strong lusts: though it should not conquer them, yet it opposes them; and to oppose and fight against sin, in scripture language, is to conquer it: this is a *fighting the good fight of faith*. The power of faith is seen in a gospel-practice, while faith is thus exercised in sowing the sweetest sin, in bearing the greatest burden, and making easy the hardest commandment. When Christ speaks of doing the greatest things, then he compares faith to the least things; when he speaks of *removing mountains*, then he compares faith to a *grain of mustard seed*: and, indeed, faith makes a man to remove mountains of pride, and sets a man's hatred upon that which he loved; and sets a man's love upon that which he hated. How shall a
heavy

heavy weight of lead be made easy to a child? Why, if you do not pare the lead, to make the weight less, then you must add strength to the child; and if he has more strength, though the weight be not pared, yet it makes no matter, because the child hath strength to bear it: even so, God in the gospel makes the command light and easy; how so? not by paring, or abating the commandment, or diminishing the rule, (that is our corrupt way;) but God does it by giving more of faith, and more of Christ.—And so the power of faith is seen in carrying a man through the greatest duties and trials.

2. Hereby the *trial* of faith is made; I say, by a gospel practice. Many judge of the truth of their faith by the degrees of their confidence; but the best trial is by the degrees of their conquest over sin; the degrees of their conquests over their lusts and corruptions. As I said before, you may know the height of the sun by the shortness of your shadow, more than by the degrees of altitude. How much doth a man believe? even as much as his faith *purifies his heart*, and *mortifies his lusts*; so much does he believe, and no more. It is true, a man may be believing in Christ for justification, and coming under the covert of his blood, while in the mean time he sees no measure of sanctification; but on the contrary his heart full of hell, and enmity and corruption; yea, but in the mean time what is that light wherein he sees his own vileness, but sanctifying light? And what is that grace whereby he is loathing and abhorring himself, but sanctifying grace? And so when justifying faith is busy flying under the covert of blood, sanctifying grace is not idle; nay, the more that faith acts upon Christ for justification, the more will it act in purification. Again,

3. Another reason why a gospel faith should have a gospel-practice is, because hereby the *beauty* of faith appears to others, and *our light shines before men, so as they seeing our good works, do glorify God*. The beauty of faith is seen by others, not in faith itself, but in the gospel-walk and practice that it produces. If a man would know in the morning whether the sun be risen in the east, he will readily look to the west, and see whether

he can notice the reflection of the sun-beams upon the top of a house, or the top of a hill; he looks the quite contrary way from the sun; and yet he does it ingeniously enough: even so here, if a man would know you to be a believer, he will not look in to your faith, but will look out to your life, or look back to your conversation, and see what marks your faith makes there; hence saith the apostle, *Shew me thy faith by thy works.* Faith and works are contrary in point of justification, and yet when a man would see your faith, he will look to the contrary part, and see how it appears in your walk and work: and if it appears not there, the beauty of faith is not seen.

4. Hereby the *comfort* of faith accrues to yourselves: even by a gospel-practice you have the comfort of faith; for, *Great peace have all they that love his law: the fruit of righteousness is peace.* There is no greater comfort in the world than for a man to get, by faith, mastery over sin, and grace to do duty for God. Whatever a man does for God, leaving self behind him, it carries the sweetest relish in the world with it. All duties, and sufferings both, are made sweet by this, that it is done for God. Self, in any duty, doth sowre the duty be it never so admirable: *Let every man prove his own work,* saith the apostle, Gal. vi. 4. *then shall he have rejoicing in himself, and not in another.*—These are some reasons why gospel-faith, in receiving Christ, must be attended with gospel-practice in walking in him.

Many talk of practical religion in our day, but few know what it is to walk in it; they are like the lark that sings with the highest, but builds with the lowest: some sing with the highest, as if they were almost angels; but where do they build? where are their affections? where are their hearts, their aims, their ends? They are low, earthly, and sensual. You that profess to be friends to the gospel, O let the mouths that reproach religion be stopped by the power of religion in your walk. If the world call us Antinomians; *It is the will of God that by well-doing we put to silence the ignorance of foolish men,* 1 Pet. ii. 15. We account them the greatest stars that give the greatest light; so men will account them still the

the greatest Christians that give the greatest light, by their gospel practice in holiness toward God, and righteousness toward men. If you be not a better servant, a better child, a better parent, a better master, than you were, or than others are, what credit will religion get by you? Therefore, seek a practical faith, leading to a gospel practice.

[2.] This walk imports not only practice, but *progress*; to stand still is not to walk. Walking imports progress and growth from faith to faith, from strength to strength, from glory to glory. For the truth is, by reason of corruption, we are like the boat in a stream; if we go not forward by the oar, we go backward by the tyde: so, if we go not forward, by the strength of grace, we will go backward, by the strength and power of corruption; even as the boat in the stream cannot stand, it must go backward. It is true, people may be at a stand in religion and yet seem to walk; men may go the round of duties, and yet not be walking; like a spinning wheel, it goes round, but yet it is in the same place still. Many may be called old job-trot professors; they are the same now that they were twenty years ago; no more holiness, no more knowledge, no more experience.

QUEST. *What is this growth and progress?*

I answer, It is not like a wheel that runs round, and stands still in the same place; but where there is more knowledge of Christ, more insight into the mysteries of the gospel, more feeling of the power of the gospel, more victory over lusts and corruptions, &c. there is growth and progress. It is true, a child of God may fall, and he may relapse, and fall again; his feet may be benumbed that he cannot walk: but here is the happiness of a true child of God, one that hath truly received Christ, that his sins are always beneficial to him; he will gain more in holiness by one sin, than a natural man will gain by an hundred duties: for his fall is like the stumbling of a horse that makes him ride the faster; so the believer may stumble, but when he gets to his feet again, he runs the faster, makes quicker progress in the ways of God; his fall humbles him, and makes him

him more dependant, more watchful, more circum-spect, &c.

[3.] This walk imports *permanency* both in the way and doctrine of Christ, according to the following verse, *Rooted and established in the faith.* A single step is not a walk, it is a permanent motion; therefore it is called a being *established in the faith, as we have been taught.* Why, how can a man walk, and yet be rooted; walk, and yet stand stable? these are very inconsistent; 1 Cor. xv. 58. *Be ye steadfast and unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord: STEDEFAST, and yet abounding in the work; MOVING, and yet unmoveable!* like the two feet of a pair of compasses, the one foot of the compass stands fast in the centre, and the other draws the line, and goes round: so it is with the believer, his faith is like the foot of the compass, that stands fast in the centre, Christ and his doctrine; but his gospel-practice is the part that is like the other foot of the compass, it never stands, but ever moves in the way of the Lord. He *stands fast in the faith, and yet walks.* As in walking, one foot stands while the other moves, or else a man is leaping and not walking; so while we go forward in the way of gospel-obedience, we must stand fast in the faith; that foot must stand while the foot of obedience moves, or else we are like them that leap rather than like these that walk: I mean, there are some who will leap out of one doctrine into another, not being *established in the faith of Christ*, which was a steadfastness which the apostle commends in the Colossians here, in the verse immediately preceding our text. But as a tree that is planted in one place to-day, and transplanted to another place to-morrow, and so on from place to place, cannot bear fruit; so the soul doth not stand fast, but leaps from doctrine to doctrine: from principle to principle; from profession to profession; and is unsettled in the principles of religion, cannot be fruitful: Therefore the apostle exhorts, Eph. iv. 14, 15. *That we henceforth be no more children, tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the slight of men, and cunning craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive: But speaking the truth in love, may grow up into*
him

him in all things which is the head, even Christ. And Heb. xiii. 9. *Be not carried about with strange doctrines; for it is a good thing that the heart be established with grace—*And thus you see what may be imported in *walking*.

Secondly, The *qualification* of this duty is, it is a *walking in CHRIST*. Here is a great word, and many things might be said upon it; but all that I offer shall be in two short words on it at the time. To walk *in Christ* is not to walk *in ourselves*, but *out of ourselves*. Now, there is a twofold self-denial; a self-denial in point of *sin*; that is, a *denying ungodliness and worldly lusts*: this the grace of God that brings salvation teaches effectually, as the law teaches preceptively. Again, there is a self-denial in point of *grace*. Now, there is a two-fold denial of grace, the one is in point of justification, and the other is in point of sanctification. Consider these two a little, in order to know what it is to walk in Christ.

1. There is a denial of grace in point of *justification*; a self-denial with respect to grace in point of subsisting with God in justification. I would ask you, How do you subsist in a justified state? Are you justified by faith in Christ without the works of the law? Doth your grace, or sanctification, justify you, or expiate your sin? Nay, that which brought you into the favour of God at first must keep you there still. You that are brought into the favour of God, how do you stand in favour with him? It is not because of your favoury venison, but your elder brother's cloaths; it is not your graces or best holiness, but the garment of Christ's righteousness that brings you, and keeps you in favour with God. Now, to walk in Christ in the matter of justification, or looking for acceptance with God, is to be denied to your graces in point of acceptance; but to let Christ have his proper room: put not grace in the room of Christ and his righteousness; be as holy as you can, but never a whit more justified are you thereby; grace hath its place in sanctification, and walking before God, but it must have no place here; for a man doth not subsist in a justified state by his graces, or holiness; hence though

though Paul could say, Rom. vii. 22. *I delight in the law of God, after the inward man*; but behold how denied he is to this, saying, verse 24. *O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of sin and death?* What then does he? *Thanks be to God, says he, through Christ; for there is no condemnation to them that are in Christ.* He sets not sanctification in the room of Christ's righteousness.

2. There is, in some sort, a denial of grace, even in respect of *sanctification*; that is imported in a walking in Christ thus; even because a believer doth not walk in Christ merely by the strength of habitual grace; nay, he cannot do it but by the operation and motion of the Spirit of Christ that cometh down from above: for, as we use to say, the ship does not go by its sails, but by the wind; the sails indeed take in the wind, but it is the wind that makes the ship to go: so, when a believer walks in spiritual obedience, either active or passive, in doing or suffering, it is owing to grace that comes down like auxiliaries, which makes him walk in him. This is what the apostle calls *grace sufficient for him*; *My grace shall be sufficient for thee*: and this makes a weak believer strong, in a moment, both for work and warfare. *My grace shall be sufficient for thee*; why, had not the apostle grace within him? Yea, but the scripture gives ground for this distinction; there is grace *in* a man, and grace *with* a man; grace *in* the believer, that is, habitual implanted grace; grace *with* the believer, that is, actual assisting grace, that comes and carries him on in his course, and by this means he walks in Christ, being denied to his own habitual grace, and resting on him for actual constant supply. — To walk in Christ in both these respects, is for a soul to say, *In the Lord only have I righteousness and strength*: *In the Lord only have I* RIGHTEOUSNESS, there is the denial of grace, in point of justification: *In the Lord only have I* STRENGTH, there is the denial of grace, in point of sanctification.



S E R M O N XXXVI.

COLOS. ii. 6.

As ye have received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk ye in him.

[The third Sermon on this text.]

BUT that I may a little more fully consider the *qualification* of this duty of walking *in Christ*, we may consider, 1. What it supposes. 2. What it excludes. 3. What it includes. 4. What it infers.

1st, What this walking in Christ *supposes*. These two things especially are supposed to a walking in Christ. 1. That Christ is the way. 2. That we have got in to that way.

1. It supposes that Christ is *the way*. To walk in Christ, says plainly that Christ is the way; and therefore Christ says himself, John xiv. 6. *I am the way, &c.* There was one other way to heaven before the covenant of works was broken, namely, perfect personal obedience; but now there is no other way to heaven but Christ, Acts iv. 12. *There is no name given under heaven, whereby to be saved, but the name of Christ.* What sort of a way Christ is, we may afterwards shew, in pursuing of this text; but here I shall only add, that whatever else be called the way, such as the commandments of the law, and holy obedience thereto; yet, take Christ out of that way, and behold it will never reach half way to heaven; take Christ out of the Bible, and you will find no way for a sinner there, but what will land him in hell. Christ is the *good old way*, the *new and living way*, and *the way of holiness* itself; for there is no holiness but what is contained in him, and derived from him: and hence some eminent divines explain that scripture of Christ himself, Isa. xxxv. 8. *An high way shall*

be there, and it shall be called the way of holiness. There is no holiness where there is no walking in Christ. Never believe the tongue that says the preaching of Christ is a discouragement of holiness; for to walk in him is the only way of holiness: it is a holy walk, for he is the holy way.—It supposes that Christ is the way.

2. Our walking in Christ supposes that we have *got in* to that way. We cannot walk in him unless we be in him. And therefore receiving Christ is here pre-supposed to a walking in him. By receiving Christ we get in to him; and then, and not till then are we in case to walk in him. The union of matter and form makes a body; the union of soul and body together makes a man; the union of a man and Christ together makes a Christian: and till then, empty is he of Christ, and of all true good works or spiritual walking. A man may bring forth the fruit of good works, morally good, and materially so, and may bring them forth as a tree upon his own root, upon old Adam's root; but he can never walk in Christ, or bring forth fruit in Christ, till he be in Christ; for what is fruit that grows upon a tree but the sap of the root concocted into fruit: so, what is walking in Christ, or working in him? it is just the sap of the Spirit of grace putting itself forth into the fruit of new obedience; and this supposes union and implantation into the root. Many err in this matter; they resolve to walk in the way of duty before ever they have received Christ, or got in to him; and by these means, they think they will get in to Christ and receive him: they walk so and so devoutly that they may receive Christ. Thus they invert the order of the text, and put the plough before the horse; for, receiving of Christ, must go before walking in him: yea, it is impossible there can be a walking in him, before there be a receiving of him. Walk as you will before you receive Christ, it is a walking on your own legs; and to think that these will bring you to Christ, is as if a branch, by bearing fruit upon its own tree, could be thereby transplanted upon another tree; no: it is not by bearing fruit upon its own tree, but it must be cut off from its own root, ere it can be ingrafted into, or bring forth fruit upon another: even so, it is not your bearing fruit on your own old stock,

stock, or doing many good works that will bring you to Christ; nay, you are mistaken; you must be cut off from your old stock, and from your own works, and ingrafted into Christ.—Thus, walking in him supposes union to him. Therefore,

2dly, What this walking in Christ *excludes*. It excludes sin and self; a sinful walk, and a selfish walk. So far as a man walks in Christ he cannot walk in sin, nor walk in himself.

1. It excludes a *sinful* walk, a walking in sin or in the flesh; for, they that are in Christ, they *walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit*, Rom. viii. 1. Though they have sin in them yet they do not walk in it, like the rest of the world; because so far as Christ comes in, sin goes out. Some speak of forsaking sin, in order to, and before coming to Christ; but never will you forsake sin evangelically, till once Christ come to you, and you come to him. When Christ comes in to the temple, he drives out all the buyers and sellers; and therefore, let him in, and he will make the house clean. His coming is like the coming of light; as the light comes in to the house, the darkness goes out; even so, as the Sun of righteousness shines in to the soul, the shadows of sin and darkness vanish.—When a man walks, he leaves something behind him, which he turns his back upon; so he that walketh in Christ, he turns his back upon his old master, the devil, saying, Wo is me that I have been so long led captive by him at his will!—He turns his back upon his old acquaintance, the world, saying, O vain world! I have seen something of the matchless glory of the Son of God, and therefore look upon all worldly glory as nothing, and less than nothing and vanity.—He turns his back upon his old lusts and idols, saying with Ephraim, *What have I any more to do with idols?* Fain would he be rid of sin; Lord, take vengeance on this lust and that lust; give it a dead stroke that it may never revive again.—He turns his back upon his old religion, that he may *serve the Lord in newness of Spirit, and not in the oldness of the latter*. He leaves his cradle-faith behind him, and gets a faith of God's operation: He leaves his old hope behind him, which had no founda-

dation but sand, and is begotten again to a new and lively hope: He leaves his old legal way of performing duty behind him, and learns a new obedience, influenced by new-covenant grace, and by the love of Christ constraining him. And therefore,

2. It excludes a *f. lfi/b* walk. This walking in Christ excludes a walking in self; for the more that a man walks in Christ, the more does he walk out of self: as Christ comes in, self goes out; when Christ is received, self is expelled. The self-righteous sinner is like an empty bottle filled with nothing but air; but pour wine into the bottle, and as the wine goes in, the air goes out: so, the soul is filled with nothing but airy speculations, and a light, vain esteem of himself; but let Christ in, let the wine of the Spirit be poured in to the soul, as that wine goes in, the air will go out. The selfish sinner is like an empty stomach, filled with nothing but wind; but if wholesome food be received and digested; then the wind is gradually dispelled: so here, the sinner is filled with the wind of pride and self; but if Christ, *the bread of life, and water of life*, be received and digested, then it dissipates the wind of pride: his self-estimation is turned to self-abhorrence; his self-justification is turned to self-condemnation; his self-love is turned to self-loathing; his self-dependance is turned to self-renunciation; his self-seeking is turned to self-searching, and self-examination, and to a seeking of God and his glory. Instead of serving himself, his desire is now to serve God as his only Master: instead of exalting himself, his desire is now to glorify God as his chief end: instead of pleasing himself, his desire is to please God, not to satisfy his justice, as a Judge, for that the Surety hath done, but to please his heart as a Father; he dares not venture on any thing that will displease such a kind Father: instead of resting in himself, his desire is to rest in the Lord, and enjoy him, saying, O to enjoy him in his grace, and in his glory! to enjoy him in this and that duty; in this and that ordinance; until I enjoy him fully in heaven?

Now, when a selfish walk is excluded, it excludes at the same time, a natural walk, a legal walk, and a pharisaical

pharisaical walk.—It excludes a *natural* walk, which being grounded only upon the light of nature amounts to no more but a natural righteousness.—It excludes a *legal* walk, which being grounded only upon the light of the law, and that as a covenant, makes but a legal imperfect righteousness.—It excludes an *hypocritical* walk, which being grounded only upon the external light of the gospel, makes only a pharisaical righteousness, where the man hath *the form of godliness, but denies the power of it.*—Many things here might be added as to what this walking in Christ doth exclude, which may afterward fall in upon the application. I come, therefore,

3dly, To consider what this walking in Christ doth *include*. Not to multiply particulars here either; there are two things more especially that it seems to include. Walking in Christ is, 1. A walking in a conformity to him. 2. In the improvement of him.

1. It is a walking in a *conformity to him*, and so to walk in Christ is to be *like him*. In heaven the saints shall be *like him*, for they shall see him as he is: Even so here, when we behold his glory, and are changed into the same image, then it is that we walk in him; even as the body walks where-ever the head walks; and where the head and the body walk, there the feet walk; all that is in the head walks. This then is a walking in him who is the glorious Head, when the members follow the Head, and walk in a conformity to him.—It is a walking in a conformity to his *nature*, being holy as he is holy, perfect as our heavenly Father is perfect, merciful as he is merciful, &c.—It is a walking in a conformity to his *way of walking*; 1 John ii. 6. *He that saith he abideth in him, ought to walk even as he also walked.* Did he walk in love to God and man? Did he walk in zeal, so as the zeal of God's house did eat him up? Did he walk in meekness, patience, humility, and activity, always going about doing good, never weary of well-doing? We are to walk as he thus walked.—It is a walking in a conformity to his *ends* that he set before him; his end was the glory of God, the advancement of his kingdom, the ruin of Satan's kingdom,

dom, and in all the praise of his rich and free grace; and surely we will walk in him, when we have these for our ends which were his ends.—It is a walking in a conformity to his *law*, which is a transcript of his communicable nature for our practice; he walked in a conformity to his own law, in all its holy, just, good, and merciful ways; and we will walk in him, when we walk in a gospel-conformity to the same.—It is a walking in a conformity to the *relations* that he comes under to us: and so it is a walking in him as our Redeemer, by price and power, which we do when we walk as these who *are not their own, but bought with a price, therefore glorifying the Lord in our souls and bodies which are his.*—It is a walking in him as our *Head*, by living as members of such a Head, and deriving spiritual virtue from him.—It is a walking in him as our *Father*, depending on him as children upon their father.—It is a walking in him as our *Judge, Lawgiver, and King*; and so a walking as these that are accountable to, and as we shall answer at the tribunal of this Judge; sitting at the feet, and receiving the law from the mouth of this Lawgiver; and yielding the tribute of praise, obedience, and subjection to this King.—In a word, it is a walking in conformity to the *privileges* we receive from him: Hath he *enlightened* us in the knowledge of himself? Then to walk in him, is to *walk as children of light*, and not as these that are in the darkness of ignorance.—Hath he *called* us effectually? Then to walk in him, is to *walk worthy of the vocation wherewith we are called.*—Hath he given us *grace*? Then to walk in him is to walk, not as graceless, but as gracious persons; not as these that are in a state of nature, but in a state of grace.—Hath he pardoned our sins, justified our persons, brought us into peace with himself? Then to walk in him, is to walk so as to *stand fast in the liberty wherewith he hath made us free.*—Hath he poured in the *promise* into our hearts? Then to walk in him, is to walk so as *having these promises, to cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of the Lord.*—Hath he made us *heirs* of glory? Then to walk in him, is to walk as candidates for heaven, as *pilgrims*
and

and strangers in the earth, and so having our conversation in heaven.

2. It is a walking *in the improvement of him*. To walk in Christ is to improve him by faith, as we receive him thereby. It is to improve and make use of him for light, life, strength, motion, acceptance, and all in him.—And so to walk in him, is to walk as these that have their *life* in him, and cannot live without him, no more than the body can live without the head; *Without me ye can do nothing*, John xv. 5.—To walk in him, is to walk as these that have their *light* in him, saying, *The Lord is my light*; and *though I walk in darkness, the Lord will be a light to me*.—To walk in him, is to walk as these that have their *strength* in him, saying, *Not that we are sufficient of ourselves to think any thing of ourselves, but our sufficiency is of God*; and, *I can do all things, through Christ strengthening me*; hence they are called to be *strong in the grace that is in Christ*. Art thou in Christ? Then the grace that is in him is forthcoming for thee: as the life that is in the heart is in the toe, the foot, the outermost member of the body; so is the believer's grace in Christ; and if the grace that is in Christ were not in the believer also in his measure, how could he be strong in the grace that is in Christ?—To walk in Christ is to walk as these that have their *acceptance* in him; *we are accepted in the Beloved*; not merely for his sake, but in him as our Head; who having fulfilled the law, and satisfied the justice of God, his doing is ours, because we are in him: the Head having done it, the body is reputed as having done it; and so we are accepted in him.—To walk in Christ, is to walk as these that have their *motion* in him: we cannot move spiritually, but by the Spirit of Christ; and indeed if our life and strength be in him, our motion must be in him also.—To walk in Christ, is to walk as these that have their *fulnes* in him; their wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, and redemption; and are complete in him by virtue of their union to him.—You see what a vast field is here, and how much lies in this walking in Christ. It is an improvement of him for all, as having our all in him.

And yet further, this walking in Christ imports such an improvement of Christ by faith, as I told you before
this

this walking did import. Walking, I said, did import these three things especially, namely, practice, progress, and permanency: so here, this walking in Christ imports a practical improvement of Christ; a progressive improvement of him; and a permanent improvement of him.

(1.) A *practical* improvement of Christ; that is, not only a receiving of Christ, and then suffering it to ly sleeping, as it were, in the dull habit; but it implies faith in practical actings and vigorous exercise of it, and laying faster and faster held upon him; and reducing your faith into practice, that you may *adorn the doctrine of God, our Saviour, in all things.*

(2.) A *progressive* improvement of Christ; a *following on to know the Lord.* It is not a standing still, a sitting down, or going back, but a walking in Christ, a going forward; *Forgetting the things that are behind and reaching forth to the things that are before, and pressing towards the mark for the prize of the high call of God,* Phil. iii. 13. The man that walks in Christ can never get enough of him.

(3.) It is a *permanent* improvement of Christ. A man that takes a step or two forward, and then sits down again, he cannot be said to walk: so, some take a start of devotion, a fit of zeal and concern for religion, perhaps about a communion, but it dies out. These cannot be said to walk in Christ; for walking in him is a constant, permanent, persevering, and continued improvement of him. It is true, this constant progress is not always discernable; saints themselves may have their winter-withering, as well as their summer-fruit: and we are not to judge of the growth of a tree by looking to it this day from what it was yesterday; for there may be no sensible alteration; but stay till the spring come, and then you will discern the flourish and the fruit; yea, let some years pass, and then you may see some sensible growth of the whole tree: so, the children of God are not always to judge of their continued growth, by comparing what they are this day, with what they were the former day; or what they are this month, with what they were the former month, lest there be no discernable

ble advance; but let them (at least, if they be of any standing in Christ) judge by what they are now, from what they were at their first ingraftment into Christ, and they will find that they have attained more knowledge of Christ than at first, more experience of his favour, more outlettings of his grace than they understood before; more insight into the gospel, more strokes that their corruptions have got, and so more fruit and growth.

This improvement of Christ is permanent; it is a walking in Christ, and abiding in him; John xv. 5. *He that abideth in me, and I in him; the same bringeth forth much fruit; for without me, [OR, SEPARATE FROM ME,] ye can do nothing.* And ver. 6. *If a man abide not in me, he is cast forth as a branch, and is withered; and men gather them, and they are cast into the fire, and are burnt.* To receive Christ, is to enter upon the bridge; and to walk in him, is to keep the bridge; for a downfall on either side is dreadful. Some fall down, as it were, on the right side of the bridge, as hypocrites and self-righteous persons; some on the left side of the bridge, as these that give themselves over to profane practices. There is a few that keep the bridge, and these are true believers and receivers of Christ; or, if they happen to fall, they are like a man that falls half down, as it were, and is kept up by a chain fastened to his body; he may get a hurt by the fall, and put to a terrible fright by it, lest he drown and perish; but the chain pulls him up again: even so, the believer, he is tied, as it were, to the bridge by a chain, a double chain, namely, the spirit of faith dwelling in him, and the grace of faith wrought in him; for, *He that is joined to the Lord is one spirit*; and of this faith Christ hath said, *I have prayed for thee, that thy faith fail not*: yea, there is the chain of a sure promise, the chain of divine faithfulness, the chain of an everlasting righteousness. However, if he do not keep the chain, he may fall so as to be put in fear of perishing in the gulf of everlasting wrath; and he may hing at the chain, as it were, betwixt hope and despair: he may hurt his peace and comfort by his unwatchfulness; and God may *visit his iniquity with the rod*, and hing him over the gulf, till the chain pull him up again. It is there-

fore dreadful in any case not to keep the bridge. I come now to consider,

4thly, What this walking in Christ doth *infer*. It infers and brings along with it especially two things, namely, a walking with his Father, and a walking in his Spirit.

1. A walking *with his Father*. *Enoch walked with God. Walk humbly with thy God*. And what is it to walk with God, but to walk in communion with him, and comfortable enjoyment of him?—In *communion* with him; in a constant contemplation of him, *sanctifying the Lord in our hearts*; in a constant affection to him, *having his love shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost*; and in a constant dependance on him, receiving our all from him by faith, and returning our all to him in duty and gratitude.—It is a walking in the comfortable *enjoyment* of him, as all our portion and happiness, all our salvation, and all our desire; renouncing all things in heaven and earth, as our portion, but a God in Christ alone: and indeed to enjoy God, is to enjoy all, and more than words can express, or thought conceive; it is to enjoy *BEING* itself, in whose nature is ingrossed all possible perfections.

2. It infers a walking *in his Spirit*; Gal. v. 16. *Walk in the Spirit, and ye shall not fulfil the lusts of the flesh*. And to walk in the Spirit is, in short, to walk in the *light* of the Spirit, as a *Spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of Christ*.—It is to walk in the *love* of the Spirit, as a Spirit of love in the soul, working love towards God and man.—It is to walk in the *liberty* of the Spirit, with enlarged hearts towards God, and the things of God.—In the *comforts* of the Spirit, Acts ix. 31.—In the *strength* and *power* of the Spirit, Rom. viii. 2.—And in all the *graces* and *fruits* of the Spirit, Gal. v. 22, 23.



S E R M O N XXXVII.

COLOS. ii. 6.

As ye have received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk ye in him.

[The fourth Sermon on this text.]

THERE are two things which the scriptures principally teach (as you may all know by your Catechism) *viz.* ‘What we are to believe concerning God, and what duty God requires of man.’ *Faith* and *practice* are the two great things in it; what we are to believe, and what we are to do. This text then is a short compend of the whole scripture; for it contains all that concerns first our faith, and next our practice: yea, it not only teaches *what* we are to believe, and *what* we are to do, or practice, but also *how* we are to believe, and *how* we are to practice. How are we to *believe*? Even by *receiving Christ Jesus the Lord*; for *believing* and *receiving* is the same thing, John i. 12. *But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name.* And so to believe aright is to receive Christ, and to receive him aright is to receive him as a Jesus, and as a Lord; as a Jesus, that we may be saved by the price of his blood; and as a Lord, that we may be governed by the power of his Spirit.—Again, how are we to *practice*? Even by *walking in him*; and walking in him *as we have received him.* Now, as to the *rule* of the believer’s walk, it lies most emphatical here in the *AS* and the *SO* in the text; *AS ye have received, SO walk*: which, in the general, imports, that a gospel-walk is a walking by faith; for, *AS we receive Christ Jesus the Lord* by faith, *so we are to walk in him*, namely, by faith. There can be no right walking, or working, but by faith; this is the spring of the spiritual life; *The just shall live by faith,*

Rom. i. 17. Hab. vii. 4. Gal. iii. 11. Heb. x. 38. And this walk is expressly called a *walking by faith*, 2 Cor. v. 7. *We walk by FAITH, and not by sight. As ye have received Christ, so walk in him*: Did you receive him by faith? So walk in him by a continual receiving of him, and drawing virtue from him to enable you to hold on your way. But this leads us to the next general head of the method.

III. The *third* general head of the method is, To speak of the *rule* of the believer's duty, and the *proportion* it should bear to his reception of Christ, namely, That he is to *walk in Christ as he hath received him*.

More particularly, seeing the great emphasis of the text lies in the *AS* and *SO*, importing, that the walk is to be suitable to the reception, we would enquire what *proportion* and *suitableness* this walk should have to the receiving of Christ: And here consider, 1. The proportion and suitableness of this walk to the *act* of receiving, or the *manner* wherein we receive Christ. 2. The proportion and suitableness thereof to the *object* received, or to the capacities wherein we received Christ, namely, as he is *Christ Jesus the Lord*.

First, The proportion or suitableness of this walk to the *act* of receiving; or the *manner* wherein we received him. Here then I must address the believer, who only is capable of this work, because he only hath received Christ, and must enquire at him how he hath received Christ, that he may be directed how to walk in him.

1. Then, Did you receive Christ *obedientially* and *warrantably*, upon the warrant of the call and command of God, requiring you to come to him, and receive him? Did you not see the authority of God interposed, saying, *This is his commandment that ye believe in the name of his Son*? And to this authority you was made to stoop in a day of power. Why then, as ye have received Christ *obedientially*, so walk ye in him, namely, obedientially; from a regard to the sovereign will and authority of a God in Christ. And this is the will of God in Christ concerning you, even that you receive the law from Christ's

Christ's mouth, and out of his hand; *This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well-pleas'd, hear ye him.*

2. Did you receive Christ *humbly* and *meekly*? Was your soul humbled to the dust when you received him? Did you ly prostrate before him, under a sence of your own emptiness, weakness, and wickedness? Did you trample upon yourself as a beast, a dog, a devil, a lump of hell, having *no confidence in the flesh*? Well, as ye have received him *humbly*, so walk in him; *Walk humbly with thy God*, Micah vi. 8. Walk in a humble dependence upon him, receiving your all from him by faith, and returning your all to him in duty and gratitude.

3. Did you receive him *deliberately* and *resolutely*, with due deliberation, judgment, and consideration, resolving to take your hazard with him, to part with all for him, and to follow him whithersoever he goes, to welcome his cross and his crown? Why then, so walk ye in him, namely, with deliberation; weighing the advantages in one scale, and the disadvantages in another, of walking in him or not. You will meet with nothing in this way, but what you was made to weigh, if you rightly received him. Even though losses, and crosses, and martyrdom should be in the scale where Christ was; and the world, and all the profits, pleasures, and preferments of it, in the other scale; yet you was made to choose Christ. Why then, so walk in him, by evidencing it in your life, that whatever reproaches you suffer for his name, or whatever trials you may suffer, you are at a point. Having deliberately received, deliberately walk.

4. Did you receive Christ *uprightly*, with the utmost integrity, sincerity, and exactness? Why then, so walk ye in him, evidencing in your life the same uprightness and integrity: *He that walketh uprightly walketh surely*, saith Solomon: *See then that ye walk circumspectly*, saith the apostle, Eph. v. 15. the word is *ἀκριβῶς*, that is, *exactly, accurately, and precisely*. Some are censured as if they were too precise in their religion; but it is the command of God, that we be as exact and upright in the way of walking in Christ, as in the act of believing in him, and receiving of him.

5. Did you receive Christ *cordially, chearfully, and lovingly*? Did you receive him with the heart, and with a thousand good-wills? And, oh? how sweet was he to you in the day that God revealed him in you, and that you was made to strike hands with him. Then *so walk ye in him*: that is, endeavour, through grace, to keep up that frame of heart that you had in closing with him, and to bring up your conversation to the way and manner in which ye received him, by walking in him cordially and chearfully; having the *joy of the Lord for your strength*; rejoicing in Christ Jesus: for, *he meeteth him that rejoiceth and worketh righteousness*; and entertaining a sense of his love which you had in the day of believing, so as his love may constrain you to obedience; and you may *fear the Lord and his goodness*. In the day of believing, was you not more elevated, and more chearful, than ever the bird that sat upon the brier? Was you not filled with *joy unspeakable and full of glory*? Away then with sinful discouragement in your walk, saying, *If by art thou cast down, O my soul? why art thou disquieted within me? Hope in God, for I shall yet praise him, who is the health of my countenance, and my God.* Psalm xliii. 5.

6. Did you not receive him *spiritually*; that is, in the strength, and under the conduct of his own Spirit, without whose influence and assistance you could do nothing? Then, *so walk ye in him* spiritually, depending on the grace, strength, conduct, and influence of his Spirit, for strengthening you both for your work and warfare; and so, with the true circumcision, worshipping God in the Spirit, praying in the Holy Ghost, and walking in the Spirit of Christ. The Spirit is in every believer according to his measure; and when the believer is in the Spirit, then it is well with him; Rev. i. 10. *I was in the Spirit on the Lord's day.* The man that walketh in Christ, as he hath received him, walketh not carnally but spiritually, just as he received him; and hence he cries for the Spirit, saying, *Lord, hold me with thy free Spirit*; and *take not thy Holy Spirit from me: Thy Spirit is good, lead me to the land of uprightness.*

7. Did you not receive Christ *speedily*? Yea, none can tell how speedily the poor soul that saw himself ready to drop into hell doth flee to Christ in a day of power. Oh! with what eagerness, and earnestness doth the convinced sinner flighter after him? and how actively he runneth in to him? Well, did you receive him speedily and actively? *So walk ye in him*, by endeavouring, through grace, to be speedy in your motion, ready and active in his service. This is to have a walk suitable to the manner of your receiving of Christ. To be lazy and unactive doth not answer the right reception; but to *run in the way of his commandments*, and to *run without wearying*, this is suitable; for in a day of believing, the soul is far from wearying, nay, then he flies on the wings of faith and love.

8. Did you not receive him *fiducially* and *confidently*, having *boldness to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus*, and drawing near with *full assurance of faith*, and with some measure of application, appropriation, and persuasion? Whatever unbelieving diffidence took place, yet according to the measure of faith, such was the measure of holy confidence, trust, and persuasion, founded upon the truth and veracity of God in the promise. Well then, *so walk ye in him*, whatever opposition be in the way; saying, with Job, *Though he slay me, yet will I trust in him*. Cast not away your confidence, saith the apostle to the Hebrews, *which hath great recompence of reward*, chap. x. 35.; and *hold fast the confidence*, chap. iii. 6.; for, *we are made partakers of Christ, if we hold fast the beginning of our confidence stedfast unto the end*, ver. 14.

9. Did you not receive Christ *wholly* and *undividedly*, in all his three offices, and in all the four excellencies that the apostle puts together, 1 Cor. i. 30. for *wisdom*, *righteousness*, *sanctification*, and *redemption*? Did you receive him for WISDOM, to make you *light in the Lord*? for RIGHTEOUSNESS, to make you *accepted in the Beloved*? for SANCTIFICATION, to make you *holy*? and for REDEMPTION, to make you *happy*? Why then, *so walk ye in him*. Ye cannot walk *wisely*, if ye do not improve
him

him for your wisdom; ye cannot walk *acceptably*, unless ye improve him for righteoufness; nor *holily*, unless ye improve him for sanctification; nor *safely*, unless ye improve him for your complete redemption.

10. Did you not receive Christ *orderly* and *evangelically*, or in the gospel order, namely, as the *Lord your righteoufness and strength*; first, to be your *righteoufness* for your *justification*; and then to be your *strength* for *sanctification*? The legal order is just the reverse of this; the man would do by his own strength, and then be justified by his own doing. But true faith receives Christ in the gospel order; that is, first to be justified by his righteoufness; and then sanctified by his grace and strength; knowing that his performances cannot be accepted, nor acceptable service, until his person be *accepted in the Beloved*. Now, have you received Christ orderly, then walk in him orderly; for, *To him that ordereth his conversation aright, will I shew the salvation of God*, Psal. 1. 25. And walk in him evangelically as ye have received him: that is, from a gospel-principle; the love of Christ contraining to a gospel-end, *the glory of a God in Christ*; and in a gospel-manner, going on in *the strength of the Lord, making mention of his righteoufness, and his only*.

In a word, Did you not receive him *irreversibly*, so as never to part with him? Why then, *so walk ye in him*, saying, as Ruth to Naomi, *Intreat me not to leave thee, or to return from following after thee; for, whither thou goest, I will go; and where thou lodgest, I will lodge; thy people shall be my people; and thy God my God: Nothing shall part thee and me*. Ruth i. 16, 17.—And thus we see the *proportion* that this walk should bear to the receiving of Christ, with respect to the manner of receiving him.

Secondly, The proportion or suitableness of this walk to the *object* received, or, to the *capacity* wherein we receive him, comes next to be spoke to. Here we may consider, 1. The three generals mentioned in the text, CHRIST, JESUS, the LORD. 2. The manifold particulars that are comprehended under, and deduceable from these; and in all these we may view the proportion that our walk should bear to our faith objectively considered.

I/z, Notice the three generals in the text holding forth the object of faith, CHRIST, JESUS, the LORD. And,

1. Have you received him as the CHRIST, the Anointed of the Father? *so walk ye in him*; even in him as the Christ. Now, as I observed in the former part of the doctrinal heads, Christ is to be considered both doctrinally and personally.

Consider Christ *doctrinally*; that is, the doctrine of Christ, which you, believer, have received, while you received Christ in his word and in the doctrine of the gospel. As ye have received, or believed the doctrine of Christ, or the truth of the gospel, *so walk ye in it*. If you consider the text, with the context, both preceding and following, you will see that Christ, doctrinally considered, is particularly here intended, not excluding, but including Christ personally considered. And indeed none can receive Christ, and reject his doctrine: If a man profess to take Christ, and yet neglect the gospel, he is a liar; for he that will have the treasure, must buy the field where the treasure is, Mat. xiii. 44. Now, did you receive Christ *doctrinally*, by receiving the truth as it is in Christ? then *so walk ye in him*; that is, walk in the truth; 2 John ver. 4. *I rejoiced that I found thy children walking in truth. I am the way and the truth*, says Christ: If we walk in this way we must walk in the truth. And this intimates to us,

(1.) That they cannot be walking in Christ, who are not *zealous for truth, and against error*; zealous for Christ, the Truth, in opposition to all error; and so to walk in Christ, is to *contend for the faith once delivered to the saints*; for, if we have received the truth, as it is in Christ, then to walk in him, as we have received him, is to maintain his truth, and persevere in the true doctrine of the gospel, in opposition to all error on the right and left hand, *not holding the head*, Col. ii. 19. If a man be careless whether truth sink or swim, he is not one who walks in Christ, or holds the head. Some instead of holding by the head, they hold by the foot; it is enough to them, that such a good man, or such a learned man says so and so, concerning this or that truth: and so they that let the head go, and hold by the foot,

not regarding the truth as it is in Christ, but the truth as it is delivered by such a man, whom they esteem, and such another man, that hath this and that good character. Why, Sirs, if ye have received Christ as the Truth, then ye are to walk in him as the Truth; as the head and the heart of the Truth, and not to hang your faith on the belt of any man or angel; for, *If we, or an angel from heaven, preach another gospel, let him be accursed.* Again,

(2.) It intimates to us, that they cannot be walking in Christ, who are not *zealous against all abolished ceremonies*; for Christ is the Truth, in opposition to types and ceremonies: these were *shadows of things to come, but the body is Christ*, ver. 17,—23. The false apostles joined the doctrines of Christ with the ceremonies of Moses; but the Colossians are exhorted, that as they have received Christ, the substance of all the shadows and ceremonies, so they should walk in him, not in Moses; *The law came by Moses, but grace and truth came by Jesus Christ*: And if they that profess to receive Christ, as the substance and body of all the ceremonies, and yet do walk in conformity to the Mosaic ceremonies that were instituted of God, do not at all walk suitably to their profession of receiving Christ; much more they that profess to receive Christ, and yet conform themselves to ceremonies that were never instituted of God at all, but are the mere inventions of men; such as, the abjured ceremonies of the church of Rome and England. Though ceremonial service and superstitious worship had never been abjured, by solemn National Covenant, as it was; yet we stand obliged, by the word of God, to renounce and reject the same; because we are obliged to *walk in Christ*, and to walk in him as we *have received him*: and if we received him aright, we have received him *doctrinally* as he is the Truth; the Truth, in opposition to error; and the Truth, in opposition to shadows and ceremonies. Again,

Consider Christ *personally*, as he is the Anointed of the Father. Now, believer, have you received Christ as the Anointed of God? that is, not only have you been made to believe that he is sealed and authorized of the
Father

Father to his mediatorial work, and qualified for it of the Father by the supereminent unction of the Holy Ghost: but also, have you, by faith, gone in to him, and closed with him as such, and so are made a partaker of the same anointing of the Holy Ghost, by virtue of union to Christ; for, *He that is joined to the Lord, is one spirit?* Why then, so walk ye in him; that being in him, you may abide in him by a lively faith; John xv. 5. *be rooted and built up in him, and established in the faith,* ver. 7th of this chapter where the text lies, *Even in Christ in whom ye are builded together, for an habitation of God, through the Spirit,* Eph. ii. 22.—Have ye received him as the Christ, the Anointed of God? Then so walk in him, by improving him and employing him still to anoint you with the same anointing.—Have ye received him as the Christ, the Authorized of the Father? Then so walk in him, by employing him as one that hath a warrant and authority to save, to heal, and help you in time of need.

2. Have you received him as a JESUS, a Saviour? This is another title he hath in the text; as one that saves from the *guilt of sin, the wrath of God, the curse of the law,* and from *all things from which ye could never be justified by the law of Moses.* Why then, *so walk ye in him;* even in him as a Jesus, in which capacity ye have received him. Be daily looking to him for daily salvation; and daily flying in to his saving arms, and taking shelter under the shadow of his blood and righteousness; and let your walk and conversation before God and the world, evidence that you have received him as a Jesus, a Saviour.

(1.) Have you received him as a Jesus? so walk in him *before God,* by resting on him for complete salvation; and rejoicing in him as God's Salvation, as old Simeon called him; *Now mine eyes have seen thy salvation.* Look not for any salvation you need from God, by any other means, but only in and through this Jesus; for the excellencies and perfections of God do all stand against you and your salvation by any other way: but in this Jesus he can save you to the honour of all his truth, and the praise of all his other perfections; *I am*

the way, says Christ, *no man cometh to the Father but by me*: and to walk in this way, as ye have received him, is just, having received him to be the way to the Father, to be still coming nearer and nearer to God in this way, till salvation be complete, and till you come to *the end of your faith, the salvation of your soul.*

(2.) As ye have received him as a Jesus, so walk in him *before the world*, by giving evidence in your conversation that this Jesus hath *saved you, and called you with a holy calling*; and by setting him forth, as you can, to all that are about you, that he is an excellent Saviour, *the chief among ten thousands*: that he is an able Saviour, *mighty to save*: and that he is a complete Saviour, a perfect Jesus. Tell your children, families, friends, and all that you can have regular access to do good unto, that religion is no fancy; but that *which you have heard and seen, and handled, of the word of life, declare unto them*, that they may have fellowship with you, if they hear; that you have seen a glory in Christ that they never saw; and felt a sweetness that they never felt, a *joy unspeakable, and a peace that passed all understanding*, which they are strangers unto: it may stir them up to say, as it is, *Zech. viii. 23. We will go with you, for we have heard that God is with you.* Sirs, a servant will commend his master that may be little worthy of commendation; and will not you commend a Jesus who have received him as such, and walk in his name? *Micah iv. 5. For all people will walk every one in the name of his god, and we will walk in the name of the Lord our God for ever and ever.* Again,

3. Have you received him as a LORD? This is another letter of his name in the text; and these three letters of his name, Christ, Jesus, the Lord, point him out beyond all other names in the world. Have you, I say, received him as a LORD? Then walk in him as a Lord, otherwise you walk not in him as you have received him. The true believer doth not only receive Christ as a Jesus, and Saviour; but also as a Lord, and Governor. Many would divide betwixt his salvation and his dominion; they would have Christ as a Saviour, to save them from wrath; but not as a Lord, to destroy their

their lusts and sin: but the true receiver of Christ is as weary of the load of corruption, as he is weary of the load of condemnation; and therefore not only being weary of condemnation, would he have Christ as a Saviour, but being weary of corruption he would have Christ as a Lord: and indeed when the heart would have water as well as blood, then it is in a right temperature? when the man would have water to purify the heart, as well as blood to pacify the conscience, this argues honest receiving; for Christ comes by *water* and *blood*, 1 John v. 6. He comes not only to justify, but also to sanctify; he comes not only as a Jesus, to save by price; but also as a Lord, to save by power.

Now, have you received Christ in the capacity of a Lord? Then so walk in him as he is a Lord, and as ye have received him. The rest of the world give evidence that they never received him as a Lord, by their practically saying, that they *will not have this man to reign over them*: but know, man, that he will never be a Jesus to save you, if he be not also a Lord to conquer you, and reign over you; and you can never receive him as a Jesus, and reject him as a Lord, without being rejected of him in both these capacities; for he will not be a Jesus where he is not a Lord. But you, believers, who have received Christ as a Lord, are you walking in him as these that have thus received him, and giving evidence that ye have received him as a Lord, before *God* and the *world*? Surely, if it be so, it will some way appear by the language of your *hearts*, and the language of your *lives*. The language of your hearts will be, *O Lord, other lords have had dominion over me; but now by thee only will I make mention of thy name*: Oh! may Christ be the Lord of my heart, and of all the thoughts of my heart, so as they may be captives to the Son of God; and of all the affections of my heart, so as they may terminate upon him alone; and of all the desires of my heart, so as that they may go out after him. Why, the rest of the world shew they never received him as a Lord, because the devil, the world, and the flesh, have the whole of their hearts, their thoughts, affections, and desires, being wholly taken up with vanishing

nothing worldly lusts, idols, and trifles. But though the world may have much of a believer's heart sometimes, yet it hath but the white of the egg, as it were, Christ hath the yoke of the heart of that man; his top and superlative thoughts and desires, because he hath taken Christ for the Lord of his heart.—Again, if you have received Christ as a Lord, then you will so desire to walk in him, by saying, O let him be the Lord of my *tongue!* while others are saying, *Our tongues are our own, who is Lord over us?* and so loosing their tongues against heaven, by cursing, swearing, railing, reproaching: but, O say, the man that hath received Christ the Lord, May Christ be the Lord of my tongue, and may it be occupied in his service, in praying, praising, and edifying one another upon all occasions, Sabbath and working-days. Many by their carnal discourse and conversation, and by their evil and unprofitable communication, give evidence that it is not Christ, but the devil, that is lord of their tongues.—Again, if you have received Christ as a Lord, then you will so desire to walk in him as to make him Lord of your *time*, so as not to squander it away with idle company, idle visits, idle diversions; as if it were good for nothing but to be cast away upon any trifle; but you will desire and endeavour to *walk circumspectly, not as fools, but as wise, redeeming the time.* Many show that Christ is not their Lord, by living as if they were lords of their own time and talents, which yet are but lent of the Lord, who says, *Occupy till I come.*—If you have received him as a Lord, then so to walk in him, is to make him Lord of your *life*, so as to live to him; the Lord of your souls and bodies, so as to glorify him in your souls and bodies which are his. Others live as if they were lords of their own life, lords of their own souls, and might cast them away at random; and lords of their own bodies, and might defile them with drunkennets and whoredom as they please; an evidence that Christ is not their Lord.—If you have received him as a Lord, then so to walk in him, is to make him Lord of your *consciences*, and the Lord of your *light*, so as not to enslave your light and conscience to any man on earth, any devil in hell, or any idol in the world. Many give evidence

evidence that Christ is not their Lord, by crossing their light and consciences for a trifle; whereas if Christ were the Lord of their light and consciences, they would die in his cause rather than put out his candle which he hath kindled in their breast.—Again, if you have received him as a Lord, you will so walk in him as to make him the Lord of your *wills*, he having made you willing in the day of power: whatever remaining enmity or rebellion of will take place, yet your habitual desire will be to have your will in subjection to his will, whether preceptive or providential, without fighting against his precept, or fretting against his providence; at least every fighting and fretting thought will be matter of exercise to you, while your soul's desire will be to have a due subjection to his precept, and submission to his providence. The rest of the world give evidence that Christ is not their Lord, because they are such as carry as if they were lords of their own wills; their wills were never subdued.—Again, if Christ be received as a Lord, you will so walk in him as to make him the Lord of your *comforts* and *enjoyments* in a world, so as to bless him when he gives or takes, saying, *It is the Lord that giveth, the Lord that taketh, blessed be the name of the Lord.* Take worldly comforts away from a man that never took Christ for his Lord, he will cry, *O ye have taken away my gods, and what have I more?* But the believer will say, even with respect to spiritual, as well as outward comforts, *It is the Lord, let him do what seemeth good to him;* If he himself be my Lord, let him dispose of me and mine as he will.—If you have received Christ as your Lord, then so walk in him as to make him Lord of your *graces*, who gives grace, and the exercise of it, as he pleases; and so your desire will be to be strong, not in yourselves, or your own grace, but *strong in the grace that is in Christ*, saying, if you want any grace in exercise, O! he is the Prince exalted by the right hand of God, to give it, and therefore to him will I look for it; or if you have any grace, O! it is not of me, it is *by grace I am what I am.*—You will own him also as the Lord of your *duties*, and the Lord of *ordinances*, that only can put a blessing in them for your good;

good; and as the Lord your righteousness, in whom alone you can have acceptance; and the Lord your strength, from whom alone you can have assistance: they that perform all their duties in their natural strength, and so think to have acceptance of God, and favour with him upon their doing so, they both put themselves in the room of the Lord their strength, and their duties in the room of the Lord their righteousness.—In a word, if you have received Christ as the Lord, you will walk in him by making him the Lord of your *faith*. The false apostles made Moses the lord of their faith and obedience equal with Christ; and therefore they joined the Mosaical ceremonies with the doctrine of Christ; but the Colossians had received Christ Jesus the Lord, and so they are called to walk in him as they had received him. Some make the church Lord of their faith; they believe as the church believes, or as this or that man believes, which shews that Christ is not their Lord. Some make the devil the Lord of their faith, they believe the devil rather than the God of truth, and the devil, the Father of lies, learns them to believe a lie: see 2 Thess. ii. 11. 12. Some make their reason the lord of their faith, they believe no more than their carnal reason can digest. But the true believer makes Christ the Lord of his faith; and the veracity of Christ the ground of it, and the doctrine of Christ the rule of it: It is true, the devil, and the believer's remaining unbelief, wage war against his faith, and seek to be lords of his faith; and it is a shame that the believer, in the day of battle, should yield to any other lord, and let his faith, hope, and confidence fall to the ground: It is a marvellous fault in believers to call the love of God, and the truth of God in question upon every occasion by unbelief. Faith is the believer's shield, and hope his helmet, Eph. vi. 16. Now, would they not be very foolish who would wear their shield and helmet when there is no war nor stir; and as soon as ever they see an adversary coming, or a battle beginning, then to cast away their shield and helmet, and to do so usually? Why, even so it is with many, perhaps, true believers; they will talk of their faith and hope in a time of prosperity

prosperity and ease, when all is in peace, and no seeming war from heaven or hell; then they wear their shield and helmet: but when war comes, when affliction comes, and temptation comes, then they childishly cast away both their faith and hope, both their shield and helmet; and till their sense and reason be satisfied, they will not be persuaded. Oh! how dishonouring is this to the Lord, whom ye have taken to be the Lord of your faith, the Captain of your salvation. To walk in Christ as ye have received him for a Lord, is to make him the Lord of your faith, in spite of the devil and the world, who seek to lord it over you and your faith.—Finally, if you have received him as your Lord, you will so walk in him, as to make him the Lord of your *obedience*. Others by obeying the devil, by obeying their lusts and idols, and by obeying the sinful commandments of men, shew that Christ is not the Lord of their obedience. But, believer, if you walk in Christ, as you have received him, you give evidence that he is the Lord whom you obey and serve; saying, with Joshua, *As for me and my house, we will serve the Lord*. And then, let it be the language of your life and conversation before the world, that Christ is your Lord. If you would judge of yourselves that Christ is your Lord, it is even to be tried by your subjection to him, and his subduing of sin in you. The higher the Sun of righteousness is risen, the shorter will the shadows of your sin and corruption be. If the world judge of your receiving of Christ, as a Lord, and of your faith, they will judge it by your walk and conversation, and by your works, as I said before, upon the second head.

2dly, I come, as I proposed, to observe all the *manifest particulars* comprehended under, and deduceable from, these generals in the text; and in all these we may further view the proportion that our walk should bear to our faith *objectively* considered. Now, these generals in the text comprehend all the particular capacities wherein he is held forth in the gospel; and to name all these, at present, were impracticable: we offer but some of them for instances, and yet shall endeavour, through grace, not altogether to scrimp or scroof over

the matter, that we may hold forth this Lord Jesus Christ as a full Saviour, answering all the cases that any poor sinner can be brought into.

Now, you know, that Christ is to be received *as he is offered in the gospel*, according to your Catechism, which says, "That faith in Jesus Christ, is a receiving and resting upon him alone for salvation, as he is offered in the gospel:" The *receiving* relates to an *offering*; and he is to be received *as he is offered*, and then walked in *as he is received*. The question then is, *How is he offered in the gospel, or in what capacity*, that we may know further how he is to be received, that so being thus received, he may be thus walked in? Well, his being offered as a CHRIST, a JESUS, a LORD, as I have shewed already, comprehends these following particulars; and while we are telling you in what capacity Christ is offered, O look to the Lord to give you grace to receive him as he is offered; that having received him in these capacities, you may walk in him.

1. Christ Jesus the Lord is offered in the gospel in the capacity of a *Prophet* and *Teacher*, that being thus received ye may so walk in him. Is there any poor, blind, ignorant souls here, that know nothing of God, or Christ, or the covenant of grace? Behold, Christ is offered to you in the capacity of a Prophet that hath *compassion on the ignorant*, saying, *Learn of me, for I am meek and lowly in heart*, Matth. xi. 29. Never will you learn till you be bound and entered to Christ; for, *Who teacheth like him?* Job xxxvi. 22. Ministers may preach, but they cannot give you a capacity to learn; but Christ can give you a heart to know, as well as an ear to hear; for he gives eyes to the blind, ears to the deaf, and understanding to the simple. What is the reason that there is so much preaching, and so little spiritual profiting, and spiritual life? It is even because Christ, the great Prophet, is so little with us, 2 Kings iv. 31. *There was neither voice nor hearing by the prophet's staff, until the prophet came and stretched himself upon the dead child: even so it is here, the staff of a preached word does not the business, till the great Prophet come.* Now, have you entered yourselves to be
his

his scholars? Have you received him as a Prophet? Then, so walk in him by daily improvement of him in that capacity, to enlighten your understanding, saying, *Lord, I have heard by the hearing of the ear, but little have mine eyes seen of thee*: I have been long in Christ's school, but made little proficiency: O come and teach me to profit! let my eyes be opened, that, in the ordinances of thy institution, I may see the glory of God, the vileness of sin, the beauty of Christ, and the excellency of his righteousness.—Thus having received him as a Prophet, so walk ye in him, by coming always for more and more instruction from him.

2. Christ Jesus the Lord is offered in the gospel in the capacity of a *Priest*, that being thus received ye may so walk in him. How sweet is this offer of Christ to all poor things that are wrestling with the guilt of sin, and the debt they owe to the justice of God! for it is only in Christ that God is well pleased, even in him *whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in his blood, to declare his righteousness, that he might be just, and the justifier of them that believe in Jesus*. They that believe in Jesus, the propitiation, have gotten all their debt paid; and God's honesty and fidelity is such, that he will never crave the debt over again. Christ is offered as a Priest for reconciliation, and a Priest for intercession. They that take hold of Christ as a Priest, they have nothing ado in heaven but they are sure to have it done; for, *he makes continual intercession for us*. Are you so vexed with temptations that you cannot get a composed thought in duty? Here is refreshment from the presence of the Lord, even a Friend in heaven, who never gives over to make intercession.—Now, have you received Christ as a Priest? Then, so walk in him, by daily improving him, his satisfaction and intercession, as the ground of your peace with God, pardon of sin, and acceptance in every performance.

3. Christ Jesus the Lord is offered in the gospel in the capacity of a *King* and a *Captain*, that being thus received, ye may so walk in him. Behold! he is held forth as a King, to subdue, by his power; to conquer,

by his grace; and defend, by his providence, from all temptations without, and corruptions within: and as a Captain, even the Captain of our salvation, who hath good skill to lead on in the battle, and victory is still upon his side. In Psal. xci. 4. there you see he hath *wings* wherein you may truit, and *his truth shall be thy shield and buckler; thou shalt not be afraid of terrors by night, nor for the arrows that fly by day.* He is a Captain whose name is, the *Lion of the tribe of Judah, the mighty God, the Prince of peace; a Prince exalted by the right-hand of God, to give repentance to Israel, and remission of sins.* Now, have you received him thus as a Prince, a Captain of salvation? So walk in him, by employing him still to subdue all your sins, and to defend you from all spiritual and temporal evils. To defend you from all *spiritual evils; for, you wrestle not against flesh and blood, but principalities and powers, and the rulers of the darkness of this world, and spiritual wickednesses in high places; therefore, be strong in the Lord,* Eph. vi. 10, 12.; *For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but mighty through God, to the pulling down of strong holds.* 2 Cor. x. 4, 5. To defend from all *temporal evils:* But here a question may be moved, How doth this Captain defend his soldiers from temporal evils, calamities, and afflictions? To which we reply, It is even by taking away the sting of them. Some may think, how are the Lord's people supported under the temporal evils they are meeting with? Why, the everlasting arms of Jehovah are underneath them, and that is enough. If the Lord see fit that temporal goods be taken from them, he makes it up an hundred fold in giving them spiritual goods. They would count it good interest who get ten of the hundred; but, behold! the people of God get a hundred fold in this life; and for any loss in temporals they get it repaired in spirituals, as in the intimation of the pardon of sin, and there is gold for copper. Many know not how the Lord supports his people under the difficulties they are brought into in this world; but he hath pledged his word to defend them from all temporal and spiritual evils, and he never failed in his word, wherein he hath said, *The place of their defence shall be the munition*

of rocks.—Now, to receive Christ as a King and Captain to rule and defend, is to receive him as he is offered; and to improve him daily for this end, is to walk in him as we have received him.

4. Christ Jesus the Lord is offered in the gospel in the capacity of an *Ark* and a *Refuge*, that being thus received, we may so walk in him. He is held forth as an Ark and a Refuge. Now, have you received him as an Ark, that only can save you from drowning by the flood of God's wrath, saying, "Lord, there is no other ark to save me but thee, for I am shipwrecked in Adam, and there is no plank, but Christ, to bring me to shore?" Have you therefore clasped to him by the hand of faith, saying, *Lord, save me, or else I perish?* Why then, having thus received him, do you so walk in him; keep within your Ark, and abide in him, seeking no other ark, and reposing confidence no where else; this is to walk in him as ye have received him.—Have you received him as a Refuge and hiding-place, Isa. xxxii. 2. saying, "Lord, I flee to thee to hide me; for the avenger of blood, the law and justice of God, are at my heels pursuing me; and if they find me afar off from thee, I am slain without mercy; the cliffs of the Rock are my only hiding-place, which I take to be a safeguard to me?" Well then, so walk ye in him, by taking shelter still in this sanctuary.

5. Christ Jesus the Lord is offered in the gospel in the capacity of a *Cautioner* or *Surety*, that being thus received we may so walk in him. There are two things requisite in a cautioner, and both are to be found in Christ: The one is that he be *solvendo*, able to pay all the debt; and the other is that he be willing, as well as able, to undertake the debt. Now, Christ is *able to save to the uttermost, all that come to God by him*, Heb. vii. 25. and all comers are welcome; *Whosoever will let him come: q. d. the will shall not be wanting on my side.* Now, have you, as a bankrupt-debtor, received Christ as a Surety, saying, "Lord, I owe many thousands more than I can pay, but thou hast a sufficient ransom to pay all my debt; and I flee to thee as my Surety, that I be not seized by justice, and dragged to the prison

“ of hell.” Have you thus received him as a Surety? Then so walk in him by employing him still as a Surety for debt and duty both; for clearing your conscience with respect to all your debt, and for carrying your soul honourably through every duty, and doing all your works in you and for you.

6. Christ Jesus the Lord is offered in the gospel in the capacity of an *Advocate*, that being thus received we may so walk in him; *These things I write to you, that ye sin not; but if any man sin, we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous,* 1 John ii. 1. Well is it with the poor soul that hath many challenges for sin and guilt, and is sadly exercised therewith, when yet it can put its case in the hand of him who is an Advocate with the Father; he can fully answer and propose able defences against all challenges from conscience. But, alas! I fear there are many sleeping consciences among us. However, freedom from all challenges is only by the blood of Christ, and the faith of his advocating our cause with the Father; and well is it with us that we have a righteous Jesus, a sinless Jesus, for our Advocate, who can comfort under the saddest discouragement, and relieve from the saddest intricacy; for, he understands all heart-secrets, his understanding being infinite: and he is not lordly in his employment. There is much lordliness among earthly advocates, and great men of that profession; you must come and wait at their gates, with hat in hand, and perhaps never be the better; for advocates with us may be honest, and yet lose a good cause: but here is an Advocate in your offer, to be received by you, who never lost a cause that was put in his hand.—Now, have you received him as an Advocate? Then so walk ye in him, by still employing him in that capacity, saying, “ Lord, my crimes
“ are great, my cause is bad, but never a cause mis-
“ carried that thou didst take in hand: Oh! let every
“ one of thy wounds be as so many open mouths to
“ plead for me; let thy blood speak, that *speaks better*
“ *things than the blood of Abel.*”

7. Christ Jesus the Lord is offered in the gospel, in the capacity of a *Physician*, that being thus received we

may so walk in him. We are full of plagues, maladies, sores, and spiritual diseases. Christ is exhibited to us as a Physician that hath skill of all diseases, and can heal them all be what they will; Psal. ciii. 3.—*Who healeth all thy diseases*: he knows the right time of applying the healing word; Psal. cvii. 21. *He sent his word, and healed them; and delivered them from their destructions*: He heals with his own blood, and mixes his own blood with the word, a strange mixture and compound to be a healing potion; for, he seals the word with his blood. Many are whole, and see no need of the Physician; they are whole hearted; their hearts were never pierced with an arrow of legal conviction. But, if you have seen your malady, and prized the remedy; if you have received Christ as a Physician, then so walk ye in him, by coming still with your broken bones to his door, saying, “Lord, here lies a Job full of boils, a Lazarus full of sores at thy gate; here a paralytic hand; here a blind eye; here a hard heart; here is a plague, and there is a wound; here is my atheism, ignorance, enmity, unbelief; Oh! heal, heal; let me have a touch of thy garment, and I shall be whole.”—Now, if you have received Christ as a Physician, to continue in the improving of him thus, is to walk in him as ye have received him.

8. Christ Jesus the Lord is offered in the gospel in the capacity of a *Head and Husband*, that being thus received we may so walk in him. Christ is offered in the gospel as a friend in the room of all friends, a *friend that sticketh closer than a brother*; a husband to the widow, a father to the fatherless, and a stay to the orphan; *When my father and mother forsaketh me, the Lord will take me up*, Psalm xxvii. 10. And Jer. xlix. 11. *Leave thy fatherless children upon me, I will preserve them alive; and let thy widows trust in me*; and again, *Thy Maker is thy husband*. Our Lord hath a kind heart to the widow and orphans; for, he is an ocean of love, and a fountain of mercy, and he hath a liberal hand towards them; for *he gives durable riches and righteousness*; and *I will fill their treasures*, Prov. viii. 21. All the silver and gold in the world cannot fill one's heart; but, says Christ, *I will*

will fill their treasures. Let a graceless man have the greatest substance in the world, he is but a poor miserable wretch; but the poorest soul, married to Christ, hath *durable riches*; yea, *unsearchable riches*, Eph. iii. 8. Take the greatest prince and monarch in the world, a few figures in arithmetic will count all his wealth, and all that he is worth; but all the arithmetic in the world cannot count the believer's stock, who hath Christ for his Friend and Husband; for, it is the *the unsearchable riches of Christ*. They that are ill friended in the world, may be supplied here: Christ is offered as a Friend, a Head, and Husband.—Now, have you received him as a Head, and Husband? Then so walk in him. Have you received him as such some time a day, when you was brought to say, “ Lord, though I be the most deformed, black, and unworthy bride that ever was, having
“ nothing but poverty, debt, and danger to recommend
“ me to thee; yet since thou, who art *the chief among*
“ *ten thousands*, art content to match with me, behold!
“ I say, AMEN to that marriage-covenant, desiring to
“ assent to all the articles of it.”—Have you thus received him, I say, as a Head and Husband? Then so walk ye in him by maintaining the relation, and saying, *My Beloved is mine, and I am his*; and again, *I am my Beloved's, and my Beloved is mine*, Song vi. 3. Let me see more and more, that neither death nor hell, sin or Satan shall be able to loose the marriage-knot; and let me have sweet communion and fellowship with this glorious Head, and love-communications, and love-visits from this glorious Husband.—Thus you may come to walk in him as ye have received him.

9. Christ Jesus the Lord is offered in the gospel in the capacity of a *Helper* and *Reliever*, that being thus received we may so walk in him and improve him. He is offered, I say, as a Helper of the needy, and a Reliever of the burdened soul; he is therefore declared to be a *present help in time of trouble*, who gives grace to help in time of need; and with respect to all burdens says, *Cast thy burden on the Lord, and he will sustain thee*. Now, have you received him as a *Helper*? Then so walk ye in him by still taking his help, and employing
him

him to help you, saying, “ Lord, I have destroyed myself, but in thee only is my help; help me in respect of deliverance from the mire of sin and misery into which I have cast myself; help me in respect of supply out of thy fulness, for never a poorer wretch came to thy door than I; not a penny of grace is there left to help me, nor a crumb to keep in my life: Oh! let me not go from thy treasure-house without an alms; for *there is bread enough in thy house and to spare*: though I be a dog, let me not go without a crumb.”

Thus by faith and prayer you may walk in him as a Helper, if you have received him as such.—Again, have you received him as a *Reliever*? (to put both these together that are so nigh of kin) Then so walk in him by employing him still to relieve you of your burdens, saying, “ Oh! sin is heavier than a millstone, and how many of these millstones are on my back! Angels cannot free me of my burdens; for the burden of one sin sunk many thousands of them to the bottomless pit: saints cannot do it, they have burdens enough of their own; nay, the whole creation cannot bear my burden; for it groans under the weight of me and it: but, Lord, art not thou the Rock, the mighty Rock, on whom God hath laid the help of poor sinners? *The Lord hath laid on him the iniquities of us all*; and there I roll my burden, even upon this Burden-bearer: let me be eased, for the Rock can bear it without any difficulty.”—In this way, having received him as a Reliever and a Burden-bearer, you are to improve him, and so to walk in him.

10. Christ Jesus the Lord is offered in the gospel in the capacity of a *Shepherd*, that being thus received we may so walk in him. See Isa. xl. 11. *He shall feed his flock like a shepherd; he shall gather the lambs with his arms, and carry them in his bosom, and gently lead those that are with young.* Christ is held forth in the gospel as the wise Shepherd that knows his sheep, and puts his mark upon them, and seals them; *The foundation of God standeth sure, having this seal, The Lord knoweth them that are his*; they are sealed by the Holy Spirit of promise.—He is the *careful* Shepherd that hath a fold for

them; *Other sheep I have that are not of this fold, them also I must bring, and they shall hear my voice.*—He is the faithful Shepherd, that rejoiceth in the thriving of his flock, and will give a good account of all the sheep; hence he says, *This is the will of my Father, that of all he hath given me I should lose nothing, but should raise it up at the last day,* John vi. 39.; and he will at that day separate the sheep from the goats.—He is the kind Shepherd, that feeds, and leads, and heals, and watches, and waters, and defends, and gathers his flock.—Now, have you received Christ as a Shepherd to perform these kind offices towards you? Then so walk ye him by depending on him for the continual communication of that pastoral care. Faith is called a returning to the Shepherd of our souls, 1 Pet. ii. 25. *Ye were as sheep going astray, but are returned to the Shepherd and Bishop of your souls.* Now, the life of faith, and walking in him in this capacity, is just a remaining with him, and depending on him as a Shepherd. It is depending on him as a Shepherd to feed you; for, he feeds his flock as no other shepherd doth; he feeds them upon a green pasture, and the pasture is himself; John x. 9. *I am the door, by me if any man enter in, he shall be saved; and he shall go in and out, and find pasture:* compare this with John vi. 51. *I am the living bread that came down from heaven; the bread that I give is my flesh, which I give for the life of the world.*—It is a depending on him as a Shepherd to lead you; *Take the Lord as my Shepherd, I shall not want. He letteth me by the still waters: he letteth the blind in a way they knew not:* he maketh darkness light before them; he guides them by his counsel, and brings them to his glory: and if you walk in him, you take him for your guide, and employ him as your guide to give you counsel, because he is the wonderful Counsellor.—It is a depending on him as a Physician to heal you; but of Christ as a Physician I spoke already.—Again, it is depending on him as a Shepherd to watch over you; for he is the watchful Shepherd that watches his flock night and day; *the watch-man of Israel slumbers not nor sleeps:* he never gives so much as a nap, for then we were undone, in regard Satan never sleeps, and enemies are never

ver idle.—It is a depending on him as a Shepherd to *water* you; he waters his flock as well as feeds them; and as he feeds them with his flesh, so he waters them with his blood, and with the influences of his Spirit: here is the *river, the streams whereof make glad the city of God*: he *pours water on him that is thirsty, and floods upon the dry ground.*—It is a depending on him as a Shepherd to *protect* you; for he defends his flock from all wolves, from all harm and injury: know you what the devil said of Job? though he be the father of lies yet he spake a truth, when he would gladly have had God's hand of protection removed from Job, chap. i. 10. *Doth Job serve God for nought? hast thou not made an hedge about him and his house, and all that he hath on every side?* I believe there are many of you know not that the devil is going about your doors seeking to devour you; but here is the mercy of all the flock of Christ, that their Shepherd hath set an hedge about them, that nothing may harm them; neither can violence touch them without his special permission and order, and that for their advantage; for, *all things shall work together for their good.*—Finally, it is to depend upon him as a Shepherd to *gather* you; *He gathers the lambs with his arms*: they go astray many times, and wander so far away that they seem to be quite lost; but *he seeks and saves that which is lost*: and he hath a long arm to gather them, and bring them back to himself, that they may get a mark answerable to his gracious care in reducing them; Isa. lxii. 12. *Thou shalt be called, Sought out, a city not forsaken.* Have you received him then as a Shepherd? So walk ye in him as to employ him to gather you from all your far wanderings; your wandering thoughts, your wandering words, your wandering affections, your wandering conversations; saying, with the Psalmist, Psalm cxix. 176. *I have gone astray like a lost sheep, seek thy servant*; verse 10. *O let me not wander from thy commandments*; and if I wander, *O bring me back, and let thy hand be upon the man of thy right-hand, the Son of man whom thou hast made strong for thyself*; and henceforth *I will not go back: turn thou me, and I shall be turned; draw me, and I shall run after thee.*

Have you received him in the capacity of a *Mediator* and *Peace-maker*? Then so walk in him, by employing him still to take up all quarrels between God and your soul, saying, “ Lord, stand betwixt me and the flaming sword; and let me have the sense of the Father’s love, the atoning blood of the Lamb; and bring the news of peace to my soul.”

Have you received him as the *Ransomer* of captives? Then so walk in him, by employing him still to assert your liberty, to knock off your fetters, to loose your bands, and to bring your souls out of prison, that you may serve and praise him.

Have you received him as a *Saviour*? Then so walk in him, by employing him to carry on your salvation to perfection; and to save you from sin, from the law, from death, and wrath.

Have you received him as a *Sun*, as the *Sun of righteousness*? Then so walk in him, by rejoicing in his light, and shunning all the darkness of ignorance and error; *O house of Israel, walk ye in the light of the Lord.*

Have you received him as your *righteousness* and *strength*? Then so walk in him, by going in the *strength of the Lord, making mention of his righteousness, and of his only.*

I may add to all that has been said, that Christ is offered as a *pattern* and *example*. Have we received him in that capacity? then let us so walk in him. The body must walk where the head walks; the body and head must walk where the feet walk; and the head having influence upon the body, the feet must walk in a conformity. They that have received Christ as a pattern and example, if they walk as they have received him, must, through grace, follow his example; that is, they are to follow him in his *faith*; for he trusted in his Father; so must we beware of casting off the profession of our faith, or deviating to error and heresy.—They are to follow him in his *love*, Eph. v. 2. *Walk in love, as Christ also loved us: being followers of God as dear children.*—They are to follow him in his *holiness*; *Be ye holy as I am holy.*—In his *zeal*; *The zeal of God’s house hath eaten him*

him up, even his zeal for the glory of God.—He walked in a conformity to the *will* of God; did always the things that pleased him; fought the glory of his Father in all that he did.—In his *activity*; he went up and down doing good; never rested till he said, *I have finished the work which thou gavest me to do.* So we are not to *weary in well-doing.*—In his *meeckness, patience, and humility*; *Follow me for I am meek and lowly.*—In his *boldness and constancy*, in adhering to the truth in spite of all opposition; *For the joy that was set before him, he endured the cross, and despised the shame.* So we are to *take up the cross and follow him.*—This is to walk in him as we have received him.

You may see what a large field of matter is here; there would be no end of speaking of the way or the walk here, because Christ is the way, and the walk suitable thereto is accordingly most extensive.

Thus you see the *rule* of the believer's walk, and what *proportion and suitableness* his walk should have to his receiving Jesus Christ the Lord, and suitable to all the *capacities* wherein he receives him.



S E R M O N XXXVIII.

COLOS. ii. 6.

As ye have received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk ye in him.

[The fifth Sermon on this text.]

WE have, in the preceding discourses, essayed to point out, in a great variety of particulars, in what capacity Christ is offered in the gospel, and shewn what it is to walk in him, in these different capacities. We now go on,

IV. To the *fourth* general head proposed in the method,

thod, which was, To speak of the *connexion* betwixt the believer's *character* and the believer's *duty*, or betwixt *receiving Christ*, and *walking in him*; where we promised to enquire into the *order* of the connexion, and the *reasons* of it. Now, in speaking to this head we may consider, *first*, in general, how this *text*, and the *duties* therein called to, are *connected* with the *context*; and *secondly*, in particular, how the *parts* of the text are connected one with another, and so come more closely to the *order* of this connexion.

First, Let us consider, for clearing this matter the more evidently, how this *text*, and what we are called to therein, are *connected* with the *context*. The short text is some what longer, if you take it with what went before, and what follows; for, texts of scripture are like the links of a chain that are fastened together, some before, and some after. Look *before*, and then you will see, that the apostle speaks to believers; in whom he notices their *order*, and the *steadfastness of their faith in Christ*: look *after*, and then you will see, that this *receiving of Christ*, and *walking in him*, are joined with a being *rooted and built up in him*, and *established in the faith*. And thus looking to the scope round about the text, and viewing both sides of it, I notice these two remarks for your edification.

Remark 1. That those whom the apostle commends, for their *steadfastness in the faith*, yet he doth exhort to *walk in Christ*. See verse 5th. compared with the text. And this teaches us this excellent lesson, That Christ is to be lived, as well as known; to be lived in, as well as believed in. The best of believers hath need of the spur of exhortation still to walk; proportionable to the knowledge and faith that a believer hath in Christ, answerably will he find the need of Christ, and of living and working in him: and so proportionable to his knowledge and faith, should this living and walking in Christ be. A man may have much of the knowledge and faith of the Son of God, and yet walk very unanswerable to that measure of faith and knowledge that he hath; and a man may have a little measure of faith and knowledge of Christ, and yet live in very much of that little knowledge

ledge and faith, by walking in Christ proportionably thereto. There are lusts to be mortified in the believer, as long as he lives; there are passions to be subdued by the Spirit, and graces to be quickened and blown up by the Spirit, that they go not out: This may take up the whole man, and there is no end of this work, till sin be quite abolished, and grace be perfected. And so there is work enough for the believer all his days: though he be established in the faith, he will find work enough still to be working and going on. Therefore, the best believers need the spur of exhortation, to quicken them to practical obedience. Suppose a man be highly advanced in the knowledge of Christ, surely the more knowledge he hath, the more doth he see into himself, and the more corruption will he see in himself than he saw before: as by the bright sun that shines in at the window, we will see those motes fly up and down, that we cannot see by the clear day light. The more light, the more a man sees into himself, and so the more corruption does he find in him, than before he thought of. Yea, take any man that walketh in Christ, and he hath this property, the further he goes, the less he thinketh he hath gone: and it is a certain truth, a man that hath gone a great way forward in religious exercises, the less he thinks he has done: for the nearer he comes to God, the greater doth he find this God to be, and the knowledge of him still the more mysterious; and the farther he dives into this depth, the deeper doth he find it to be. And therefore, even those, that are commended for their *stedfastness of faith*, need to be exhorted to *walk in Christ*: here is walking, and walking further and further. If any man should say, I care for no more than will bring me to heaven; this very thought shews the corruption and rottenness of his heart; and that he seeks grace to be saved, and not to be fruitful. It is a great flaw in a man's heart, in the very desiring of grace itself, when he desires grace to be saved, so as he may be glorified in heaven; and not to be fruitful, so as God may be glorified on earth. I shall not say but something of this naughtiness may be in the heart of a true believer; but surely, where-ever it is in its full power and dominion,

nion, it evidences the man to be no believer, to seek grace merely as it is a beneficial grace, to get heaven for himself; but not as it is a serviceable grace, to be laid out in the service of God in Christ.—This is one remark from the precedent text.

Remark 2. Is from the subsequent context, That *walking in Christ*, and *being rooted, built up in him, and established in the faith*, are coupled together: compare the text with verse 7th. And so we are taking a look of the other side of the text, *walk in him, rooted, built up in him, and established in the faith*. And these are coupled together two ways, both as to the *manner* of walking, and as to the *end* of walking: the *manner* of *walking in him*, so as to be also *rooted in him*; and the *end* of *walking in him*, so as to be *ESTABLISHED in the faith*.

(1.) They are coupled as to the *MANNER* of *walking in Christ*; for it is a *walking in him*, so as to be also *rooted and established in him*. Why, here is walking, and yet a standing still, a being *rooted*. It is here just as it is with the foot of the compass; the one foot of the compass stands fast in the centre, and the other goes round, and draws the line: so it is with the believer; as to his faith, he stands fast and unmoveable in the matters of doctrine, that is the foot of the compass that keeps the centre and stands fast; but as to his gospel-obedience, or obediencial walking, according to the command in the law, in the hand of Christ, that is the part that moves forward, and indeed never stands. And thus the believer moves, and yet stands fast; walks, and yet is rooted and established. As it is with a man in walking, there is still one foot stands, while the other moves, or else a man does not walk, but leap: so, many do not stand fast in the faith, with one foot; nor walk in the truth, with the other foot, as it were; but they leap out of one doctrine to another, not being established in the faith, nor walking in Christ, so as also to be rooted in him. And thus we may understand the scriptures that sometimes injoin us to go forward, and sometimes command us to stand fast: you may thus reconcile the scripture that says, *Stand fast in the faith*; and another scripture that says, *Run the race set before you*:

you: why, in the *way*, run; in the *truth*, stand. If a man stand still in the way of obedience, such a man stands when he should run; but if he runs out of the faith or doctrine of the gospel, this man runs when he should stand. If a tree be removed to-day from this place, and transplanted to-morrow to another place; and so on from place to place, it dries, and cannot bear fruit: even so, the Christian that changes from doctrine to doctrine, decays in fruitfulness; he is loose, and not established in the faith, and so cannot walk in Christ; for these two are coupled together, namely, *walking in him*, and being *rooted and established in the faith*.—Thus they are connected as to the *manner* of walking in Christ.

(2.) They are coupled as to the *END* of *walking in him*; for, the end of *walking in Christ*, is to be *rooted and established*. It is a remarkable promise made to poor feeble ones in Christ's house, John vii. 17. *If any man will do his will, he shall know the doctrine whether it be of God*: This doctrine is not man's, but God's. Now, how shall I know whether the doctrine be of God, or not? why, if you *do his will*, you shall know it; that is, by walking in Christ he shall get much experience: for, as true knowledge makes way for practice; so gospel-practice makes way for more knowledge and experience. O but a practical Christian, is the most experienced Christian in the world! You may very easily observe, that a tree is not rooted in a day; but the more it grows upward, the more it is rooted; and the more it is rooted, the better it is: so, they that walk in Christ shall be confirmed and established in the faith. You will never find a man of mere notional knowledge, that hath any rootedness or stedfastness; nay, but the practical Christian comes to be more and more an experimental Christian. He that *doth his will, shall know the doctrine*: the meaning is not, that our knowledge and experience is owing to our work; but that, where a man, through grace, is helped to practical religion, so as not to satisfy himself with notions and speculations, but so as to subject himself to the preceptive will of the Lord, that man is in the high way of growing in knowledge, and

further experience.—Thus the text stands *connected* with the *context*.

Secondly, Let us consider how the *parts* of the text stand *connected with one another*: *As ye have received the Lord Jesus Christ, so walk ye him*. Here you see, *receiving of Christ*, and *walking in him*, are coupled together: what God hath joined, no man should put asunder, otherwise it is at his peril. And though these two cannot be separated in reality, yet the most part of people separate them in effect: some pretend that they receive Christ, and yet certainly they do not walk in him; and so, on the other hand, seem to walk in him, in some outward good life and works, and yet certainly do not receive Christ. Now, if you sever these two sorts of professors from the rest in the visible church, those that profess to receive Christ, and yet do not walk in him, and those that seem to walk in him by their good works, and yet have not received him, you will find, that those that truly receive Christ, and walk in him, are very thin sown: for, as few of those in scripture, that called Abraham, Father, were indeed his children; so our Lord tells us, as few of those that pretend to Christ, are indeed Christians. Look upon the greatest part of the world this day, it is unchristian; because they receive not Christ: look to the greatest part of Christendom, and they are unchristian too; because they walk not in him, though they pretend to receive him: these two must be coupled, and the dividing these two, mars the whole. He is no Christian that does not receive Christ; and he is no receiver of Christ, that doth not walk in him; and therefore he is no Christian that doth not receive and walk in Christ: in a true Christian these two meet, receiving and walking. It may well be said of many, *The voice is Jacob's voice, but the hands are the hands of Esau*: Their voice is the voice of a Christian, but their hands are the hands of an atheist, or an infidel. Where Christ is most named and professed, without being truly received, there he is dishonoured. Search the whole world over, and where will you find the most proud, the most cruel, the most selfish, the most carnal, wicked, and worldly persons? it is even
among

among notional and nominal Christians, who, hearing of Christ, either profess to receive him, but never walk in him; or, fancy they walk in him, and yet never receive him.

If you ask me, *Where is the most unfavourable dung-hill?* I answer, It is where the sun shines hottest: so, in these days of the gospel, where in the world will you find the greatest sins committed, or the most nauseous dung-hill of sinful corruptions? it is even where the sun shines hottest, and where the gospel shines brightest. Think not strange to see, that where the gospel shines most brightly, there the devil works most spitefully, that he may break this chain, *viz.* the *receiving of Christ*, and *walking in him*: when these two are cut asunder, it spoils all.—Thus much for the connexion.

But now, the *order* of this connexion follows to be considered: it is first a *receiving of Christ*, and then a *walking in him*: receiving is first, in as much as the branch must first be in the vine, before it can bear fruit: there must be an inbeing, before there can be a fruit-bearing, John xv. 1,—5. There it is Christ's doctrine, and here it is the apostle's. Now, we must enquire into the *reasons* of this order, that there must be a *receiving* BEFORE a *walking*, and a *walking* AFTER the *receiving*. We would therefore shew, 1. Why there must be a *receiving of Christ*, BEFORE there can be a *walking in him*. 2. Why there must be a *walking in him*, AFTER the *receiving him*.

1st, Why there must be a *receiving of Christ* BEFORE there can be a *walking in him*.

1. Because *receiving of Christ* is that which *constitutes* and gives *being* to a *Christian*. Now, we have a common rule, *esse* must go before *operare*; that *being* must go before *working*; *life* before *walking*. Now, if you ask, *What it is that constitutes and gives being to a saint, to a Christian, to a believer?* I reply, It is this *receiving of Christ*; it is by this means that we become the *sons of God*; John i. 12. *But as many as received him, to them gave he power, [OR PRIVILEGE,] to become the sons of God; even to them that believe on his name.* It is by this means, that we, having union with Christ, have the righteousness of Christ; Phil. iii. 9. *That I may be found in him,*

not having mine own righteousness, but the righteousness of God by faith: first, we must be found in him, before we can have any thing from him; and this union is by a faith of his own operation: this gives the being and constitution; for, till we receive Christ, we are not united to him, and so have no spiritual life or being. It is true, in regeneration, the Spirit of life comes in to the soul; but the first act of spiritual life is faith, whereby the soul closes with Christ, and so becomes a Christian indeed. As the union of matter and form, makes a body; the union of body and soul together, makes a man; and the union of a man and Christ together, makes a Christian; and sap from this root makes him a growing one: so, it is not good fruit, that makes a good tree; but a good tree, that makes the good fruit: and as it is sap from the root, and the reception of it, that makes the branch to bring forth; so it is not the fruit of works and obedience that constitutes a Christian, or gives him a being, but it is the reception of Christ, the receiving of him as Jesus the Lord; and therefore that must be first.

2. *Because receiving of Christ is the rise and ground of walking in him:* and therefore receiving is first, as the cause before the effect. A man may bring forth the fruit of works morally good, and may bring forth upon his own root, as a natural man; but he can never *walk in Christ*, until he do it in virtue of receiving Christ, and receiving sap from him. As the fruit of a tree is the sap of the root concocted; so walking and working in Christ, is just the sap of the Spirit of grace, putting forth itself into obedience; and that sap must be received from the root, ere it can be produced in fruit; and therefore receiving must go before walking. None can walk in Christ unless they be in him: as the branch cannot bear fruit in the tree, unless it knit to the stock; so we cannot walk in Christ, without being united unto him. Works and duties, though they be performed in a conformity to the law, as the rule; yet this is not walking in Christ, unless it be done by virtue from Christ, and drawn out of him. Conceive it thus; a man may write a copy by his own art and skill, and a
man

man may write with his hand by another man's guiding it; even so, out of moral principles, a man may shape his actions according to the law and rule; he may write this copy with his own hand: but then, as one that writes with his hand in another man's hand that guides it, so one that is in Christ, walks indeed in a conformity to the law as a rule, otherwise it is no walking aright in Christ; but he walks in the life and Spirit of Christ, he writes after the copy with his hand in the hand of Christ, being acted by these influences and graces of the Spirit, that through his union with him, are always flowing to him. And thus a believer's walking is distinguished from all other walkings in the world, he being acted by the very Spirit and life of Christ: he bears fruit by the sap and life, which he receives from the tree of life, to which he is united; and not upon the old stock from which he is transplanted.

3. The *third* reason, why *receiving of Christ* goes BEFORE *walking in him*, is, because receiving of Christ is one of the *principal* things, whereby any soul can *honour God*. The world little considers this, how God is honoured by their taking Christ off his hand; how he is honoured by this act of faith in receiving of Christ: for, by receiving him, we renounce ourselves, and all confidence in the flesh. Now, while a man hath any thing to trust to in his own opinion, he will never seek after Christ the Saviour; but when a man begins to count all his gain loss, and can throw himself over board, that he may come to Christ only; how doth this glorify and honour God!—Again, when a *great sinner*, that lies under an infinite load of sin and guilt, notwithstanding all discouragements from the multitude and magnitude of his sins, though infinitely great, yet doth so value the truth of God's word, and lay such stress upon the veracity of his promise, as to break through all discouragements, and throw his soul upon God's promise, saying, *If I perish, I perish*; what infinite honour doth this bring in to the crown of heaven!—Again, when a *benighted soul* sees no light of comfort in all the world, and yet can throw himself upon a God in Christ, saying, *though he slay me, yet will I trust in him*; this honours

nours God greatly: for, still we may mark this at any time, the faith that carries the soul through the greatest difficulties and contrarieties to God, doth bring the greatest glory and honour to him. Men do not think they honour God, but by outward works of piety, equity, charity, and the like: but, however we ought to glorify God that way; yet God gets the greatest glory by the strongest faith. *Abraham was strong in the faith, giving glory to God*: How did he honour God this way? Even by trusting God, notwithstanding all unlikelihood, Rom. iv. 19, 20, 21. Yea, by faith God is so much honoured and glorified, that nothing pleases him without it; *Without faith it is impossible to please God*, Heb. xi. 6.

4. The *fourth* reason is, because before a man receive Christ, he hath neither *power* nor *will* to walk in him; but by receiving of him, he hath both: before receiving of Christ he hath no power nor ability; but he is acted and enabled by receiving of Christ to walk in him. As it is impossible for a dead man to walk; so it is impossible for a man that hath not received Christ to walk in him. No unbeliever, no unregenerate man ever did, or can walk in Christ; such a man is not in him, all his works are out of him. But, on the contrary, every man that hath received Christ by faith, is in Christ; and being in him, he hath all righteousness and strength in him, and so ability to walk in him: and he may be *strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus; strong in the Lord*: he hath also a new principle: *the seed of God in him*. And as he hath a power, so he hath a *will* to walk in him; for his enmity and antipathy against God and Christ is broken: so that it becomes as easy and pleasant to walk in Christ, as before it was uneasy, unpleasent, and hateful. If water be poured out, it will run downward to the centre; but water metamorphosed and transformed into air, would mount upwards, because of its new principle; and it is impossible for it to come down: so here, before you receive Christ by faith, whereby you are united to him, it is impossible but that you should go downward to your own centre, to seek yourselves in what you do; but when a man hath another principle,

principle, he goes the quite contrary way, with as much easiness as he did the other way; so it is with every believer, as far as he is under the influence of the new Spirit, that is put within him. And so you see why *receiving* is first.

2dly, Why there must be a *walking in him*, AFTER the *receiving of him*; and so we are come to the reasons, why believers should *walk in Christ as they have received him*; or why a GOSPEL-FAITH must have a GOSPEL-PRACTICE *. Why, it is every way reasonable and necessary, and that is respect of God, and man, and ourselves, and our faith.

1. The *first* reason, why they that *receive Christ* must *walk in him*, is in respect of GOD, that he may be glorified; and CHRIST, that he may be honoured. It is by walking in him that we glorify and honour him: the glory of God, Father, Son, and Holy Ghost is concerned here; for the glory of the FATHER, as the *end*; the SON, as the *way*; and the HOLY GHOST, as the *guide*, are all honoured by this gospel-walk; John xv. 8. *Herein is my Father glorified, that ye bear much fruit.* John xvii. 10.—*And I am glorified in them*, says Christ. And the believer being the temple of the Holy Ghost, surely he is glorified when his temple is not defiled, by a sinful walk. In a word, it is a great affront upon Christ, not to walk in him as we receive him: it is the greatest injury done to Christ; *By this they give great occasion to the enemies of the Lord to blaspheme*, 2 Sam. xii. 14. A wrong step in a believer, is very dishonouring to God, and makes enemies to blaspheme the name of the Lord. Therefore,

2. The *second* reason, why they that *receive Christ* are to *walk in him*, is in respect of MAN, that they may be edified, and brought to glorify God also: *Let your light so shine before men, that others, seeing your good works, may glorify God.* Men will not look in to your heart, to see your faith; nor up to your head, to see what knowledge you have; but down to your feet, to see what

* See what was said on the *second general head*, page 50, &c. Hereby the power of faith is seen, the trial of faith is made, the beauty of faith appears to others, and the comfort of faith accrues to ourselves, &c.

for a walk you have: they cannot look to the sap that is within, but they will look to the fruit that is without, and judge of the tree by the fruit, and of your faith by your works.

3. The *third* reason, why they that *receive Christ* are to *walk in him*, is in respect of YOURSELVES, who are believers, and receivers of Christ, that you may be confirmed; for you are to judge the truth of your faith, not by the degrees of your confidence, but by the degrees of your conquest over sin, Satan, and the world, in a gospel-walk; even as you may know the height of the sun by the shortness of your shadow, rather than by the degrees of altitude; if the shadow be short, the sun is high; if the shadow be long, the sun is low: so here, if the shadow of sin and corruption be long, your faith is low; but if it is short, your faith is in a more lively exercise. How can you have the comfort of faith, if you do not rise and walk, as you have received him? If you do not walk, it is a sign you never *received light*, 1 John i. 7.

4. The *fourth* reason, why they that *receive Christ*, are to *walk in him*, is in respect of FAITH itself: faith, where-ever it is, brings in this walk in point of necessity, congruity, obligation, and encouragement.

(1.) In point of *necessity*: It is native, as I said, for a man that hath received Christ to walk in him; it implies a contradiction, not to walk in him, and yet to receive him; *How shall we that are dead to sin, live any longer therein?* Rom. vi. 2. The believer is *dead*, and *his life is hid with Christ in God*, Col. iii. 3. If ye be dead and buried, united to Christ, in his death and burial, how can ye live in sin? You can no more live therein, than a dead man can come back, and eat and drink in the world. Therefore, if you do not walk in Christ, ye plainly declare that your pretending to receive him, was but a cheat and a sham; for, he that receiveth him must walk in him, and will walk in him, and cannot but walk in him. Why? he that receiveth Christ, receiveth him as a Jesus and as a Lord: which infers two parts of practical religion; the fiducial part, which is a receiving him as a Jesus, a Saviour; and the obediential part, which

which is a receiving him as a Lord, and so walking in him as a Lord and Law-giver : so that they who receive him, must walk in him.

(2.) In point of *congruity* : Is it not congruous to the soul's *deed* in receiving him ? Did you not receive him as the way to the Father ? Why then, if you walk not in him, you take another way, and look to another air.—Is it not congruous to the *end* for which you received him ? Did you receive him only to look to him a while, and then to let him go ? No : if ever you received him, it was that you might abide in him.

(3.) In point of *obligation* ; there is the strongest obligation upon every man that receives Christ, to walk in him ; even as in marriage, when two are married together, there is a mutual obligation they come under to those duties that are required of each of them : so, a man, when he receives Christ, he is married to him, and so comes under the strongest, and yet the sweetest obligations : for, in the day of espousals, the soul is made to say, as Jer. l. 5. *Come and let us join ourselves to the Lord, in a perpetual covenant, that shall not be forgotten* : It is a joining to the Lord as our strength, to carry us on in the way wherein we should go ; so that we may be exalted to *mount up with wings as eagles, run and not weary, walk and not faint*.

(4.) In point of *encouragement* ; the man that receiveth Christ, hath the greatest encouragement, and incitement in the world, to walk in Christ : for he, receiving Christ, receiveth all things that can contribute for carrying him on in this way and walk. What does a man receive, when he receives Christ ? 1. He receiveth the *pardon* of all his sins ; *In him we have redemption through his blood, even the remission of sin*, Col. i. 19. And what encouragement is this to walk in Christ ! May not a man love much, who hath so much forgiven him ? 2. When you receive Christ, you receive *peace* and *reconciliation with God* ; *We have peace through the blood of his cross*, Col. i. 19. And what encouragement is this, that you have to do with a reconciled God ! O strong encouragement to walk in him ! 3. When you receive Christ, you receive *grace* ; for, *Out of his fulness we receive,*

ceive, and grace for grace. And what encouragement is this to walk in him, that you receive grace from him! Do you not receive him for this end, that you may have grace in him, and grace from him? And why then not walk in him as ye have received him? 4. When you receive Christ, you receive the *promise*; yea, all the promises of the new and well-ordered covenant; for, they are all *Yea and Amen in Christ*. He hath given us exceeding great and precious promises, saith the apostle Peter, 2 Pet. i. 4. And now, *Having these promises*, saith the apostle Paul, *let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God*, 2 Cor. vii. 1. 5. When you receive Christ, you receive the *Spirit*; and here is the principle of a holy walk: *I will put my Spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes*. Is not this encouragement, to walk in him as ye have received him, that you have the Spirit dwelling in you as an inhabitant? 6. When you receive Christ, you receive the *adoption of children*; Rom. viii. 15. *We have received the Spirit of adoption*. And again, Gal. iv. 4, 5. *Because ye are sons, God hath sent forth the Spirit of his Son into your hearts, crying, Abba, Father*. John i. 12. *To as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God; even to them that believe on his name*. Is not this encouragement to be *followers of God as dear children*? 7. When you receive Christ, you receive a *right and title to eternal glory*; John xiv. 2, 3. *In my Father's house are many mansions;—I go to prepare a place for you, and I will come again, and receive you to myself, that where I am, there you may be also*. And what encouragement is this to walk in him, in the joyful hope of walking in him in white for ever? 8. When you receive Christ, you receive *all things in him*. I cannot tell what you receive, or how much you receive, when you receive Christ; for he is *all in all*; and *in him dwells all the fulness of the Godhead bodily*, Col. ii. 9. *It pleased the Father, that in him should all fulness dwell*, Col. i. 19. *And in him are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge*, Col. ii. 3. He is all for present support, and all for after happiness: and if he be yours, *all is yours*. What more encouragement can be given to walk in him,
and

and improve him as your all?—Thus you see, why *walking in him* must go AFTER the *receiving*; and why believers in Christ are to walk in him.

Now, what say you of your Christianity, man? you that profess to be a Christian, that is, a receiver of Christ Jesus the Lord, do you so walk in him? I believe it to be a needful work to Un-Christ many that pretend to be in Christ: you know Christ, in his preaching, went about to Un-Moses some; to bring the Jews from under the wings of Moses, under whose name they did the works of the devil; and from under the wings of Abraham: he shows whose children they were, indeed not Abraham's, but the devil's. Even so, it were a needful work to Un-Christ some persons, that pretend to be Christians, and to bring them from under the wings of Christ, under whose wings they do the works of the devil: Surely, if ever Christ was received by you, so as to be in you, he would produce these graces in you, which he himself had, and which he himself preached, while he was here: but while men bring arguments from Christ, to shelter their base lusts and idols, their base ends and purposes, it is the greatest dishonour done to the name of Christ; for, *The foundation of God standeth sure, having this seal, the Lord knoweth them that are his*; and, *Let every one that nameth the name of Christ, depart from iniquity.*

Thus much for the fourth general head, *viz.* the connexion between the believer's *character* and his *duty*; or, between *receiving Christ*, and *walking in him*.



S E R M O N XXXIX.

COLOS. ii. 6.

As ye have received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk ye in him.

[The sixth Sermon on this text.]

IF believers, who have received Christ, do not walk in him, none in all the world will; if they stand still, who will go forward? Many there are in our day, that are like the sun in Joshua's time, that *stood still*; nay, many worse, like the sun in Hezekiah's time, that went *backward ten degrees*; they have gone backward many degrees: few there are like the sun, in its ordinary course, still going forward; still walking in Christ, as the sun doth run in the firmament. It is true, as the sun once stood still, and another time went backward; so the saint may stand still, and through temptation, be driven backward: but his denomination is to be taken from his ordinary course, and habitual walk. It was the commendation of Enoch, that he *walked with God*: and how shall one walk with God? It is by walking in Christ. And how shall one come to walk in Christ? It is by the means of receiving him, under the influence of heaven; *As you have received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk ye in him.*

V. The *fifth* thing was the *application* of the doctrine. Is it so, That it is the great and indispensable duty of all true believers, who have received Christ Jesus the Lord, to walk in him as they have received him? then hence many things might be inferred, and many uses deduced: I shall confine myself to these four in a special manner.

1. For *information*, to instruct us in some precious truths.
2. For *reproof*, to convict us of some errors, both doctrinal and practical.
3. For *examination*, to try our faith

and

and obedience. 4. And more especially, for *exhortation*, to excite and direct us, both to receive Christ and walk in him.

First, The *first use* is for *information*. Is it so, that a gospel-principle, or a gospel-faith, is the foundation of a gospel-practice, then hence see,

1. The *nature* and *excellency* of the *gospel*; it is just that whereby God makes an offer of Christ to us, and all salvation in him; for the receiving of Christ here, hath a relation to the offer. A receiving faith presupposes an offering hand: now, Christ is offered to us in the gospel; there is God's offering hand: but where is our receiving hand of faith? Alas! whence is it, that we cannot take Christ that is offered to us? Even because our hand is full: the empty hand is a receiving hand; but our hands are so full of sin, so full of the world, so full of self-righteousness, that we have not an empty hand, to receive what is offered to us, by the hand of free grace, in the gospel: and we have no will to quit our hold of that, with which our hands are full; and hence cannot take a grip of Christ offered to us. However, herein lies the excellency of the gospel, that it is a Christ, a Jesus, a Lord that is offered to us therein: and the gospel is to be pressed on this account, because, as all that reject it rejects Christ; so, all that receives it truly doth receive Christ in it. Human doctrine, however true, brings nothing, at best, but knowledge and speculation to us: but gospel-doctrine brings salvation to us; yea, the Saviour himself to our hand, to be received: and, when the offering hand of the gospel, and the receiving hand of faith meets together, then the good work is begun.

2. Hence see the *nature* and *excellency* of *faith*; it is a receiver of *Christ Jesus the Lord*, as he is held forth in the word and sacrament. It is true, there is a difference between the receiving of Christ in the word, and the receiving of him in the sacrament, *i. e.* in the Lord's supper. More generally, in the word, all sinners are welcome to Christ, as a Saviour and Lord; and in the sacrament, all believers are welcome to come to him anew. But more particularly, in the word we receive
Christ

Christ under an offer and a promise; but in the sacrament, we receive him under a pawn, a pledge, and a seal. However, herein lies the nature and excellency of faith, that it is a fiducial reception of Christ Jesus the Lord. You say you believe, man; but, what is it that you do believe? Is it only that God offers Christ to your faith? Why, surely there is more than a believing that Christ is offered to you: what is a poor man the richer for believing that one offers him a shilling? What is a condemned man the better for believing, that a pardon is offered to him? But, do you receive the offer?—It is true, many come not this length to believe truly, that God offers Christ to them in particular; and yet, where it is without any more, it is but the faith of the *truth* of the offer: you believe this to be a truth; and if you believe no more, that faith doth but serve to your just condemnation: it is not merely the truth-acknowledging, but the Christ-receiving faith that bringeth salvation. A woman may believe a man to be rich and honourable, and real in his suit; yet, that believed, doth not make marriage, but actual consent to take him for a husband: Even so, a man or woman may believe Christ to be a full, glorious, and suitable Saviour and Lord, and real in his suit and offer; but that believed, doth not make marriage and union to Christ, but actual consent to take him for your Saviour, and your Lord.

3. Hence see, what is the glorious *object* of faith; and, therein also the difference between *saving* and *justifying* faith. Christ Jesus the Lord is the object of faith; and faith, as it is saving, doth embrace Christ in all his offices, and in all these capacities, as Christ, Jesus, the Lord. But now, there are two special branches of salvation, namely, *justification* and *sanctification*; and these being two different things, faith acts upon Christ for them, in a different manner. Faith acts upon Christ for *justification*, as he is a JESUS; or by receiving him as a Jesus: faith acts upon Christ for *sanctification*, as he is a LORD; or by receiving him as a Lord. In justification, we receive him as a Jesus, to be saved from the *guilt* of sin; in sanctification, we receive him as a Lord, to be delivered from the *power* of sin. Now, though both these acts

of

of faith go together, to make up saving faith; though they be inseparable from one another, in the same faith; yet they differ, as the eye and the ear in the same head: for, as we do not see with the ear, nor hear with the eye; so, neither are we justified by that act of faith, that receives Christ, as a Lord, for sanctification; but by that act of faith that receives him, as a Jesus, for justification: we are not justified by that act of faith that receives Christ, as a King; but by that act of faith that receives Christ, as a Priest*. However, when we speak of salvation in general, which respects both justification, sanctification, and all; the object of it is a whole Christ, both as a Jesus and a Lord; to be redeemed by him as a Jesus, and governed by him as a Lord. It is not true faith that blows hot and cold out of the same mouth; that cries, *HOSANNA to the Son of David*; and yet says, *We will not have this man to reign over us.*

4. Hence see what is the *root of right religion*, and where it begins; and what is the root of true obedience, and the principle of it: It is rooted in union to Christ by the faith of God's operation; for, there is no walking in him, till once there be a receiving of him. Men may have a moral walk, a fair outward life, a good complication of many excellent beautiful virtues, and the matter and metal of them may be very good: but, like coin that does not pass, they want the king's superscription upon them; having nothing of Christ in them. Yea, these moral virtues that some boast of are, many times, the greatest obstructions against Christ, that can be; while the man is puffed up with his self-fitness, and self-righteousness. A bottle stopped with gold receives not so much, as an empty shell will do: even so, some may be filled and stopped with golden virtues; and hence they receive not so much as an empty soul, destitute of all these, will do. But here perhaps you will say, *Is there any need that a change be wrought upon a virtuous man, one that has lived a virtuous life all his days?* Yea, surely there is; for, there is as great a difference between a life of *moral virtue*, and a life of *true grace*,

* See this important point of doctrine more copiously handled above, at the close of the first general head, page 41,—48.

as there is between the *light of the stars*, and the *light of the day*: and, when grace changes such a man, it is a change from star-light to day-light: let him have never so many virtues, all these stars will not make a day. It is true, religion is under a great eclipse in our day: and, as a bright star will shine and make a figure in the eclipse of the sun; so will moral honesty, when true Christianity is under such an eclipse; but yet, let me tell you that this is not a gospel state: The true invisible church is a *woman clothed with the sun*, the Sun of righteousness. There must be an implanting into Christ, a receiving of him, before there can be any true gospel-walk. Religion must begin at receiving; and the walking that goes before receiving, is but morality at best; and whatever use it may be of to others, it is not what will be for your comfort or salvation.

5. Hence see, that the *doctrine of the gospel* doth not give any room for *licentious walking*. They reproach the gospel, who slander it as a doctrine of carnal liberty and licentiousness: for, it calls to *receive Christ*, and then to *walk in him*. GOSPEL-LIBERTY, is not a *liberty to sin*, but a *liberty and freedom from sin*. True believers are practical Christians: as by the same hand we receive a thing, we also work; so faith is the receiving hand, that receives Christ in the promise; and it is a working hand, that *works by love* in the commandment: and *love makes his commandments not grievous*. Why? because faith's receiving Christ and the promise, is first: for, in the law, the obedience to the command is first, and this engages the promise; *Do this, and live*: but, in the gospel, Christ and the promise is first received, and this brings in gospel-obedience to the law, and that in all duties, both of humility towards God; and righteousness, towards man. In *humility towards God*; or, *walking humbly with him*. What a scandal is it, to hear it said, There goes a proud professor; there goes a drunken professor of religion, or the like? But a humble walk before God, adorns religion; and self-denial is the glory of all our duties. The doctrine of the gospel is a doctrine *according to godliness*; it gives no toleration to sin, or impiety toward God. — In righteousness towards

wards man, doth this gospel-obedience also vent itself: duties of religion, without righteousness towards man, are hateful to God; *I hate your sacrifices*, saith the Lord; *they are full of blood*. True religion is practical; it doth not ly in profession, but gospel-practice; not in talking of Christ, but walking in Christ. Many, as I said before, are like the lark that sings with the highest, but builds with the lowest; they sing with the highest, as high as angels, in their profession, but they build with the lowest, as long as devils in their practice: in their profession they sing and mount towards heaven; but in their practice they build upon the earth, and their affections are low, earthly, and sensual: they build their nest in the earth.—Gospel-liberty doth not ly in some *faint resolutions*; but *real performances*, through the grace of Christ. Many, under convictions, will flee to their good purposes and resolutions; like a mariner in a storm at sea, who, for the time, will do any thing; but when the danger is blown over, he is just where he was. A man that hath the falling sickness, in his lucid intervals may resolve to fall no more; but it is to little purpose, without some application to the disease, that lies within: so it is with resolutions, upon convictions of conscience, without application to Christ, for mortifying grace, to subdue their corruptions; and purifying grace, to wash away their pollutions.—Gospel-liberty doth not ly in *legal conviction*; for, without union to Christ, by faith, there is no true sanctity, or gospel-walking, whatever way a man may be bruised, in the mortar of legal conviction and humiliation, and broken with the hammer of the law. Cut a bee in pieces, yet she puts forth her sting; so here, still the sting of enmity remains. Let iron be broken into pieces, yet still it remains hard; so, a heart may be broken in pieces, and yet remain hard and unhumbled. But true humility is, when the soul is melted, so as to run into this gospel-mould; so as to receive Christ, and walk in him.

6. Hence see, that *true religion* is a *qualified motion*; for it is a WALK. It is a *progressive* motion, a moving forward; a *pressing towards the mark*; a *going from*

strength to strength; from glory to glory; from faith to faith: We are like the boat in the stream, if it goes not forward by the oar, it will go backward with the tide; it cannot stand still. Many, as I noticed before, are like a wheel, they go round, yet still keep the same place; they go the external round of duties, but have no union to Christ, make no progress in the way of holiness. But this walk is progressive; the man *grows in grace, and in the knowledge of Christ.*—It is a *permanent* motion: it is a motion, and yet a steadfastness, as I said before; for, the man *stands fast in the faith,* and yet walks fast in obedience: he walks in Christ, *rooted and established in him,* as ye have been taught. The apostle guards the Galatians from declining from the *simplicity of the gospel,* upon this argument, Gal. i. 8. There is not another Jesus, than he whom we have preached; there is not another Spirit, than he whom ye have received; there is not another gospel, than that which we have published: if there were another, then ye might receive it; but because there is not another, therefore keep by this Jesus. There is but one Christ, and truth cannot be but one; if there were more truths than one, or more gospels than one, the apostle could not have said there, *If see, or an angel from heaven, preach another gospel, let him be accursed.* Whatever manifold articles of truth there be, yet truth itself is but one: and Christ the centre of truth is but one: if there were any more truths or gospels but one, why would the apostle curse the angels, that shall preach another? for that which they preach may be truth too: no, says he, speaking of justification by Christ, and not by the works of the law, *If any man, or angel from heaven, preach another doctrine, let him be accursed:* this doctrine we are to hold fast. It is a permanent walk.—And again, it is a *perpetual* motion; a persevering thing; a constant motion: to walk is not to make a step or two, but it imports constancy; *The righteous holdeth on his way.* It is true, his sin may make him go halting; and this is what makes a saint continually jealous, that he knows nothing of walking in Christ; because he thinks, it is not a constant motion that he makes; but is many times

times and ways interrupted. But I would say, for the encouragement of the weak believer, that sin may be felt, and yet the walk in Christ may be constant; a man may be lame, and halt in his walking, and yet go on: Jacob *wrestled with God*, and yet *went away halting*; Paul had a *thorn in the flesh*, that made him halt; however, he saw the use of that thorn, like a corrosive to eat away the proud flesh growing: *Lest I should be exalted above measure, there was given me a thorn in the flesh.* Hence, says one of the fathers, “Proud hearts have need of sins, as proud sores of eating plaisters:” in this case it is better to feel a corruption, than to be quit of it. A child of God will sometimes see his grace, by looking to his sin: To apply to this a simile that I used for representing another thing; A man may look for the sun’s rising in the east, but he that looks for it toward the west, on the top of a high tower or steeple, may see it first: Even so, a man may see and know his grace sooner many times, by looking to his sins, than to his graces, though they be contrary one to another: grace is more apt to see sin than to see itself; for, the eye that sees other things, doth not see itself: so, grace may not see itself, but it sees sin and corruption; and thus humbles, and so carries the man forward.— Finally, it is a *regular* motion; it is a walking by rule; a *walking in Christ, according as we have received him*: of which I spoke at large, on the doctrinal part.

7. Hence see what is the *way to heaven*: Christ is the way, and holiness is the walk in it; and so, holiness is as necessary to heaven, as a man’s walking in a way, is necessary to come to his journey’s end: hence, *Without holiness no man shall see God*; for, it is just a walking in the way to heaven: and the excellency of holiness lies in this, that it is a *walking in Christ by faith*. Christ is the only way: he that thinks to reach to heaven out of this way, shall wander like a blind man, and never come there. The text shews, how faith and manners all centre in Christ. In our RECEIVING Christ, is the *act* of faith; in our WALKING in him, is the *life* of faith: He is the all of our faith and obedience. In our *receiving*, he is the *object* to be received; in our *walking*, he

is the way we are to walk in. Many pretend to be Christians; but, being strangers to Christ, they are monsters: for, to be a Christian, without Christ, is like a body without a head.

8. Hence see, that *true faith* is never alone, but still joined with *gospel-obedience*: *As ye have received, so walk*. He that would disjoin faith from obedience, endeavours to walk with one foot, which is impossible. Faith and works, faith and holiness, are the two feet by which a man doth walk in Christ: and when the Spirit of Christ doth promote the one, he doth promote the other also. If a man should essay to go upon one foot, he could not walk, but only hop, which would be impossible for him to continue long in: neither can obedience be without faith, nor faith without obedience; but according to the measure of the faith, such will be the measure of the gospel-walk. As the fuller a vessel is, the faster will it run over at the top; so, the fuller views a man gets of Christ, by faith, the faster will he run in the way of evangelical obedience. When Jacob had seen the sweet vision in Bethel, he *lift up his feet*, Gen. xxix. 1.; it put mettle into him: So here, when the poor soul hath once received Christ, and got the faith of his own operation, he is made chearfully to run the way of his commandments. Therefore,

9. Hence see, that the *believer hath always much ado with Christ*; having received Christ, he is still to make use of him, by walking in him: habitual grace will not do his business, without actual grace. The believer is like the ship; it is not enough that he hath the sails of grace implanted, but he must have the wind of the Spirit filling his sails, otherwise he cannot make way towards the heavenly port. The believer is like a branch, that hath nothing of its own, but what it receives from the root, even as itself doth so spring from the root: he is like the moon which, as appeareth from the eclipse, hath no light of itself, but increaseth, and cometh to full, as it receiveth from the sun. Let none think, that believers have no further use for Christ, after their first believing and receiving of him; nay, as Christ is *the*
author,

author, so he is the *finisher of faith*: Therefore, *As ye have received him, so walk ye in him.*

10. Hence we may see, what is the *best fortification against all ungodliness, and antidote against apostacy.* This inference I deduce from the text, compared with the whole context; for it comes in with an antidote against defection: for the apostle tells, there were some that went about, to *burden them with vain philosophy, human propositions, and superstitious ceremonies,* ver. 8, 16, 17, 18, 20, 23. You see then, I would not go off from the scope of my text, to speak upon this subject; for, how doth the apostle fortify them against these evils? It is even by this; *As ye have received Christ, so walk ye in him*: So that receiving him, and walking in him, is the only way to be kept from defection. Let a man receive Christ, and he will reject these things; let a man walk in Christ, and he will go out of the way of these dangerous rocks; if a man receive Christ, and walk in him, he will abandon and slight all the trash of hell and Rome. He that hath enough ado to get food for his family, he will not bestir himself, to take in chaff and trash; but, if a baker come with an armful of bread, he will take in somewhat from him: so it is here, they that see a need of Christ, and receiving of him into their house, their heart, as the *bread of life*, they will not be careful to take in empty chaff, and superstitious trash. They that take in Christ, the body, the substance, will not regard the shadow and ceremony, ver. 17. *And why are ye subject to ordinances, or burdened therewith?* saith the apostle, ver. 20. Men will not willingly suffer under impositions in their free-holds in the world; and far less should they suffer the world to impose burdens upon their souls; such as the burdensome worship of antichristian, prelatie, abjured ceremonies. You heard the last Lord's day, of the evil of such superstitious ceremonial worship, as it is a breach of Scotland's Covenants, and a profanation of God's name, and an incurring the judgment threatened in the third command: nay, as my reverend Brother * told you the danger of it, so I would tell you the antidote against it; and it is

* The Rev. Mr. JAMES WARDLAW, our Author's Colleague.

just in my text, to *receive Christ*, and to *walk in him*. As Christ and Antichrist are opposites; so, if you receive Christ, you cannot but reject the trash of Antichrist. To walk in Christ, and to walk in the road of superstition, is irreconcilable: let Christ in, and Antichrist will go out; let faith take place, and superstitious fancies will vanish.

In a word, O see that your faith be a *Christ-accepting faith*, so as to *receive him*; and a *Christ improving faith*, so as to *walk in him*: If your faith be not of this kind, it is not a saving, but a damning faith. Many have a faith that keeps them from faith; a believing that holds them fast *in unbelief*. All the terrors of the law draws no blood, all the invitations of the gospel moves you not; why? because you lie under the canopy and shelter of this faith and believing, which defeats the operation both of law and gospel, till God open your eyes to see through it. O seek, that the Lord may bring you to a faith, that receives Christ indeed, and so walks in him! The life of believers, after conversion, is an active life: none of them can say, Now I have no more ado, having received Christ; I may walk at random, and live as I list; no, by no means: after Israel were come through the Red-sea, they had a wilderness to walk through; and so it is with every believer, while here in this world: but though he hath a journey to go, yet he hath the greatest encouragement to walk forward; for he is in Christ, in whom he hath all fulness; and therefore let duties be never so difficult, and his emptiness and insufficiency for them never so great, yet no ground of discouragement, while he is in Christ, and complete in him; and called to walk in him in the whole course of his progress: yea, to *walk in him as he hath received him*. And if believers were walking in Christ, so as to keep up the same frame of heart in their walk, that they had in their closing with Christ, it would be the sweetest and pleasantest life imaginable: O what a holy, humble, sensible frame of spirit, took place when you were receiving Christ! how precious! how sweet! how lovely was Christ every way to you then! What strong desires after him, and ardent love to him, and joyful

joyful delight in him, took place, in the day when you joined hands with him! And now, what a sweet life would you have, if this frame of soul was maintained, through grace, in your walk and conversation? Why, this is what you are here called to; *As ye have received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk ye in him.*

Secondly, The *second use* is for *reproof* and *refutation* of errors, both doctrinal and practical. I begin with the former of these, namely,

1st, DOCTRINAL errors, which this doctrine doth refute and reprove. And,

I. It refutes the error of these, that take *fiducial application* out of the *nature of justifying faith*, while our text makes faith to be a *receiving of Christ Jesus the Lord*. It is not only an *assenting to the truth of the gospel*, but a “receiving and resting upon Christ, and his “righteousness, therein held forth, for pardon of sin, “and for accepting and accounting of a man’s own “person righteous, in the sight of God for salvation,” as our Larger Catechism describes *justifying faith*; and these divines confirm their description, from Acts xv. 11. *We believe that, through the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, we shall be saved.* So that, a *man’s believing that he shall be saved, through the grace of Christ, and receiving and resting on him, for this end*, is made the very essence of justifying faith, by the purest standards of this church, in a conformity to the word of God: so much assurance and appropriating persuasion belongs to the nature of faith, according to the doctrine of all our Reformers, that take away unbelief from faith, and not a single doubt will remain behind. Whatever doubts may be in the believer, there is no doubt in his faith: it is his unbelief that creates his doubts, and not his faith. 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. It is not a woman’s believing a man to be rich and honourable, but her actual consent to take him for her husband, that makes marriage; so, it is not peoples believing Christ to be a great and glorious Saviour, but actual reception of him for theirs, that makes a spiritual marriage and union

nion to Christ: the receiving of Christ hath as close and particular an appropriation of him to ourselves in it, as a man's receiving of the meat and drink, whereby his body is nourished; and therefore it is called an *eating and drinking of the flesh and blood of the Son of God*; John vi. 53,—57. *Except ye eat the flesh of the Son of man, and drink his blood, ye have no life in you. Who so eateth my flesh, and drinketh my blood, hath eternal life, and I will raise him up at the last day, &c.* What is more ours than the meat we eat? Yet know, the best meat and drink doth no good, except you make it your own.

2. This doctrine refutes the error of these, who confound the *covenant of works* and the *covenant of grace*; the *law* and the *gospel*; *justification* and *sanctification*. The gospel-order of things described in our text, while it makes justifying faith, in receiving Christ, to go before sanctification, or walking in him, doth refute the legal mixture that many make in our day, while they put DOING in the same room it had in the covenant of works; for the legal order was, *Do, and live*; first the duty, and then the promise; and so, the promise was made to doing and walking uprightly: but the gospel-order is, first the promise, and then duty; first Christ is received, and the promise of life in him, and then the duty of walking in him follows; the soul being sweetly encouraged, by the promise, to the duty. The inverting of this order is *legal doctrine* with a witness. For men to make a promise of life to any duty or work of ours, tho' wrought by grace, is to turn the gospel-covenant to a covenant of works; where the promise of life was made to man, upon his doing, by the grace and strength he had received from God in his first creation: It is a new mould of a covenant of works, to make the promise of life to our duty and work, wrought by the grace of God, in the new creation: nay, the promise is not made to our working now, but to Christ, and in him to us; and this promise of life being made, and apprehended and received in Christ, then, and not till then, can a man evangelically work and walk in Christ, as he hath received him.

With the same breath, it refutes the *inverting of the gospel-order of justification and sanctification*; for, where-

as our text makes justification by faith, in receiving Christ, to go before sanctification, or walking in him. Some now-a-days will tell us of *gospel-repentance*, which is a special part of sanctification, going before faith and justification; yea, necessary in order to it. The repeating of our text is refutation enough to such doctrine: For, it plainly informs us, that justifying faith, receiving Christ Jesus, is requisite first, in order to sanctification, or walking in him; and so to actual holiness: for, habitual grace is infused by the Spirit, in regeneration, at the same time that the Spirit enables the soul to receive Christ; but actual holiness cannot take place, till after this reception; and to this agrees the antient saying of some of the fathers, *Fides facta justificat ante partum*; i. e. "Faith, however fruitful and big with child of good works, yet, it justifieth before it bring forth any." All the *promises are Yea and Amen in Christ*, and made to him. It is true, *godliness* is said to have *the promises of this life and that which is to come*, 1 Tim. iv. 8.; but it is not to godliness of itself, but godliness in Christ. *All that live godly, do it in Christ*, 2 Tim. iii. 12.: no godly walking but in Christ; and therefore no promise to a godly walk, but in Christ. To make a promise belong to our doing then, or to make our works have a *federal causality*, or *conditionality*, in obtaining life, is erroneous legal doctrine.

3. This doctrine refutes the error of those, who bring the BELIEVER *under an obligation to obey the law, as in the hand of God Creator, out of Christ*: Whereas, here he is laid under obligation only to *walk in Christ*; that is, to obey the law in Christ: not to have any thing to do with an absolute God, but a God in Christ; *As ye have received Christ, so walk ye in him*. The believer hath nothing to do with a God out of Christ; the authority and majesty of *God is in Christ, in whom all the fulness of the Godhead dwells*. And by the authority of God the Father, we are obliged to take the law, only out of the hand of Christ, who, in regard of essence, is one with the Father, and who, as Mediator, God-man, is not divested of his essential glory: *This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased, hear ye him: My name*

is in him, faith the Father; my authority, supremacy, sovereignty, and all: and we dishonour the Father, if we put not this honour upon the Son, to receive the law from his mouth. It is so far from derogating from the honour of the Father, that we cannot honour him any other way, than in Christ: for there is no coming to the Father but by him; and no right walking but in him.

4. This doctrine refutes the error of those, who would bring the BELIEVER, in any respect, *under the yoke of the law, as a covenant of works*; while, “being in Christ, he is wholly and a’together delivered from it; so as his person is not under it, either as to its commanding or condemning power, so as it can neither justify nor condemn him,” as our Confession and Standards assert. It can neither justify him for his obedience, nor condemn him for his disobedience: Why? he is justified by faith, in receiving Christ, before ever he can obey by walking in him; and so cannot be justified by his obedience to the law: and being justified, his justification is perfect in Christ, and his perfect righteousness: he is freed from condemnation, and no more liable to it for his disobedience, whatever contrary apprehensions he may have, than those that are already in heaven are liable to condemnation. It is true, he is liable to fatherly wrath and chastisement, while here, but being in Christ, his glorious Head, and a part of Christ mystical, he is no more liable to condemnation, so long as he remains united to Christ, which is to eternity. When a man receives Christ, he rejects the law as a covenant; when he is married to Christ, he is divorced from the law, Rom. vii. 4. *Ye are dead to the law, by the body of Christ, that ye should be married to another, even to him who is raised from the dead, that he should bring forth fruit unto God.* Where also you see the believer’s freedom from the law as a covenant, strengthens his obligation to it as a rule; for, *Christ is the end of the law for righteousness, to every one that believeth.* His righteousness of merit, for justification, is the end of the law as a covenant; his righteousness of Spirit, for sanctification, is the end of the law as a rule: and both these are reached by receiving Christ, and walking in him.

5. This

5. This doctrine refutes the error of those, who make the believer's *obedience* to be influenced, by the *legal hopes of heaven*, or *slavish fears of hell*. Why, to receive Christ as a Jesus, is to receive him as a Saviour, to save from hell, so as to bring the man to heaven; and to walk in him as we receive him, is to walk in him as a Saviour, and so to improve him for that salvation; both negatively, in delivering from hell, and all things that lead to it; and positively, in bringing him to heaven, and to all the means that lead to it: and therefore, as far as we do not improve him, for both these ends, we do not walk in him by faith, but depart from him by unbelief. To walk in Christ, as we have received him, is to obey him as a Saviour; and to obey him as a Saviour, that hath purchased heaven for us, and satisfied vindictive justice in our room: and yet to obey from a legal hope of heaven, as if our obedience was to obtain it; or from a slavish fear of hell, as if our obedience could procure freedom from it: I say, to walk in him, and obey him as a Saviour, and yet to be influenced by such a legal hope or slavish fear, is inconsistent; for the one is the believer's duty, the other his sin: the believer may be guilty of it through his unbelief, but it can never be his duty. To have the fear of hell, is the believer's duty; but to be moved by the fear of hell, is his sin, and makes his obedience so far slavish and servile, not filial: to fear hell is to fear vindictive wrath, or the wrath of a terrible Judge, which is opposite to the holy fear of him as a loving Father, which is always his duty. And surely, to walk in Christ, and yet to fear the wrath of God out of Christ, are contrary; for, to fear God in Christ, is to fear him as a God reconciled in Christ, and not as a judge dealing with us, according to the tenor of the covenant of works, which is in vindictive wrath. There may be the fear of hell, where there is not a spark of grace, or true faith; as we see in devils and reprobates; their fear of the punishment of sin may take place, while their willingness to sin lives: and so, this fear no more changes the inclination of their wills, than the whip or chain doth the nature of the fox or wolf. It is holy fear that works a godly sorrow, and it is this godly sor-

row that brings forth these seven fruits you read of, 2 Cor. vii. 11. And thus godly sorrow, which is the happy mother of so many good children, is caused, like Peter's weeping, by the looks of Christ; the reproofs, the frowns, the offences of a gracious God thaws the heart into melting fears, and would do so though there was no hell; as a meek child needs no other house of correction than his father's looks.—Again, hope of heaven is the believer's duty, when it is looked upon as a reward of grace; for, he is to have *respect to the recompence of reward*; and may excite and influence him in his obedience; but the legal hope of heaven, so as to expect to obtain it, by our obedience and good works, is a Christless doctrine: for, to say that our works doth save us, is to deny that Christ is our Saviour. How is he your Saviour, if you might save yourselves by your works? Or, wherefore should he die to save you, if any works might have saved you? Nay, says the Apostle, *If righteousness come by the law, Christ is dead in vain*. If you do good works, to get the inheritance of heaven thereby, you do not walk in Christ; for, *eternal life is the gift of God, through Jesus Christ our Lord*. And if you seek to attain salvation that way, you would receive the good, not as the gift of God, but as a debt unto you: and make yourself fellow with God, because you will take nothing from him for nought.

6. This doctrine refutes the error of those, that make *good works and holiness* the product of *man's free-will, natural power*: or, at least, of the *common and general assistance of God*; or to proceed from him only as the moral cause, and not by way of powerful efficiency. Surely such do also herein err, that lay so much stress upon natural endeavours, and moral seriousness, as to connect the same infallibly with saving grace: surely none of those duly ponder, that *faith is the gift of God*, and the *work of God's almighty power*, requiring the same powerful efficiency, that *raised Christ from the dead*; and that true obedience and good works, is a walking in Christ: and that walking in Christ, is a walking by the strength and power of the Spirit of Christ, who says, that *without me ye can do nothing*. Paul tells us, in his
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own name, and in the name of all believers, that they are *not sufficient of themselves, to think any thing, as of themselves, but that their sufficiency is of God*; and that *it is God that worketh in us, both to will and to do of his good pleasure*. All the working and walking that men are capable of, before they receive Christ, is but evil works before God; for, *without faith it is impossible to please God*: and *whatsoever is not of faith is sin*. “And
 “surely evil works never make a good man? for good
 “works themselves do not make a good man: no works,
 “good or evil, makes a man either good or evil. As
 “good fruit makes not a tree good, nor is it evil fruit
 “that makes a tree evil; but a good tree bears good
 “fruit, and an evil tree evil fruit: so, good works
 “make not a good man, nor evil works an evil man;
 “but a good man bringeth forth good, and an evil
 “man bringeth forth evil works. For, as the tree is
 “good, ere it bringeth forth good fruit; and evil, ere
 “it bringeth forth evil fruit: so, a man is good, ere
 “he bring forth good fruit; and evil, ere he bring
 “forth evil fruit. So that our works make us neither
 “good nor evil*.”

If a man hath not received Christ, he is not a good man, and cannot walk in Christ, or do any good work; but if a man hath received Christ, then, and not till then, is he a good man, and so is capable of walking in Christ, and bringing forth good works; yea, native-ly doth this good tree bring forth good fruit.—Thus you see, how this doctrine sets itself in opposition to manifold *erroneous principles*: these are only a few of many that might be named, which this text and doctrine doth refute; and too many of them are either directly, or

* These are the words, and part of the articles of that valliant and heroic champion for the truth, and famous martyr for the cause of CHRIST, the Rev. Mr. PATRICK HAMILTON, who was raised up by God to be a happy instrument of our reformation from popery, in contending zealously against the abominations of Rome, till he at last fell a sacrifice to his cruel and merciless enemies, by cheerfully yielding his body to the tormenting flames at St. Andrews, while in that fiery chariot, through the aerial region, his soul ascended to the celestial country, to possess eternal blessedness, on the last day of February 1527.—The famous Mr. GEORGE WISHART, suffered for the same good cause, in the very same place, and in the same manner, on the first of March 1546.

indirectly countenanced in our day, even by public acts*, and those that ought to contend most zealously for the truths of Christ.

The doctrine of the gospel is like a bridge, by which alone men can go from this valley of misery, to the regions of bliss and happiness; and the principles of religion, or truths of the gospel, are like so many arches which, joined and united together, doth make up this bridge: and therefore these errors, that doth overturn any of these principles, do, as it were, cut out an arch from the bridge, whereby a breach is made, and the passage by it unto heaven, is either cut off, if the error be fundamental; or greatly obstructed, if it nearly concerns the fundamentals of religion. Some perhaps will think, Whether or not am I making all these fundamental errors, and so all that maintain them to be cut off from heaven; and consequently accuse the most part of the ministers of this church, except a very few? To which I would reply, That, as I do not desire to be like those, that think all Blackamoors except themselves; so I presume, that the judgment of the generality of the church of Scotland is to be gathered from the public Standards of doctrine, in our Confession, and Catechisms, deliberately enacted by this church, and to which all profess adherence; and not from any particular Acts relative to doctrine, either made by an oversight, or maintained by mere human authority. And therefore, whatever may be the dangerous consequence of public deeds of that nature; yet, I entertain charity for the most part of the ministers of the church of Scotland, that the latter Acts, that seem to clash with our Standards, hath nothing of their deliberate approbation. However, the least truth ought to be sacred to every one of us, who are called to *prove all things, and hold fast that which is good*; for, the loss of the least truth, whether you reckon it fundamental or not, is of dangerous consequence: the loss of the least divine truth, is as the loss of a diamond out of a ring; or of a jewel out of

* Our author here probably has his eye upon the acts of Assembly 1720. and 1722. condemning the *Marrow of Modern Divinity*. See Vol. I. p. 238. Vol. II. p. 304, 305, 395.

the Mediator's crown. The gospel is like a ladder, that hath so many steps, or rounds; every truth is like a round of the ladder; and by these rounds we climb up to heaven: if you break off any round, you are in danger of falling; and your climbing up is rendered either difficult, or impossible. The truths of the gospel are like stepping-stones over a deep water; take away any of these stones, and you make such a wide and dangerous step, that you are in hazard of falling into the deep. I now proceed,

2dly, To the other branch of this use of *reproof*, namely, to mention some *practical errors* that this doctrine doth reprove; as,

1. Those that walk in *darkness*; we read this of the wicked, Psal. lxxxii. 5. *That they walk on in darkness*; even in the darkness of ignorance, error, sin, and security. Can they walk in Christ who walk in darkness? No: *If any man say he hath fellowship with Christ, and yet walk in darkness, he is a liar*, 1 John i. 6.

2. Those that walk in *vanity*, Jer. ii. 5. *Thus saith the Lord, What iniquity have your fathers found in me, that they have gone far from me, and have walked after vanity, and are become vain?* O the vanity of mind, the vanity of thought, word, and action! Is this to walk in Christ? No, no: he says, *Follow me, for I am meek and lowly in heart.*

3. It reproves those that walk in *profanity* and *lasciviousness*; 1 Pet. iv. 3, 4. *For the time past of our life may suffice us to have wrought the will of the Gentiles, when we walked in lasciviousness, lusts, excess of wine, revellings, banquettings, and abominable idolatries: wherein they think it strange that you run not with them to the same excess of riot, speaking evil of you.* Do these walk in Christ, that walk in drunkenness, whoredom, swearing, Sabbath-breaking, and such like abominations? Oh! it is blasphemy to think it!

4. It reproves those, that instead of walking in Christ, do walk in *lies*; Jer. xxiii. 14. *I have seen also in the prophets of Jerusalem an horrible thing; they commit adultery, and walk in lies, &c.* They that walk in hypocrisy
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and lies, instead of walking in Christ, do rather walk in the *devil*, the *father of lies*, and who *was a liar from the beginning*. God's children are called *children that will not lie*.

5. Those that walk as *slanders*, Jer. ix. 4, 5. *Every brother will utterly supplant, every neighbour will walk with slanders*. O slandering tongue! Is that the way to walk in Christ? No, no. See what is the character of a godly man, that shall abide in God's tabernacle, and dwell in his holy hill; he is one that *speaks the truth in his heart; he backbiteth not with his tongue, nor doth evil to his neighbour, nor taketh up a reproach against his neighbour*, Psalm xv. 2, 3.

6. Those that walk in *pride*: such a walk you have described in the daughters of Jerusalem, Isa. iii. 16. *Because the daughters of Zion are haughty, and walk with stretched forth necks, and swollen eyes, walking, and mincing as they go, and making a tinkling with their feet*. And you see how Nebuchadnezzar learned to preach this doctrine, after the Lord had humbled him for his pride, as low as the beasts of the field: *Those that walk in pride, he is able to abase*, Dan. iv. 37.

7. Those that walk in *carnality*, or walk after the flesh, and after the imagination of their own evil heart, and so walk contrary to God: See such a walk described, Eph. ii. 2, 3. *When in times past ye walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience. Among whom also we all had our conversation in times past, in the lusts of our flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh, and of the mind, and were by nature the children of wrath, even as others*. To walk in Christ is a spiritual walk; and surely they do not walk in Christ, who *walk in the flesh*, 2 Cor. x. 3.

8. Those that walk in *superstition*; even in superstitious worship and ceremonial customs, Acts xxi. 21. We read there of some that *walk after the customs*, viz. the Jewish ceremonies, that were abolished: Those walk not in Christ the substance, who *walk in the shadow*, Col. ii. 17.

9. Those that walk in *self*, or self-righteousness; *Go-*
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ing about to establish their own righteousness, not submitting themselves unto the righteousness of God, Rom. x. 3. Thus, some make works their righteousness; some make faith their righteousness; and they walk in this faith, not *in Christ by faith*: but it is not faith that saves merely, but Christ received by faith. As it is not the laying on the plaister that heals the sore, but the plaister itself that is laid on; so it is not our faith, or receiving of Christ, but Christ received by faith that saves us. It is not our looking to the brazen Serpent mystical, but the mystical brazen Serpent looked unto by faith, Christ received by faith, that saves us. O but self is subtle! But if we knew ourselves, self-knowledge would be a school-master of humility. One of the first works which the word and Spirit works in men, is to give them light to go down into the dark cellar of their hearts, and make discoveries: we are proud because we do not know ourselves; he that knoweth himself, loaths himself; he that knoweth his wants, prays in earnest; he that knoweth his weakness, fears, and flies to the Rock; he that brings knowledge of himself to a sermon, gathers out of the garden those herbs, that are medicinal to him. It is true, the heart is deceitful, and who can know it? but as we need not taste all the water of the sea, or every drop thereof, to know that it is salt and brackish; nor taste every apple of the tree, to know the tree: so, the tasting of some evils of our heart, may make us to know what we are; so as to make us flee out of ourselves to Christ.

10. This doctrine, in a word, reproves all *Latitudinarians* and *Libertines*, who think they believe, and so that they may do what they please? having *received Christ*, they think there is no need of *walking in him*: they please themselves with a superficial, opinionative, inoperative faith. Know, Sirs, that men are not to judge of themselves, either by their *faith without works*, or by their *works without faith*; but by their *faith, as it works by love*.—The legal hypocrite judges himself, by his *works without faith*. But, as by fair and beautiful children, we cannot judge of lawful marriage; so, neither by the fruit of good works, can a person judge of his marriage to Christ: where there was never a formal consent, or

receiving of Christ Jesus the Lord, all the professed walking in him, is but hypocrisy.—Again, the gospel hypocrite judges himself, by his *faith without works*; he professes to receive Christ, but he walks not in him. A man may have a sound faith, and yet not a saving faith; he may be called an orthodox believer, but yet an heterodox practitioner, an erroneous walker; sound in his principles, but not in his morals; and this discovers the naughtiness of his faith: for, *true faith works by love*.

May the Lord bear home the *reproof* himself, and and give us understanding in all things.



S E R M O N XL.

COLO S. ii. 6.

As ye have received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk ye in him.

[The seventh Sermon on this text.]

THERE is but one Being that we have most to do with, in all the world, who yet is most neglected by the generality of mankind, and that is God, the Being of all beings; Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, one God. There is one of these persons of this glorious Trinity, that stands very nearly related unto man; and yet men are generally very little acquainted with him, and that is the second person, the Son of God, who is God-man in one person. God and man cannot meet together in peace, after our fall into sin, but only in this central place, this glorious person, God-man, the Lord Jesus Christ: without union to him, and communion with him, we cannot meet with God in mercy. Now, the way to have union to him, is by receiving him; and the way to communion with him, is by walking in him: and so, the whole mystery of true religion lies here before us; *As ye have received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk ye in him.*

We now come to the *third* use of the doctrine, which is for *trial* and *examination*. There are two things that we all need to examine and try, namely, Our *STATE*, and our *WALK*; our spiritual being, and our spiritual well-being: both these are before us in the text. The state and being of a Christian lies in this, that he hath *received Christ*: the behaviour, and well-being of a Christian lies in this, that he is one that *walks in Christ*. And therefore let us try in both these particulars. 1. Let us try our *faith*, namely, if ye have *received Christ Jesus the Lord*; and so come to try our state and spiritual being. 2. Let us try our *gospel-obedience*; namely, if we be *walking in Christ*; and we may thus know our well-being.

First, Let us try our *FAITH*, whether we have *received Christ Jesus the Lord*; yea or not: and so, whether or not we be in a state of grace. O man, woman, poor dying mortals; according as you have this faith or not, so will it fare with you through all eternity: if you die in unbelief, *you die in your sins*, John viii. 24. And better die in a ditch, and die like a dog, than die in your sins. If you die in your sins, you will rise in your sins, and stand at the tribunal of God in your sins: you can never receive remission of the guilt of sin, nor redemption from the power of sin, so long as you have not received Christ; and therefore reflect solemnly upon this matter, man, whether you have received Christ or not. If all that you are worth in a world, lay in one precious stone, and that stone was to be tried by a skilful jeweller, whether it were true or false, whether it would fly or endure, under the smart stroak of his hammer; surely your thoughts could not be unconcerned, about the issue of such a trial. Why, man, woman, all that you are worth in this world, and in the world to come, depends upon the truth of your faith, which now we call you to try, whether it will fly or endure the trying stroak of the hammer of God's word. Have you no concern in this matter? You would be loath to put to sea, though it were but to cross a short ferry, in a rotten lecky bottom; and will you dare to venture into the ocean of eternity, in a false rotten faith?

O man! can you be too exact and careful about that, on which the determination of your whole estate depends, and that for ever?—Well then, say you, *How shall I know, If I have received Christ, by a saving faith?* I do not incline to multiply marks. There are two questions, I would have you to examine this great matter by, whether you have saving faith, or not; such as hath received Christ Jesus the Lord, 1. Enquire how it was *created* by the Spirit. 2. How it was *acted* in your soul.

1st, How it was *created* by the Spirit? Many pretend to faith, but can give no account how they came by it, or where they got the hand to receive Christ withal: but it is Christ that receives and embraces the soul, before the soul can receive or embrace him. Faith is the fruit of the creating power of the Spirit of God: and hence, it is called the *fruit of the Spirit*, Gal. v. 22.; so it is called the *faith of the operation of God*, Col. ii. 12. And such a powerful operation, as is called the effect of the *exceeding greatness of his mighty power, which he wrought in Christ, when he raised him from the dead*, Eph. i. 19, 20. But some have experienced the powerful working of the Spirit in creating faith, that yet cannot give a distinct account of his operation therein; and therefore I will tell you of these two or three things, that the Spirit doth usually in creating this faith, whereby the soul receives Christ.

1. He prepares his way by a work of *conviction*, John xvi. 8. and legal humiliation. The Spirit first *convinces of sin*, and then of *righteousness*: and surely the child of faith is not ordinarily born without pangs; some have greater pains than others, but all have their measure of conviction of sin, and deep concern about their lost state by nature. Now, were you ever deeply convinced, and stabbed to the heart, by the sharp sword of the law; and put to that plight, *Men and brethren, what shall I do?* Were you ever put to your wits-end, so as you knew not what to do in all the world, or what hand to turn yourselves to? Were you at that pass, that you would have given a thousand worlds for light and direction, where you might find outgate and deliverance to your

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weary spirit? Were you ever deeply weighted and affected, with your guilt, sin, and danger, by the powers of the world to come; and the thoughts of your spiritual and eternal state actuating upon your soul, with such invincible force, that you could have no rest, no satisfaction, no contentment, till you got some sovereign outgate? Was you ever deeply wounded upon the account of your sin? Was it like a sword in your bones, and like a weight of iron, and a mountain of lead upon your soul? Surely, if ever you have received Christ, you have seen a need of him. When you are sick, you will readily see the need of a physician; when poor, you will see the need of riches; when naked, you will see the need of cloathing: whatever temporal straits ly upon you, you will find your need of suitable supply: Even so, if ever the Spirit of conviction hath come in, surely you have seen a need of Christ, a need of mercy and pity, and of a sovereign antidote against your maladies and miseries, which have been discovered to you.

2. The Spirit having convinced the soul of sin, in order to make the soul see a need of Christ, having brought the man to conviction, doth next bring him to *desperation*; I mean, to self-dispair: This is imported in the language of those, Acts ii. 37. *Men and brethren, what shall we do?* They are at a total loss about deliverance, and the way of escape. It is an emphatic word to this purpose, the apostle useth, Gal. iii. 23. *Before faith came, we were kept under the law, shut up unto the faith, which should afterwards be revealed; SHUT UP unto the faith, συγκεκλεισμένοι, as MEN BESIGED and DISTRESSED* in a garrison, in a time of storm, when the enemy pours in upon them through the breaches, and overpowers them; there is but one port or gate, at which they can escape, and to that they all throng, as despairing of life, if they take any other course: Even so doth convictions besiege men, and distress them, beat them off from all their holds and entrenchments, and shut them up unto Christ, as the only way of escape. The man once thought his duties would save him; his reformation would save him; that a little repentance would

would save him, or that a stricter life would do the business: but now there is no hope appears in the whole horizon of sense; there is no way but one, Christ or condemnation for ever. Now, the man is brought to say; Oh! I cannot deliver myself out of the wretched state: men and angels cannot deliver me: all my former refuges will not secure me: I find the bed is too short, the covering is too narrow; and if I trust to these Egyptian reeds, they will not only fail me, but pierce and wound me too.

3. The Spirit, in working this faith, whereby the soul receives Christ, having wrought the soul to this conviction, this self-despair, doth next bring the soul readily to the *greatest pinch and straits*, and *solemn concern*, that ever it was under about any thing in the world, as we see in the experience of the jaylor, Acts xvi. 29. He came *trembling*, and asked, why the judgment of the great day was acted by way of anticipation in his conscience? It is with no little concern, that people do revolve these and the like questions in their minds daily; *What shall I eat? what shall I drink?* and, *how shall I and mine be fed and clothed?* But surely, much deeper impressions upon the heart, when the soul is under the awakening influences of the Spirit of bondage, do these questions make in the man's breast; *What shall I do to be saved?* and, *What shall come of me through eternity?* The man is brought to a solemn and awful concern about his everlasting condition; and to be in sed earnest about his eternal state. All frolics and frothiness doth vanish, and here the man lies at God's mercy, unable to help himself, and unworthy that God should help him; and owning that he deserves to be thrown into the bottomless pit; and that it will be a wonder of grace, and a miracle of mercy, if God shall pity him. And then,

4. The Spirit, in working this faith, whereby the man receives Christ, doth come into the soul by a *powerful, saving, conquering illumination*; even as a Spirit of *wisdom and revelation, in the knowledge of Christ*, Eph. i. 17. Some enlightening work, setting home the law, and discovering sin, makes way for what I have already mentioned:

mentioned: but now, saving, powerful, illumination takes place, for discovering the glorious object of faith, the Lord Jesus Christ; for there must be a *seeing of the Son*, ere there can be a *believing in him*, John vi. 40. As faith without works, so the consequent of it is dead; as faith without light, so the antecedent of it is blind: faith is the hand whereby we receive Christ, but knowledge is the eye by which that hand is directed. Now, hath ever God opened your eyes, and given you a heartsome view of Christ, the *King in his beauty, as fairer than the children of men; as more glorious than mountains of prey; as brighter than the firmamental sun, in his meridian splendor and glory?* Have you got such a view of him, that, suppose God should come to you with Christ in one balance, and ten thousand worlds, full of all imaginable pleasures and honours, in another balance; and said to you, Which of them will you choose? You would have rejected all those with disdain and abhorrence, and your soul would have flattered after a Redeemer, saying, *I count all but loss and dung for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord?* Have you got such glorious discoveries of the grace and love of God in Christ, in the gospel, as hath drawn out your heart to the offer thereof? It is by the shining of the gospel light, through the free promise, into the heart, that the man is turned from darkness to light. The highest natural light will leave a man short of the discovery of sin, in its *exceeding sinfulness*; and of the riches of grace in Christ, for the recovery of lost sinners: these cannot be seen aright, till they be revealed by the divine Spirit; *Flesh and blood revealeth them not*, Mat. xvi. 17. The heart stood immediately before, at an infinite distance from the Lord Jesus, and was full of opposition against him: but now, a divine power being exerted, by the word of the gospel, for drawing the soul off from all other objects, to pitch upon Christ alone for salvation, in the way of free grace; then it accepts of the blessed offer, when all arguments in the world before could not prevail with it. Hath the Spirit of God cleared up to you the gospel offer of Christ, in order to your receiving of him? for, *therein is the righteousness of God revealed*

revealed from faith to faith. It is in a gospel-glass, that the soul gains a right discovery of the excellency of Christ, and that righteousness of his, without which there is no salvation. This first acquaintance with Christ doth make such a powerful alteration, by discoveries above sense, bringing the heart towards Christ beyond all other means, that it usually hath a mark upon it, in so much that it is most evidencing, and carries its evidence along with it. Such first things have a mark upon them, and are of a most desirable nature; the state thereupon being so vastly different from what it was, how refined soever the nature was before.—Thus try your faith by the way how it was *created* by the Spirit.

2dly, How was faith *acted* in your souls, when Christ was received? or, how did it act? To be sure, in general, faith acts under the influence of the same Spirit that works it; for, as he works it, so he draws it forth to act and exercise; and, under this conduct, the soul, in receiving Christ, acts in the following manner.

1. The soul, in receiving Christ, doth act *humbly*; Ezek. xvi. 63. *That thou mayest remember, and be confounded, and never open thy mouth, because of thy shame, when I am pacified towards thee, for all that thou had done.* O but a soul convinced of its unworthiness, and desert of hell, and that scarce can expect any thing but utter damnation, how doth the first dawnings of mercy melt and humble it! O whence is this to such a worm as I! He stands behind Christ weeping and washing his feet with tears. When one of the first works of the word and Spirit is, to give the soul a light to go down to the dark cellar of his heart, and make discoveries, so as he is standing amazed, and trembling at the sight of himself: and the next work of the Spirit is, to lead him in to the lightsome chamber of the King of glory, to bring him *from darkness to light*; how is he melted with the sense of mercy!

2. The soul, in receiving Christ, doth act *vehemently*, and with ardent desire after Christ, and *hungering and thirsting after righteousness*; and crying for faith itself, which yet may be hid from the man's own sight, saying, *Lord, I believe, help my unbelief*: he sees his own inability

lity to believe, and that the work of faith is wholly supernatural; and crys, O enable me to come to Christ! O give me Christ, or I perish for ever! It is thy work, O reveal thy arm! O man, woman, where are the bed-fides, and secret corners where you have besieged heaven with such a cry? saying, O for a drink of the water of the well of Bethlehem! O for a drop of that precious blood? O for a smile of a God in Christ! *As the heart panteth after the water-brooks, so panteth my soul after thee, O God,* Psal. xlii. 1.

3. The soul in receiving Christ, acts *intirely* and *undividedly*: he receives him as CHRIST JESUS the LORD. As the three offices are undivided in Christ, so are they in the believer's acceptance: O my ignorance, says the soul, makes him necessary and desirable as a Prophet! O my guilt makes him necessary and desirable as a Priest! And my strong corruption makes him necessary and desirable as a King! To receive Christ as a Jesus, in submitting to his obediencial righteousness, for acceptance unto life, is faith unto *justification*, Rom. x. 10. And to consent to have him for our Lord, to rule over us, by his Spirit dwelling in us, is faith unto *sanctification*, Rom. viii. 9, 10, 11. Is it thus that you receive Christ?

4. The soul in receiving Christ, acts *confidently*; for, in him *we have boldness and confidence, through the faith of him*; for it acts upon an infallible testimony, the divine veracity and faithfulness; or, *Thus saith the Lord*, is the firm foundation upon which faith is built: faith is a *setting to the seal that God is true*. When faith is acted, God gives the man a testimonial; Heb. xi. 5, 6. *Enoch had this testimony, that he pleased God: But without faith it is impossible to please God*. But what is yet more strange, faith not only gets a testimonial from God, but gives a testimonial to him, as I formerly observed; John ii. 33. *He that hath received his testimony, hath set to his seal, that God is true*. It is a receiving the record of God: here is the confidence and assurance of faith, according to the measure of it: and all acts of faith without this are but as so many arrows shot at random, into the open air.

5. The soul, in receiving Christ, acts *violently*; *The kingdom of heaven suffereth violence, and the violent take it by force.* It acts *peremptorily*, saying, *If I perish, I perish*; at Christ I must be. It acts in a manner *wilfully*; *Although he slay me, yet will I trust in him. I will not let thee go, until thou bless me.* The soul ventures upon the free grace and faithfulnes of God, in the greatest distresses; and here it lies, as it were, at anchor, in such stormy days, Heb. vi. 19.

6. The soul, in receiving Christ, acts *exclusively*, excluding all other favours, all other helps, all other props; receiving him; and resting upon him alone; saying, *I will make mention of thy righteousness, even of thine only,* Psalm lxxi. 16. *And he found in him, not having mine own righteousness which is of the law, but that which is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God by faith,* Phil. iii. 19. To depend partly upon Christ's righteousness, and partly upon our own, is to set one foot upon a rock, and another in the quick sands: Christ will either be to us, *all in all*, in point of righteousness; or else nothing at all; as he did the whole work, so he will have the whole praise: If he be not *able to give us the uttermost*, why do we depend upon him at all? If he be, why do we lean upon any beside him? If we lean partly on Christ, and partly on ourselves, or our own good works, wishes, actions, or affections we inevitably ruin ourselves. If a man set one foot upon dry land, and the other upon deep water, and lean to them both with equal weight; yea, if he give any of his weight to the water, he will sink there: So here, if a person rest partly upon the merits of Christ, and partly, or in any degree, upon his self-righteousness for salvation, he will inevitably perish. Man's righteousness indeed was once in himself; and because he was endowed at first with a perfect rectitude of nature, and ability sufficient to have yielded perfect obedience to the law, and thereby to have obtained eternal life, had he persevered in his integrity: so there is still a mighty bias in his heart, though now depraved, to seek righteousness by the works of the law; and all his best actions favour much of this legal turn of mind. It is with

with all Adam's posterity as with bees, which have been accustomed to go to their own hive, and carry all hither; if the hive be removed to another place, they will still fly to the old place, hover up and down about it, and creep about the sides of it, and rather die there than go to a new place: so it is with us, God hath removed our righteousness from ourselves to Christ, it is not now in ourselves but Christ; but, who is prevailed with to forsake self, and self-righteousness? Corrupt nature will venture to be damned rather than do it. The proud self-conceited heart will not stoop to live upon a stock of another's righteousness: but now, by faith, or in the day of believing, the man is brought to this; *Surely shall one say, In the Lord have I righteousness and strength;* and acts upon Christ exclusively, excluding all other Saviours, all other righteousness, in point of justification; yea, and excluding all other Lords in point of sanctification: for, whereas unbelief says, *We will not suffer this man to reign over us;* and hypocrites say, *We will have this man, and the world; this man, and our lusts both, to reign over us:* Faith says, we will have none but this man, this God-man, to reign over us. A man may as lawfully join saints and angels, in his mediation with Christ, as his graces: "It is gross idolatry, says one, [*viz.* Mr. Burgefs,] to make the works of God, a God; and it is but a more subtle idolatry, to make the works of Christ, a Christ.

7. The soul, in receiving Christ, acts *regularly*; I mean, according to the gospel-rule, and suitable to the gospel-offer; *So we preached, and so ye believed,* 1 Cor. xv. 11. Faith answers the gospel-offer, as the impress upon the wax doth answer the engraving of the seal: so Christ offers himself, and so faith receives him, namely, for *wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, and redemption.*

8. The soul, in receiving Christ, acts *methodically*, receiving first the PERSON and then the BENEFITS: God gives CHRIST, and then with him *all things*, Rom. viii. 32. And so faith receives Christ, and then, in and with him all things. It is true, salvation must be most of all in the sinner's eye, at his first believing; and thus

many, in their acting faith at first, may be filled with much confusion, and are not distinct in their actings of faith: but this is the proper order in believing, as will afterward be more and more clear to every believer, upon his repeated acts of faith, first to accept the person, and then the benefits.

9. The soul, in receiving Christ, acts *freely*; he receives the *water of life freely*, Rev. xxii. 17. Isa. lv. 1. The man comes to receive Christ with an empty hand, as to one that *justifies the ungodly*; Rom. iv. 5. *To him that worketh not, but believeth on him that justifieth the ungodly, his faith is counted for righteousness. To him that worketh not*, in the law sense; not to work, and not to work perfectly, is all one to the law. Now, the man is convinced that, as he cannot work perfectly, nay, cannot work at all, so he comes to Christ as one that is in himself ungodly, acknowledging that the righteousness, by which, he can stand before God, is only in Christ, and not in himself, in whole or in part. The man comes emptied of all qualifications to recommend him to God; he sees himself qualified for nothing, but hell and damnation; and thus comes freely, to get all good out of Christ's fulness: he is an empty-handed sinner; but he comes to one who is a full-handed Saviour; for he hath such a stock of grace as cannot be exhausted: angels have a fulness of sufficiency, but they have none to spare; but Christ hath a fulness of redundancy, that hath been flowing over to sinners, near these six thousand years, and yet is not lessened: and it is he that lets out of his grace with the word you hear, or else you get no good of the sermon.

10. The soul, in receiving Christ, acts *successfully* and *fruitfully*; and by its fruit you may know it: for, true faith is a fruitful faith. It brings forth the fruit of gospel-repentance, Zech. xii. 10. *They shall look on him whom they have pierced and mourn.* O but the apprehension of grace and mercy in Christ, thaws and melts the heart! It brings forth the fruit of *love to Christ*, his ways, his people; *Faith worketh by love*, Gal. v. 6. Again, *To you that believe, he is precious.* O! *Whom have I in heaven but thee, and there is none in all the earth that*

that I desire besides thee.—It brings forth the fruit of *heart and life purity*; Acts xv. 9. *Purifying their hearts by faith.* Morality may hide corruption, but faith purifies the heart from it; and it cleanses the hands also; the man is sanctified by that faith which is in Christ.—It brings forth the fruit of *zeal*; zeal for the Lord's *name*, and *honour*, and *glory*: O the man could wish, that all the world would come and admire him; that all the world would come and adore him, and love him! The man is made content to do and suffer for him, to live and die for him, so as he is a witness for Christ, at least in the intention, and a martyr in resolution: this takes place when faith is up.—Zeal against *sin*: O the more sweet that Christ is to the man, the more bitter is sin! O that abominable thing that God hates! He now resolves to pursue it to death: he not only confesses, but forsakes; not only forsakes, but hates; and not only hates, but kills and crucifies; and not only kills it, but desires to bury his dead out of sight; to have his seed buried in Christ's grave; to be saved by him and rise with him.—Zeal for God's *house*, and love to the ordinances of his appointment: *O how amiable are thy tabernacles! Thy words were found of me, and I did eat them.* The word and ordinances are the very food of faith; and the desire of the believer's soul is after the same: and here he is painful and diligent in his attendance upon the same. If we weigh the pains for bodily food, with the pains that men take for their soul, in the balance of the sanctuary, many would discover their want of faith, or their faith to be lighter than vanity: how do men, even without all sense of pain, undergo sore labour and toil, for the matter of a shilling? How, in the time of harvest, will they even melt themselves in the heat, and yet are merry and pleasant? How will they in winter ride to markets, and stand in the open and cold air all day long, to vent their commodities without fretting? But now compare this to the other: see what vain and fleshly excuses men will have, about the hearing of the word; as, who can endure to go to church when the weather is so hot, there is such crouding? and what a misery is it to stand all the time of the sermon? and, who

who can endure to sit an hour in the cold church? truly, it is enough to make a man catch his death! Why, man, can you endure the summer heat and winter cold about your outward affairs, and stand a whole day in your shop, or in the market, in the coldest of winter? and do you excuse yourselves, or fret for an hour in the church? Can you be content to labour six days, for your bodily food; and think you it great pains to bestow one day in following the gospel-market for your souls? What does this argue in you, but that you have no faith to feed upon the word; no affection or desire after the bread of life, for your spiritual maintenance and sustentance? If you had a fervent zeal for the word, it would cool the heat of summer and warm you against the cold of winter: you would little regard such trifles as cold and heat, wind and weather; these would vanish before this zeal, as the morning dew before the sun: these shifts and excuses could not stand the zeal of God's house; it would eat up and consume them. Now, try yourselves by these things.

It may be some weak believer may be saying, *Some of these marks I know to my experience; but others are dark to me, therefore I doubt of all.* To which we reply, If indeed you have one saving solid mark, and can really close with it; it may satisfy you, though you be in the dark in others. If a child cannot go, yet if it can suck; if it cannot suck, yet if it can cry; if it cannot cry, yet if it can breathe, it is a mark of life: so, there may be breathings in the soul, that are evidential of life and faith, when other things are hid. O try yourselves, and look to God to search and try you! it is by his judgment you stand or fall.

Secondly, Let us try our GOSPEL-OBEDIENCE, or our *walking in Christ*. Christ is the way to heaven, and faith is the way to Christ: This faith hath two offices, the one is *acceptance*, and the other is *dependance*: O! what a mercy is it that we, who are by nature out of the way, have the way to heaven set before us, namely, Christ; and the way to this way, namely, faith; and the nature and office of this faith: the first office of it, is acceptance, or the reception of Christ: the second office of it,

is dependance on him, or walking in him: and both these are here before us in the text; *As ye have received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk ye in him.* Here is a very large field, and it is not possible to travel through it all; for it concerns both the internal disposition, and the external conversation; and to both these we must have a view, in the progress of this trial. This walk in Christ is just the *obedience of faith*; and when we propose to try this, it is all one as to try, whether or not we be living the live of faith; for, as to *receive Christ*, is to *come* to him by faith; so, to *walk in him*, is to *live* on him by faith; for, to walk in Christ, is to walk by faith, as we have received him; or suitably to the reception of him, as I shewed at length on the doctrinal part, and might resume it by way of trial: but because I enlarged so much upon it then, shall offer some particulars distinct, at least in the enlargement from what I then proposed and prosecuted. To be sure those do not walk in Christ, whom I spoke of in the use of reproof, that habitually walk in the darkness of ignorance and error; that walk in vanity and profanity; that walk in lies and slander; that walk in proud self and superstition; that walk in carnal liberty, in rioting and drunkenness, chambering and wantonness; yea, these that never received Christ, are not capable of this walking in him; and therefore the root of this walk, is the reception of Christ, concerning which I offered some marks before. Now, I insist the longer upon this use of trial, not only because we may thereby try ourselves, but also therein be further instructed, concerning the nature and excellency of this walk. There are two general heads I propose in this part of the use of trial, whether we know or not, what it is to walk in Christ, namely, 1. To try by the *scriptural qualities* of it. 2. By the *gospel provision* for it.

1st, Try this Christian walk, or walking in Christ, by the SCRIPTURAL QUALITIES of it. And,

1. It is a *mixed* walk: this we may view concerning it more generally; it is a mixed kind of a walk, interwoven with a great many vicissitudes: as long as believers are in this valley of tears, sometimes they walk
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in the light of God's countenance, sometimes they walk in darkness; Pſal. lxxxix. 15. *Blessed are the people that know the joyful sound; they shall walk, O Lord, in the light of thy countenance.* Isa. l. 10. *Who is among you that feareth the Lord, that obeyeth the voice of his Servant, that walketh in darkness and hath no light?* It is a changeable kind of walk, not in respect of the believer's state, nor yet his habitual tendency towards God and heaven; but in respect of his inward frame and outward condition; he is like a man that, in a journey, is sometimes going up hill, and sometimes down; sometimes in a valley, and sometimes on a mountain; sometimes meets with a piece of dirty way; sometimes with a more plain and easy road. It is said of the wicked, *Because they have no changes, therefore they fear not God:* It is true, the wicked may have their outward changes, from prosperity to adversity; yea, and their inward changes, from an ill mood to a good mood; but as they are still always the same thing; so their most remarkable changes differ from the changes of God's people, whose mixed walk, and interchangeable circumstances, do mainly consist in their seeing sometimes the smiles, and sometimes the frowns of the Lord: now he shines, and then he hides; now he is present, and then he is absent: *I said, my mountain shall be like Bashan; but lo, thou didst hide thy face, and I was terrible.* The changes of the hypocrite, is like that of a stone put into the fire; it is changed from cold to hot, but it is a hard stone still: but that of a believer, is like gold put into the fire; it is tried and purified thereby, and purged from some dross.

2. It is a *denied* walk; to walk in Christ is as much as to walk, not in ourselves; the man is denied to himself, and his own understanding and wisdom; to his own strength and righteousness. The discipline of Christ must *deny himself*, and have *no confidence in the flesh*: hence it is called, a *walking humbly with our God*, Micah vi. 8. Augustine being asked, What was the first grace? Answered, Humility: What is the second? Answered, Humility: What is the third? Answered, Humility. Indeed it is the varnish of every grace; and *God gives grace to the humble*: he loves to lay his wines in the

the lowest cellars. The motto of a humble faint is, *Poor and needy; poor in spirit*: and here the poorest are the richest; the man is empty in himself, but full in Christ; hath nothing in himself, but hath all in Christ; and is filled with self-debasing, God-exalting, grace-admiring thoughts, saying with Jacob, *I am less than the least of thy mercies*, Gen. xxii. 10.; and with Job, *I abhorre myself, and repent in dust and ashes*; and with Afaph, *So foolish was I and ignorant, I was as a beast before thee*; and with Heman, *I am more brutish than any man*; and with Isaiah, *I am unclean*; and with Paul, *I am the chief of sinners, and the least of saints*. It is a humble and denied walk; the man is denied to himself, brought out of himself.

3. It is a *dependant* walk: it is a living by faith in the Son of God, and dependance on him; like the spouse, *Going up from the wilderness, leaning on the Beloved*. As it is with a woman, she first gives her consent, and becomes a wife: and then, being a wife, she looks upon her husband, as the only person to supply her, protect her, comfort her, and provide for her: so it is with faith, it first espouses the soul to Christ, takes him as a Lord and Husband; and then casts all the provision of the soul upon him, all supplies and helps; trusts on him for righteousness, for pardon of sin, for grace, for strength, for comfort, for eternal life; and commits all to him, 2 Tim. i. 12. *I know in whom I have believed, and I am persuaded he is able to keep that which I have committed unto him against that day*. Though other things should all fail, faith depends upon Christ: when the spider's web is swept down, when the cob-webs of creature-confidences are swept down, faith will see a sure foundation to rest upon: *Though the fig-tree should 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 herb in the stalls: Yet I will rejoice in the Lord, I will joy in the God of my salvation*, Hab. iii. 17, 18. He that crutches, if he lean not on them in his walking, take away his crutches and he will walk still; but take away a cripple's crutches, that goes upon them, and he

comes to the ground presently: so, if we did not, like cripples, lean upon these outward things, or outward frames, we would not be so easy thrown down, in their removal. To walk in Christ is to depend upon him; it is a dependant, a believing walk; leaning upon the word of God, his bare word: and indeed, if a man of worth should be asked a pawn, and not credited upon his word, he would take it in ill part: what a shame is it, that we cannot credit God, without pawn and caution!

4. It is an *extensive* walk: what is said of the commandment of God, we may say of this walk; *I have seen an end of all perfection, but thy commandments are exceeding broad.* It is a narrow and strait way indeed, in regard of its difficulty to nature, and the paucity of those that walk in it; but it is broad in itself, in respect of its extent. This walk of Christ extends to all the commandments of God; for the man that walks in Christ, hath a *respect to all God's commands.* It extends to all the duties of religion; and to all the graces of the Spirit. It extends to all the motions of the heart, and all the actions of life; to every thought, word, and deed. In all these, we are called to walk in Christ by faith. Yea, it extends to all the circumstances of the believer's life; to all the indigencies of his life; and all the exigencies of his soul; for, *the just shall live by faith,* Rom. i. 17. Where is the believer on earth, but hath the sensible feeling still of some distress or other, inward or outward; whether it be sense of sin, or sense of guilt, or sense of corruption, or sense of temptation, or sense of desertion, or sense of wickedness, or sense of want, or sense of affliction from God, or sense of contradiction from the world? Now, in all these, he is to live by faith, and to walk in Christ, knowing there is enough in him to answer all. The soul cannot be cast into any sea, but Christ is a sure ship and safe harbour. To walk in him, is to improve him in every case, and to trust in him for relief, in every exigency. A man is said to walk, not merely when he hath feet to walk with, but when he is making use of his feet, to carry him on his way: even so, a man walks in Christ, not merely when he hath faith,

faith, and hath received Christ, but when he is by faith improving Christ, in every time of need, for pardon, light, life, liberty, comfort, and communication: the habit and quality of faith is one thing; the use and exercise of faith is another. A man is said to live by bread, not when he hath it in his cup-board, but when he takes and eats it: so, to live by faith, is to put faith to exercise; to bring the pitcher to the well and draw water. Why, says the man, that is walking in Christ, there is corruption working again; but I will away to Christ again to subdue it: Satan renews his temptations, but I will renew my address to Christ; he will again *bruise Satan under my feet*: my comforts are gone, but I will go to Christ; he *will come again, and my joy shall be full*. The life of faith is a multiplied work, and a repeated work; it leads the soul often to look, even for the same kind of supply. To live by faith, is to keep house with Christ, and to be his daily guest; to rely upon him as often as we have need, and to draw still from the same fountain.

5. This walk in Christ, is a *gospel walk*; *Only let your conversation be, as it becometh the gospel of Christ*, Phil. i. 27. It is under a gospel-conduct; according to a gospel-rule; from a gospel-motive; in a gospel-manner; to a gospel-end; and by a gospel-spirit, which were a large theme, if I could insist upon it.—This gospel-walk hath *gospel-holiness* in it, and so it is a *holy walk*; *Be ye holy as I am holy: holiness becometh his house for ever; And without holiness, no man shall see the Lord*.—It hath *gospel-circumspection* in it, and so it is called a *circumspect walk*; *See that ye walk circumspectly, not as fools, but as wise, redeeming the time, because the days are evil*.—And a *watchful walk*, knowing that there is a deceitful heart within, a flattering world without, and a tempting devil going about us: therefore, what *Christ says to one, he says to all*, WATCH.—It hath a *gospel-uprightness* in it; and so it is called an *upright walk*; *He that walketh uprightly, walketh surely: The way of the Lord is straight to the upright: He will give grace and glory, and no good thing will be withhold, from them that walk uprightly*.—It hath a *gospel-order* in it; and so it is called a *well-order-*

ed walk; To him that ordereth his conversation aright, will I shew the salvation of God. And as a walk is orderly, when a man gives every duty its proper time and place, and suffers not one to clash with another, or one to shuffle out another; so, gospel-order in our walk, will make a man bring all from Christ, and then improve all for him: it makes a man live upon him as the ALPHA of his life, and to him as the OMEGA of it.—In a word, a gospel-walk hath a *gospel spirit* influencing it; and so it is a cheerful walk, according to the measure of the Spirit; *The joy of the Lord, is the man's strength*: and this joy is not inconsistent with gospel-sorrow; for it may be, and frequently is, both a joyful and a mournful walk at once; for a man never begins to mourn as a child, till he hath faith to see God as a Father: the gracious looks of Christ are the springs of gospel-repentance: *And blessed are they that thus mourn, for they shall be comforted.*

6. This walk of Christ, it is a *heavenly walk*: the man that walks in Christ, hath his *conversation in heaven*, where Christ is, Phil. iii. 20. There is here a heavenliness of thought: the man in this walk comes to be heavenly-minded; at least he is burdened, that he cannot get his thoughts placed on heavenly things, and best pleased with himself, when he gets his heart set in heaven. There is a heavenliness of speech that he endeavours, when he is walking in Christ; a heavenliness of language; a heavenliness of affections; a heavenliness of trading by faith and prayer, drawing bills of exchange, as it were, upon Christ for whatever he stands in need of. How unsuitable is it for them, that have received Christ Jesus the Lord, to have an earthly walk! like the bird they call a lapwing, that hath a crown upon his head, and yet feeds upon excrements. Hath the Lord crowned you with loving-kindness, and yet do you live upon the dung of this world; made you an heir to a kingdom, and yet you ly tumbling among ashes? If God hath given you the fountain of living waters, and yet you are anxiously careful about the drops, that are in the broken cistern; surely you are not walking in Christ.

Christ. The faint that doth not live above the world, he lives beneath himself.

7. It is a *stedfast* walk; *Be ye stedfast and unmoveable*, 1 Cor. xv. 58. It is *progreſſive*, and yet *ſtedfaſt*; for, as I have formerly obſerved, the very word WALKING, imports progreſs and permanency. There is a conſtant progreſs in it; *The righteous holdeth on his way, and he that hath clean hands, waxeth ſtronger and ſtronger. The path of the juſt is as the ſhining light, that ſhineth more and more unto the perfect day.* True grace is of a growing nature. It is true, the believer may not be ſenſible of his growth, as we do not ſee ourſelves or others grow; but that we are grown, is plain; neither do we ſee how much the light increaſes, by every ſtep of the ſun's riſing higher; it is by imperceptible inſtances or degrees. When power of reſiſting temptations, and mortifying luſts, which before were too hard for us doth appear, we may ſee our growth; as we ſee our ſhadows are ſhortened, when the ſun riſes higher, but how much in a minute, we ſee not; yet it is a progreſſive walk. If the believer be not walking forward, he is not walking in Chriſt; for, when he walks in Chriſt, he is always coming ſpeed: and this walk in Chriſt, or living by faith on him, is the only ſtedfaſt and abiding life and walk. Though the mariners, when they put to ſea, may quickly loſe ſight of land, yet they never loſe ſight of heaven; how far ſoever they fail, in whatever tempeſt, yet ſtill, if they look up, they will ſee the ſame heaven: even ſo, the man that walks in Chriſt, and lives by faith, his faith never loſes its ſight of its rock; he may loſe ſight of land, ſight of friends, ſight of relations, and enjoyments of time, and all human props; but faith acted, will never loſe ſight of God, and Chriſt, and the promiſe: though all ſenſible enjoyments fly off, yet the man, who lives by faith, is at no loſs: What can he lack, who hath him that is *all in all*?

8. It is a *familiar* walk; *So walk ye in him.* O! who can walk more familiarly, one with another than this, for one to walk in another? *walk in him! Two cannot walk together, except they be agreed*: here is the ſweeteſt agreement and familiarity. There are ſeveral acts of familiarity,

miliarity; by which this intimate walk is expressed in scripture; and each of them might also be matter for our trial, whether we know this familiar walk.—There is *communion* between Christ and the believer; *Truly our fellowship is with the Father, and with the Son, through the Spirit. He sups with them, and they with him.*—There is *communication*; *The secret of the Lord is with them*; and they impart their secrets to him.—There is *cohabitation*; he dwells in them by his Spirit; *I will put my Spirit within you. I in them, and thou in me, that they may be one in us*: and they dwell in him by faith.—There is *co-ambulation*; he walks with them, and they walk with him; *He walks in the midst of the golden candlesticks*: they shall *walk with him all the day long.*—There is *confabulation*; he speaks to them, and they to him: they converse together: *Thou saidst, Seek ye my face; my heart said unto thee, Thy face, Lord, will I seek.*—There is *mutual visitation*; he visits them in a way of grace, and they him in a way of duty.—There is *mutual feasting and banquetting*; *He brought me to the banquetting-house, and his banner over me was love.*—There is *mutual salutation and embracement*; they *greet each other with a holy kiss*: *Let him kiss me with the kisses of his mouth; for his love is better than wine.* And they learn to *kiss the Son lest he be angry.*—But I enlarge not upon these now: what know you of these things, when thus you see what sort of a walk it is, this walking in Christ?—Try yourselves, by searching into the scriptural qualities of it.

2dly, Try this walk by the GOSPEL-PROVISION for it. All that know this walk, and truly walk in Christ, they are provided for the journey: God sends none a warfare on their own charges; nor doth call any to walk in him, without providing them for the way. And there are these eight things that travellers need for their journey, and all these things spiritual travellers have in Christ; yea, and communicate from him, according to the exigencies of their journey.

1. The traveller must have a *guide* to direct him: even so, if ye walk in Christ, ye have a guide; Christ himself is the guide: *This God is our God for ever and ever, and will be our guide even unto death.*—He is a skilful

ful guide, that knows every step of the way.—A faithful guide, that doth not mislead his people.—A tender guide, that helps the weak traveller.—And a continual guide, that never leaves them nor forsakes them.—Now, what know you of his guiding you by his word and Spirit? Do you ever hear the voice behind you, saying, *This is the way walk ye in it*, when you go to the right-hand, or to the left? And have you been made to resign yourselves to his conduct?

2. The traveller must have *light*, for it is hard to walk in the dark; and *sight*, that his eye may be upon the road: for though a traveller have light, yet if he shut his eyes, or suffer them to gaud, or to wander, without noticing the way, he is ready to stumble, or turn aside; so the spiritual traveller, that walks in Christ, he gets light and sight: and indeed Christ himself is his light; for, *He is the light of the world*: and his Spirit is given to the believer, as a *Spirit of wisdom and revelation*; and it is he that gives him sight as well as light, and fixes his eye: hence prays the Psalmist, *Turn away mine eyes from beholding vanity, and quicken me in thy way*, Psa. cxix. 37. Right walking is influenced by the light of the knowledge of Christ: the more we know of Christ, the more will we walk in him; yea, and the more we walk in him, the more will we know him; *He that doth his will, shall know his doctrine*: they influence one another. Even as the body warms the cloaths, and then the cloaths warm the body: so, the knowledge of Christ leads to gospel-practice; and gospel-practice leads to more knowledge.

3. The traveller must have a *cordial*, that he faint not by the way: even so, they that walk in Christ have a cordial provided; and indeed Christ, who is the way, is also the cordial; for, he is the *consolation of Israel*: and he affords them sometimes strong consolation, so as the *joy of the Lord is their strength*. *Wisdom's ways are pleasantness*, though the world reproach it as a melancholy way.—Now, what know you of the gospel cordial, or of the intimations of divine love, filling your hearts, at sometimes, with *joy unspeakable*, and *peace that passeth all natural understanding*? This is what he affords,

affords, now and then, to those that walk in him: he hath provided public inns for their refreshment and entertainment; and these are the public ordinances of his grace; the banquetting-houses, where he satiates and solaces his people with himself, on the *feast of fat things*, even the *true bread that cometh down from heaven*, and displays his *banner of love over them*.

4. The traveller must have a *purse* and *money* to bear his expences: even so, they that walk in Christ, they get *unsearchable riches* in him: *Out of his fulness they receive, and grace for grace*: they get what they need, though not always what they would; but he is a wise dispenser, and they have enough in him: yea, are *complete in him*; in whom is fulness of merit for their justification, and fulness of Spirit for their sanctification: *Money that answers all things*; yea, *durable riches and righteousness*; riches that will not rot in the grave, nor take the wings of the morning and fly away, as temporal enjoyments do: here is enough to pay all his charges, satisfy all his creditors, and answer all the law-pleas of the devil, of conscience, yea, of justice, and the law itself.—Know you what it is, man, to be supplied out of this stock?

5. The traveller must have *armour* for his journey: even so, they that walk in Christ, they get weapons to defend them from robbers and wild beasts, that are ready to bereave them of their life, and of their goods. See the Christian's complete armour, Eph. vi. 11,—17. You have the several pieces of armour there mentioned; and Christ himself is the great magazine of his military provision: the traveller walks in Christ, and in him hath all these pieces of armour; therefore is called, to be *strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might*.—Are you acquainted with this way of travelling, and walking in arms, depending on the power of a Mediator to fight all your battles against sin and Satan?

6. A traveller must have a *girdle* for his loins, to keep up his loose garments, and to keep his loins firm, that he do not weary with the length of his journey: even so, they that walk in Christ, need to *gird up the loins of their mind*, as the apostle expresses it; and to *have their loins girt about with truth*, Eph. vi. 14. Now,

as *Christ is the way*, so he is *the truth*, and can give *truth in the inward part*, and therefore will provide them of a girdle. His *truth shall be thy shield and buckler*, Psal. xci. 4. Spiritual travellers are therefore taught the truth, as it is in Jesus: both the truth, in respect of gospel-principles; and the truth of God in his promise.

7. The traveller must have *shoes* for his feet: even so, they that walk in Christ, they must have their *feet shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace*; that is, with a heart prepared to adhere to the gospel, and abide by it: now, this *preparation of the heart is from the Lord*. Do you find your heart prepared, fortified, and strengthened by his grace, notwithstanding of difficulties that are in the way of adhering to his truth, his gospel, his cause, and his interest in the world?

8. The traveller must have a *staff* in his hand, to help him forward, and to lean upon: even so, they that walk in Christ, have a staff put in their hand; *Thy rod and thy staff, they comfort me*, Psal. xxiii. 4. And what is the staff they lean upon? CHRIST himself is the main staff; *She goeth up from the wilderness, leaning upon her Beloved*. More particularly,

(1.) The staff of his *All-sufficiency*; saith God to Abraham, *I am God all-sufficient, walk before me*; I have enough in myself, and enough for every creature: as the sun hath light enough for a whole world; and a fountain of water enough for a whole country. *Walk before me*: if you want light, you will look to the sun; if you want water, you will go to the spring; and so, if you want any good, will you not look up to me, who am goodness itself, and infinitely able to succour; All-sufficiency itself, and infinitely able to supply? There is a strong staff.

(2.) The staff of his *promise*; as when God says, *I am thy shield, and thy exceeding great reward: Fear not, for I am with thee; I will uphold thee with the right-hand of my righteousness*. Not only have I all good, all-sufficiency, but there is a promise, might he say, that all the good I can do, I will do it for thee: there is no particular want of the believer, but hath a particular promise. If you knew a man to be sufficient, and to

have an estate worth ten thousand pounds, and all free, you would soon trust him for an hundred pound: but if he should tell you particularly, and say, Friend, I have a great estate, and I pray thee, if thou hast need of any thing, at any time, repair to me, I give thee my word, and if that be not enough, my bond and seal, that I will help thee; it were enough, he needed say no more. Yet, thus saith the Lord to the man that hath received Christ; Not only am I an all-sufficient God, but I promise that I will give thee *grace and glory, and withhold no good thing from thee*: as true as I am God, *I will not leave thee, nor forsake thee*. Is not this an excellent staff to lean upon?

(3.) The staff of his *power*: Whatever God promiseth, he is able to make good. Many a man is undone by suretyship; he suffers himself to be bound beyond his ability: but it is not so with God. If a subject promise to release and pardon a malefactor, it is nothing; he is not trusted, because he hath not power of life or death. If a poor man promise to discharge a great debt, nobody will credit his promise; because his ability is not answerable to his undertakings: But behold here, Christ hath ability to make good all his promises: he hath promised great things; to pardon great sins, to conquer great temptations, to subdue great corruptions, to convey great consolations. Well, but he is a great God; is any thing too hard for him? Do your particular wants still increase and renew themselves? Well, as vessels which we fill to-day, need a new filling to-morrow; the stomach which we seem to satisfy just now, within a few hours is empty and craving again: so here, the soul that hath once *tasted and seen that God is good*, sees that this taste is not sufficient to support him, and that created fulness will soon be diminished, if it is not daily supplied, and therefore still wants more, saying, *Evermore give us this bread*. But, here lies the comfort, that though the vessel be dry, the fountain is not; though the vessel be empty, the fountain is full: and his power to help is a creating power; such as can command things into being. O what a wonderful staff is this!

this! Do you know what it is to walk with this staff in your hand?

(4.) The staff of his *fidelity*: behold, the promises are sealed with truth; it is *God who cannot lie who hath promised: Faithful is he who hath promised, who also will do it.* He takes his own time, but he will be true to his word; *Behold, the days come, saith the Lord, that I will perform the good thing, which I have promised to the house of Israel, and to the house of Judah.*

(5.) In a word, *Christ himself*, and his *everlasting righteousness*, his *meritorious obedience* to the death, with which God is well-pleased, and his *valuable intercession*, whom God heareth always, is the staff which the believer leans upon: he that is the way they walk in, is the staff they walk with, and lean upon; for, *in him are all the promises Yea and Amen*; and one word of promise from a God in Christ, is enough to faith. If a mariner can get to the top of the mast, and descry but a point of land, then he is glad, and all is well: thus the believer by faith climbs to the top-mast, and sees the *promise afar off*, Heb. xi. 13.; and rejoices in Christ, in whom it stands fast. Every believer is ordinarily brought to such circumstances, that, if he do not live by faith, he cannot live at all: he is brought to *Jehosophat's plight*; *We know not what to do, but our eyes are towards thee.* It is with them, many times, as with a ship laden; on a sudden it is broken to pieces, and now of necessity they must swim to the shore, to the rock: so doth God dash all our lower confidences; he cracks our full state; separates us from all our sensible enjoyments; and, it may be, gives not a heart to any to show us compassion; that, when sorrows are poured in on all sides, a man may have nothing in all the world left him, but God's Bible, his word of promise, his Christ; and here he may rest, when all means under heaven cannot give relief.

Now, here are the *qualities* of this walk in Christ, and here is the *ordinary provision* that is given believers for this walk: a guide, a light, a cordial, a purse, armour, a girdle, shoes, and a staff. What know ye of this walk in Christ? These are some scriptural accounts

of it, by which we may try ourselves. I fear this walk is a mystery to many of us: these that never received Christ know nothing of it; and many that have received Christ, know but too little of this walk in Christ, this life of faith.

O man, woman; what do we think of Christ? and what do you think of this walk? Is he not a better portion than all the vanities of time can be to you? Yea, *The portion of Jacob is not like these; for, he is the former of all things. and Israel is the rod of his inheritance; the Lord of Hosts is his name,* Jer. li. 19. Is not this walk in him, a better walk than the world are taking, who are walking in the broad way, and reject Christ? Alas, Sirs! however lightly you think of Christ, and his way now, yet I will assure you, if you die not like a sot, you will think otherwise when the dead sweet begins to break upon you; you would then give a thousand worlds to have saving acquaintance with this way and this walk: and it may be, all that you will here then, instead of this, will be, As you have given the devil the flower of your age, so give him the bran also. O seek in to Christ, that you may know him, receive him, and walk in him!



S E R M O N XLI.

COLOS. ii. 6.

As ye have received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk ye in him.

[The eighth Sermon on this text.]

TH**E**R**E** are two excellent gifts which all men stand in need of; and as God only can give them, so every one should earnestly covet them.

The *first* is CHRIST, who is expressly called *the gift of God,* John iv. 10. This gift is the more to be prized, that
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that when God gives it, he gives himself and his Spirit with it. When a man gets Christ, he receive God in and with him; and therefore Christ says to such, *My Father is your Father, and my God your God*: and when a man receives Christ, he gets the Spirit in him and with him; for, *If any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his.*

The *second* is FAITH, which is expressly called *the gift of God* also, Eph. ii. 8. When God gives this latter gift, he just gives grace to receive the former gift. Infinite Majesty cannot give a greater gift than Christ; and infinite poverty cannot receive a greater, or more suitable gift: Christ is the greatest gift that heaven can give, or earth can receive. There is a giving of Christ in the gospel-offer, which is presupposed to, and constitutes the duty of receiving: for, *A man can receive nothing, except it be given him from heaven*, John iii. 27. Now, the whole life of religion lies in these two things, *viz.* faith's reception of Christ; and faith's improvement of him: both are in our text; *As ye have received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk ye in him.*—We are now upon the application. And

The *fourth* use of the doctrine is for *exhortation*; which we shall tender to two sorts of persons: 1. To *unbelievers* who never received Christ, that they *receive Christ Jesus the Lord*. 2. To *believers* who have received Christ Jesus the Lord, that they *walk in him as they have received him*.

First, The first branch of the *exhortation* is to all UNBELIEVERS who never have believed in Christ, that they believe in him, and receive him: this is the great call of the glorious gospel to all sinners that hear this gospel. And though believers, who have received Christ already, be called to receive him again and again; and so are not to exclude themselves, but are to improve the call that is given to unbelievers, in order to their further reception of Christ; yet their duty falling more natively in my way, upon the latter part of the text, and so in the second branch of the exhortation, I shall more especially now address myself, as the Lord may assist, unto those that never yet have truly received Christ. O unbelieving soul,

soul, who art afar off from God, be exhorted to receive *Christ Jesus the Lord*. And that I may the more enforce this exhortation, I would, 1. Shew who they are that I call *unbelievers*, that never received Christ as yet. 2. Offer some *motives* and *considerations* to urge you to the receiving of Christ. 3. Give some *directions*, in order to the receiving of Christ. 4. Endeavour to remove some *obstructions*, and answer some *objections* against the receiving of Christ.—What I here propose, will make me launch further yet, into this gospel-subject, than ever I proposed, when I entered upon it, though I have enlarged much upon the text already: but yet, it being such a necessary comprehensive theme, containing, in a manner, the whole Bible in one verse; the whole gospel in one sentence; and so, being of the utmost concern, I think this may be sufficient ground and reason, for my enlarging thereupon, as the Lord may please to assist. And,

1st, I am to shew who they are that may be called *unbelievers*, who never yet received Christ: for, when I am calling all unbelievers especially to believe, it is fit you know whom I mean; for it is a great bar and hinderance to faith, in multitudes of people, that they think they are believers already, and that they have received Christ: and hence they never take a word to them, that is directed to them; and are proof against all the calls of the word, because they think they have faith already, they have believed already, and have received Christ already. But that they who never received Christ, may not deceive themselves, I will offer you some evidences of an unbeliever, that hath not received Christ. As the learned speak of twelve signs in the heavens, so I might tell you of twelve signs of unbelief, which, where they take place in their power, discover the man was never gained thereby, to the acceptance of Christ.

1. The first sign, or discovery of reigning unbelief, is *total hardness of heart*; when a man is not moved or affected with his own misery, nor the remedy provided by Christ, nor the invitations of grace in the gospel: It is said, Acts xix. 9. *That divers were hardened and believed not*. An hard heart is one of the devil's impregnable forts, standing out against the word, and slighting the

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the offers of Christ. Hardness of heart is known by the *foolishness* of it; *When seeing, we see not; and hearing, we hear not*: when we have the grammatical knowledge of things, but no spiritual discerning.—It is also known by the *insensibleness* of it; when men have no feeling of fear and terror by the law; no feeling of peace, joy, and hope by the gospel; no taste of the good word at all; but are as stones, unmoved with all that is spoken. This hardness shews your unbelief to be such, as that you have not received Christ. Believers may feel much heart-hardness; but this hardness I speak of, is past feeling, being *seared as with a hot iron*.

2. The second sign, or discovery of unbelief, is the *total neglect of spiritual and heavenly things*; when men make it not their business, to look after these things; *They made light of it, and one went to his farm, another to his merchandise*, Mat. xxii. 5. Do not thousands bewray their unbelief, and that they never received Christ, in that the world hath engrossed all their care? Would Christ, and heavenly things, be thus slighted, and lightly esteemed, if they soundly believed in him, or believed the word of God. Surely, when men make the world their main care, and take no heed to the great offers of the gospel, they do not look upon it as a certain truth, whatever faith they fancy they have.

3. The next sign, or discovery of unbelief, is a *secret suspicion concerning the truth of the gospel*; like him that called the gospel, *Fabula Christi*; they look upon it as an excellent fable, a golden dream, to make fools fond of it; and that all opinions in religion, are but a LOGOMACHY, a mere *strife of words*, a doctrine to set the world together by the ears, and that they need not trouble their heads about it. They may have some understanding about the truth of the gospel, but no *assurance of understanding*, Col. ii. 2. It is true, such thoughts may rush into the heart of a godly man, but they are abominable and cast out with indignation: but in wicked men they reign and dwell; they live by these kind of principles; natural atheism in them is not cured; and that faith they pretend to is but a loose and wavering opinion, not a grounded and settled persuasion, of the
gospel:

gospel: the *assurance of understanding*, spoken of, Col. ii. 2. depends upon experience, and an inward sense of the truth, and is wrought by the Holy Ghost, when the gospel comes *not in word only*, but in *power*, and in the *demonstration of the Spirit*.

4. The fourth sign, or discovery of unbelief, is a *secret rejecting of the counsels of salvation*, Acts xiii. 46. All natural men are children of disobedience; out of pride scorning either the messages of God, for they are *foolishness to them*; or the messengers of God, *Is not this the carpenter's son?* Is not this preacher of the word such and such an insignificant person? Thus unbelievers fancy of the methods of grace used to gain them.

5. The fifth discovery of unbelief, is *unholiness of life and conversation*: the truth of faith brings in *the obedience of faith*, Rom. xvi. 26. Where the prince is, there will his train be; where faith is, there will gospel-obedience be; and where unbelief is, there is disobedience: faith hath its train of gospel services; unbelief hath its train of ungodly practices. When men give themselves up to drunkenness, and whoredom, and Sabbath-breaking, and swearing, and lying, and backbiting, and live as carnally and careless as infidels, who will believe that they are believers, let them say what they will?

6. The next discovery of unbelief, is *mens hearing the word, without ever applying it to their own use*; without application it worketh not; it causeth not a man see himself involved, and inclosed, and included in the general promise or precept, so as to give a particular answer; as Psal. xxvii. 8. the call is in the plural, *Seek ye my face*: the answer is in the singular; *Thy face, Lord, will I seek*. The gospel-call is general; *Believe in the Lord Jesus Christ*, and receive him: the answer must be particular; *I believe, Lord, help my unbelief*. When people suffer truths to hover in the brain without application; or learn things as children do their Catechism by rote, never reflecting, what am I? what have I done? where am I going? what will become of me? what effect hath this word upon me? unbelief remains undisturbed.

7. The seventh sign, or discovery of unbelief, is *total apathy*,

apostacy, or falling off from God: for, as *by faith we stand, and continue in well doing*, Rom. ii. 7. if we are believers; so, by unbelief, or by reason of unbelief, men fall off from God, they tire and grow weary of his service; and so wholly give up with it.

8. The next sign, or discovery of unbelief, is *final desperation*; Jer xviii. 12. *There is no hope, but we will walk after our own devices, and we will every one do the imagination of his evil heart.* When men think there is no hope, it is in vain to trouble ourselves: when men think their damnation is fixed, and therefore resolve to go to hell as fast as they can; such desperate wickedness there may be in the heart of man, like those, Job xxi. 15. *What is the Almighty, that we should serve him? and what profit should we have, if we pray unto him?*

9. The ninth discovery of unbelief, is *people's distrusting all present means*, saying, *If one come from the dead, they would believe*: if we had oracles or miracles, or if God did speak to us from heaven, then we would believe: but *Moses and the prophets* are a sufficient ground of faith, and *if we believe not them, neither would we believe, though one rose from the dead.* Extraordinary means will not work with them, upon whom ordinary means doth not prevail.

10. The next sign and discovery of unbelief, is *demurs and delays as to a complete closing with Christ*: here is a refined degree of unbelief; the man seems to approve the report of the gospel; hath nothing to object against Christ; but there is a secret, dilatory, procrastinating, delaying spirit in him: he hath a will for a future, but not a present choice of Christ; he cannot yet bid adieu to his beloved lusts: *A little sleep a little slumber* more he must have, in the lap of his Delilah. Luke ix. 59. *Follow me*, says Christ; why, says the man? *Lord, suffer me first to go and bury my Father*; excuse me for a while. Again, ver. 61. *Lord, I will follow*; but let it be deferred for some time; *let me first go and bid them farewell which are at home at my house.* Thus awakened sinners put off Christ, as Felix did Paul, with delays; these delays are but a sly rejection of Christ: a will for hereafter is a present *will*; your resolving will

hereafter says you have no heart at present. But the longer you delay, the more averſe will you be from believing: and before your hereafter comes, you may be in hell.

11. The next ſign and diſcovery of unbelief, is *men's receiving a falſe Chriſt*, an idol of their own fancy, inſtead of the true Chriſt: they that compound Chriſt, or add any thing to him, make to themſelves a falſe Chriſt; as they that would have Chriſt and the world both, Chriſt and their luſts too: Chriſt they muſt have to ſatiſfy their conſciences; and luſts they muſt have to ſatiſfy their heart. Hence they meditate, and meditate a league between Chriſt and their darling idols: ſuch a mixed Chriſt is a falſe Chriſt. Thus many would make their own righteousneſs, their tears, and melting affections, in part, if not wholly, their Chriſt. As the *gofpel* hypocrite makes his very faith his Chriſt; ſo the *legal* hypocrite makes his duties his Chriſt. The *political* hypocrite will join his carnal prudence with Chriſt's wiſdom, and ſo make it in part his Chriſt. The *refined* hypocrite will make the common aſſiſtance and influences of the Spirit reſts to him, and put them in the room of Chriſt. Are not all theſe ſo many falſe Chriſts? Yea, a divided Chriſt is a falſe Chriſt, while men would receive him as a Jeſus, to ſave them from hell; but not as a Lord, to rule over their luſts: they would ſhare in his benefits, but not in his perſon. There is ſomething in Chriſt that they like, and ſomething that they diſlike; they like the *blood* that came forth of his heart, to waſh their guilty conſciences; but they diſlike the *water* that came forth alſo, to waſh their filthy hearts.

12. The laſt ſign and diſcovery of unbelief, is *men's receiving a truth Chriſt in a falſe manner*; as when Chriſt is received, but not in his grandeur. A prince is then received aright, when he is received according to his dignity: if a ſubject ſhould receive his prince, and entertain him no otherwiſe than he would do a peafant, or country neighbour, this would be interpreted a contempt: So, if Chriſt be not received according to his grandeur, and dignity, and ſtate, he counts it a contempt rather than a right reception of him. Chriſt will be received as a LORD, or not at all: he will be a KING,

or nothing. This was the sin of the Jews, they could be content to receive Christ as a great Prophet, as the Mahometans do ; but they did not receive him according to his grandeur, or that greatness and glory which he was invested with, and therefore they are said *not to receive him* ; John i. 11. *He came to his own, but his own received him not.* Whereas John says of the believing Jews that received him, that they *beheld his glory, as the glory of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth* ; that is, they received him in all his grandeur, splendor, majesty, and glory. Thus men receive not Christ, but shew their unbelief, even in receiving the true Christ in a false manner. When Christ is not received as he is offered in the gospel, he is received in a false manner : He is offered fully, freely, cordially, and constantly ; and the right reception is also full, free, cordial, and constant : men may therefore receive him in a false manner, which is as good as rejecting of him ; when they do not receive him fully, without dividing him ; freely, without buying him ; cordially, without reluctancy ; and constantly, without repentance, or being dissatisfied with the bargain.

Now, let all these twelve signs and discoveries of unbelief be considered, and they will shew, how many pretenders to faith are yet unbelievers : even all that are under the power of heart-hardness ; live in the total neglect of spiritual and heavenly things ; in a secret suspicion of the truth of the gospel ; and a secret rejecting of the counsel of God ; in habitual unholiness of life and conversation ; and that hear the word without any application suitably to themselves ; who give themselves up to a total apostacy, and a final desperation : a distrustful of all present means ; to delaying and demurring about closing with Christ ; who either receive a false Christ, or yet a true Christ in a false manner. These are unbelievers, that have not yet received Christ the Lord. I now proceed.

2dly, To the next thing proposed, namely, to offer some *motives* and *considerations* to urge you to the receiving of Christ. If any here would know what is that star, by which they may be led to the place where the

Lord Jesus lies? why, it is just this everlasting gospel; it points out Christ, saying, *Behold the Lamb of God.* There are but two great requests that heaven makes to us all by this glorious gospel: the first request is to all *Christless* persons whatsoever, that hear this gospel, *viz.* That they *receive Christ Jesus the Lord.* The second is to all *Christians*, that have received him, *viz.* That they *walk in him: As ye have received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk ye in him.* Now, you would know before hand, that no motive will move you, no argument will persuade you to receive Christ, unless it be backed with the almighty power of God: and therefore if you think salvation a business worth your while, O send up an ejaculatory prayer to heaven, that God would make this gospel, the power of God to your salvation, through Jesus Christ. We are now calling you in the name of the great and eternal God, to believe in his Son Jesus Christ, and receive him, so as you may walk in him, till you come to *walk with him in white* among the redeemed above: and there is this general motive, that should be instead of a thousand to you all; and which, if duely regarded, there would be no need of any more; and that is, the *supreme authority of God the Father* is interposed in this matter: *For, this is his commandment, that we should believe on the name of his Son Jesus Christ,* 1 John iii. 23. And, shall we think nothing to trample upon the authority, and contemn the command of that God, who can command us to hell in a moment? Here God sums up all the ten commands, as it were, into one; and says, If you obey this, you obey all; if you break this, you break all: the man that doth not believe in the Son of God, he breaks both the tables of the law at one dash: and violates every precept of the law in the most dreadful manner. You have heard sometimes, how the sin of Adam, in eating the forbidden fruit, was at once a breach of all the ten commands. But do you consider, that your unbelief, in not receiving Christ, is a trampling under foot the authority of God in every one of these commands, and that in the most grievous manner. — The man that receiveth not Christ, he rejecteth God himself as *his God*; for he is not the God of any man,

neither

neither will be, but in Christ.—The man that receives not Christ, all his *worship* is at best but idolatry and superstition; for God cannot be worshipped acceptably any other way than in Christ, who is the *image of the invisible God*.—The rejecter of Christ is a profaner of the name of God; for, *God's name is in him*: and it is in him especially that God maketh himself known.—The man that doth not receive Christ, he cannot sanctify the *Sabbath-day*, nor hallow it; for all the days of his life, wherein he lives without Christ, are unholy days; his whole time is a sinful time.—The man in this case, is *disobedient* to his heavenly Parent, dishonours his heavenly Father; and so can never put due respect upon earthly parents.—He kills his own soul, and crucifies the Lord of glory afresh, and so can never have a right love to man.—He is guilty of the grossest *spiritual adultery*, in departing from the Lord, and cannot be otherwise clean.—He *steals* and robs God of his glory, so cannot in other respects be altogether innocent.—He bears *false witness* against God, by making God a liar, and rejecting the testimony that God gives concerning his Son; and having so little regard to God's name, he cannot have much for his neighbour's—And, finally, he is guilty of *covetousness*, which is idolatry, and that of the most atrocious nature; for, he through unbelief, and rejecting of Christ as a Saviour, and thinking of salvation by his own means, doth covet that glory and honour which is only due to God and Christ, to be ascribed to himself: self is his God, and self-righteousness is his Christ; and what will he not covet, who covets to be in God's room?

Thus the sin of unbelief, in rejecting of Christ, doth at one stroak dash the whole commands of God to pieces; and therefore, no wonder that this be his great command, that we *believe in the name of his Son*: seeing also that, by receiving him, we fulfil the whole law, namely, by receiving him for our righteousness and sanctification; for in receiving him for our righteousness, we fulfil the law as a covenant, and that personally in him, who hath yielded perfect obedience in our room, and paid the penalty also for its violation; and in receiving him for our sanctification, we fulfil the law as a rule,

by a perfection of parts, through his sanctifying Spirit in us, which goes on to a perfection of degrees in heaven. Therefore, I say, when we reject Christ, we reject the great command of God, and contemn his authority in the most signal instance. Know then that, by the authority of the eternal God, you are obliged to believe; and let this general motive be in the room of all.

But I shall name some more particular motives; and there are these six considerations that should, and would, if the Lord would powerfully concur with them, engage us to receive Christ. 1. Consider *whom* you are called to receive. 2. How *few* of the world do receive him. 3. *What* you shall receive when you receive Christ. 4. *What* you *must* receive, if you receive not Christ. 5. *What* is the *malignity* and *danger* of *unbelief*, in rejecting of Christ. And, 6. *What* is the *excellency* and *necessity* of *faith*, in receiving the Lord Jesus Christ.—Now, we would essay to open some of these at the time; and earnestly beg your attention to what may be said.

[1.] Consider *whom* you are called to receive. It is no less than the *Lord of glory*; the *Lord, mighty in battle*: we are exhorted from this very consideration, Psa. xxiv. 7, 8. *Lift up your heads, O ye gates; and be ye lift up, ye everlasting doors, and the King of glory shall come in. Who is this King of glory? the Lord strong and mighty, the Lord mighty in battle.* Who would not cast open these gates, to receive such an honourable guest! O let us open the gate of our understanding, to behold him; and open the gate of our will, to choose him; and open the gate of our affections, to embrace him; and open the gate of our whole heart and soul, to receive him. O what an excellent One is he! What excellent company for travellers! What excellent food for the hungry, and drink for the thirsty! What excellent medicine for the diseased, and excellent salvation for the needy! Man is the excellency of the creatures, grace is the excellency of man, glory is the excellency of grace; but Christ is the excellency of all. It is greater honour to be one of Christ's little ones, than one of the world's great ones. O consider whom you are to receive, it is not a man or an angel; but he that is Lord of men and angels; *The Prince*

Prince of the kings of the earth; He is the plant of renown; the chief among ten thousand. His beauty and glory outshines the sun in its meridian splendor: *He is fairer than the sons of men; he is altogether lovely.* He is the desire of all nations; and hence believers in all nations, both before and since his incarnation, have esteemed him most desirable: and shall we find in our hearts to reject and despise him? He is the *consolation of Israel*; and to all *who believe he is precious*: And indeed every thing in him is precious. *What is in Christ?* Why, if you duly considered what is in Christ, you would never reject or neglect him; for God is in Christ; 2 Cor. v. 19. *For God is in Christ reconciling the world to himself.* He is *God manifested in the flesh*; this is the *great mystery of godliness*, 1 Tim. iii. 16. A Godhead dwelling in flesh, is the world's wonder: it is such a wonder, such a mystery, that the world cannot receive it: yet God is in him, so as in receiving Christ you receive God. But here it may be asked, *What of God is in Christ?* Why consider,

1. The *authority of God is in Christ*; *My name is in him*, Exod. xxiii. 21. God hath authorized and sealed him; for, *Him hath God the Father sealed*, John vi. 27. He hath a commission, under the great seal of heaven, to save you; and therefore he comes in his Father's name, as well as in his own, to *seek and save you*. And this glorious One is come this day, in this gospel, to seek your acceptance of him, as a Saviour every way well qualified to save even the chief of sinners. Oh! shall such a One be rejected!

2. The *wisdom of God is in him*; *Christ is the wisdom of God*, 1 Cor. i. 24.; and *in him are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge*, Col. ii. 3. Never did the wisdom of God display itself in such an illustrious and transcendent manner, before the eyes of men and angels, as it hath done in Christ: wisdom in uniting the most distant extremes, God and man, and God's glory and man's happiness: he is the centre of the union.

3. The *power of God is in him*; as he is the wisdom, so he is *the power of God*, 1 Cor. i. 24.: and *all power in heaven and earth is given unto him*, Mat. xxviii. 18.

He hath not only the wisdom of God to contrive, but the power of God to accomplish and perform whatever concerneth us, and our eternal happiness. In an essential way, he hath all power as he is God; and in a donative way, he hath all power as he is God-man Mediator: therefore, *he is able to save to the uttermost.* You are called to receive a Christ, by the power of Christ; to receive One that can give you power to receive; as one absolutely feeble, you are invited to come and to take hold of his strength, that you may be enabled to go *from strength to strength.*

4. The Spirit of God is in him; *I have put my Spirit upon him, Isa. xlii. 1.; God gives not the Spirit by measure to him.* Men and angels that have the Spirit of God in them, they have their measures; some more some less of the Spirit; but the Spirit is in Christ without measure; *He is anointed with the oil of gladness above his fellows:* and he dispenses to every one their share, as seemeth fit to him; for he hath the communication of the Spirit in his hand: *The Father hath loved the Son, and hath given all things into his hand: He received gifts for men, and he giveth gifts to men.*

5. The righteousness of God is in him, by which only a poor guilty sinner can be justified before God; for he is *JEHOVAH'S righteous Servant, who brings in an everlasting righteousness, and brings it near to justify many:* for, *we are made the righteousness of God in him, 2 Cor. v. 21. He is the Lord our righteousness, Jer. xxiii. 6. JEHOVAH-TSIDKENU;* the Lord that justifies us, and is our justifying righteousness. And this righteousness is meritorious of all blessings, being every way perfect and complete. And therefore in him is the righteousness and and justice of God manifested; *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.* Again,

6. The love and mercy of God is in him: the very yearning bowels of divine love are in him. What is Christ but the love of God warpt up in a garment of flesh and blood? *1 John iv. 9, 10. In this was manifested the love of God towards us: and herein is love,—that*
God

God sent his Son. This is the highest flight that ever divine love made; and higher than this it cannot mount.—The *mercies* and *compassions* of God are all in Christ, Jude ver. 21. God's mercy is the thing that poor sinners cry for, when breathing out their last, as the only thing that can do them good. O! what would a man give for mercy, in the moment of death, and mercy at the great day! Why, if you receive Christ, you receive the mercy of God; but out of him there is no mercy to be expected out of God's hand; for he will never shew mercy to the prejudice of his justice; and it is only in Christ, that mercy and justice meet together, and harmoniously embrace each other.

7. The *salvation* of God is in him; *Neither is there salvation in any other*, Acts iv. 12. Christ is the door of salvation; and faith is the key that opens that door; or it is just the man's entering in by it: and therefore, they that receive **not** Christ, they exclude themselves from all hope of salvation; for the salvation of God is no where to be found but in Christ: for, *In vain is salvation hoped for from the hills or multitude of mountains: truly in the Lord our God is the salvation of Israel*, Jer. iii. 22. And such as receive Christ for salvation, will, in the issue, take up old Simeon's song, *Now, lettest thou thy servant depart in peace; for mine eyes have seen thy salvation*, Luke ii. 29.

8. The *fulness* of God is in Christ: *It hath pleased the Father that in him should all fulness dwell*, Col. i. 19. And chap. ii. 9. *In him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily*. The fulness of all God's attributes and perfections are in Christ. He is the *brightness of the Father's glory, and the express image of his person*. And there is a meritorious fulness of blessings in him, to be communicated unto the members of his body, being *full of grace and truth*, John i. 14. O what a full Saviour! what a full Christ are ye called to receive!—Thus you see what of God is in him, to induce us to receive him; and whom it is that we are called to receive: he is Christ, he is Jesus, he is the Lord: shall we reject such an One?

[2.] The *second* motive is: Consider how few in the world do receive him; notwithstanding of these glori-

ous excellencies that are in him, yet the most part of the world do reject him: *He came to his own, and his own received him not,* John i. 11. The language of the most part is, *Who is the Lord, that we should serve him? We will not have this man to reign over us.* Now, *is this nothing to you, all you that pass by?* Do you think it a small matter, to see the world crucifying the Lord of glory, and renewing the bloody tragedy again? And shall you have a hand in this interpretative murder also? The more they be that reject him, the more cordially should you receive him. What! say you? who would reject such an one as Christ? Is it possible that any will be so mad as to despise this plant of renown? Yea, there is a whole generation of Christ despisers, and see that you be not in the midst of them. I will give you a representation of them, and shew what they are like, that you may know them, and know if you be among them that are rejecters of Christ, in these eight particulars.

1. There is a *Gallis-like* generation, that *care for none of these things.* Are there not many among us, that will not give a fig for the richest offers of Christ in the gospel? They will not give a fig for the ordinances of Christ; they will not give a farthing for the gospel; they will not give a farthing for a sermon concerning Christ; they will not give a straw for a week day's preaching, nor think it worth their while, to go the length of a street for it: so little do they care for Christ and his gospel, that they will not give a straw to stay away from a Sabbath-day's sermon; they care for none of those things. A senseless story of Thomas the Rhymer would go better down with them.

2. There is a *Demas-like* generation, who are overfondly attached unto the things of this world: *Demas hath forsaken me, having loved this present world.* They discover their rejecting of Christ, by their putting the world in his room; *If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him.* And they that love not the Father, they love not the Son, whatever they may pretend and profess to do; for, *Every one that loveth him that beget, loveth him also that is begotten of him.* It is not Christ, but the world they are taken up with.

3. There

3. There is a *Pilate-like* generation, who, though they *find nothing against the man*, yet will cry, *Take you him, and crucify him*. They find no fault with him, and yet are content that he be crucified: they have no objection against him; and yet are content though the world trample upon and abuse him; they are easy and indifferent: they have nothing to say against him, and yet they are content to live without him. Surely they are rejecters of Christ.

4. There is a *Felix-like* generation, that will say as he did to Paul, *Go your way at this time, and I will bear thee at a more convenient season*. They are not for hearing Christ to-day; they are for putting off to another season; and that season may never come: *To-day, if ye will hear his voice, harden not your hearts*; for all the world cannot promise you a to-morrow, or another offer of Christ. How sad is it, that the world should be still for delays! A delay for the future, is a denial for the present. You reject him, if you do not presently hearken to him.

5. There is an *Agrippa-like* generation; *Almost thou persuadest me to be a Christian*. They that are but half persuaded, are wholly lost and undone, unless they be wholly brought over to Christ, and altogether persuaded. They are but almost persuaded to receive Christ, are but almost believers; and they that are but almost believers, are but almost saved; and they that are but almost saved, they will be altogether damned; and more fearfully damned, than if they had never been so near to salvation. O seek to have it to say, *Lord, thou hast persuaded me, and I was persuaded*.

6. There is a *Herod-like* generation, who can *bear the word gladly, and do many things*; but an Herodias is dearer to him than a John the Baptist whose head is served up in a charger to please and gratify her. They are but rejecters of Christ, that, rather than be crossed in a Delilah, and touched in a particular lust and idol, will give up with all their pretended kindness to ministers and dispensers of the word: touch them in the fore heel, and then they are persecutors, either by tongue or hand, as well as in heart: if they have not an opportunity

tunity of open violence, yet at least John Baptist's head is brought in a charger, by and by into every company: the minister will be beheaded of his good name, by reproach and ignominy cast upon him. If any faithful reproof, that reflects upon your honour, or crosses your carnal satisfaction, raise in you a persecuting spirit against the reprove, it is an evidence of your being but a rejecter of Christ.

7. There is a *Judas-like* generation, who *betray the Son of man with a kiss*; with the kiss of a profession, with the kiss of a feigned subjection, with a kiss of flattery, or a kiss of bastard faith, that never had God for the father of it, nor the word of God for the mother of it: *They profess to know God, but in works they deny him; having a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof.* They want but an opportunity to betray Christ; whatever profession of love to him they make, yet, whenever the trial of temptation comes, they betray his cause, they betray his truth, they betray his people, they betray religion, and are ready to turn to any way, or do any thing that the world desires them, rather than lose the bag: yea, they will *sell Christ for thirty pieces of silver*; and Esau-like, *sell their birth-right for a mess of pottage.* They will give up with Christ, and with a good cause, and a good conscience too, for a worldly trifle.

8. There is a *Balaam-like* generation, that will *desire to die the death of the righteous, and to have their last end like his*; yet they love not to live the life of the righteous. They would desire to die as saints, but to live like pagans: they would desire to have Christ when they are dying, but they care not for Christ when they are living. But, how foolish is that desire, whereby they would die in the Lord, but live without him! yea, the life of many is a practical saying with the Jews, *Away with Christ, way with him; away with him and give me Barabbas.* The hearts of many say, *Away with that Christ whom you call so glorious and transcendent, and give me the world, give me my lusts and idols.*

In these eight particulars you see a sight of the world, the temper and disposition of the most part, and how Christ is despised and rejected of men; and shall that be
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your disposition too? Can you find in your heart to turn your back upon this glorious, matchless Prince of the kings of the earth, with the rest of the world? Are you content that he get no backing to follow him and praise him? O the more you have rejected him, the more should you receive him. Again,

[3.] The *third* motive is, consider WHAT you will receive if you receive Christ. I remember upon the doctrinal part *, when I shewed the reasons, why they that have received Christ, are to walk in him, in shewing what encouragement a man that receiveth Christ, hath to walk in him; I told of eight things that a believer receives when he receiveth Christ, namely, that he receiveth pardon, peace, grace, the promises, the Spirit, the adoption of children, a title to heaven, and even all things, when he receiveth Christ: but this ALL, that he receiveth in Christ, will admit of infinitely more particulars. I shall, at this time, name a few things more that you will receive, if you receive Christ.

1. If you receive Christ, you receive *light* with him; for, *He is the light of the world*; and, *in his light shall we see light clearly*. You shall be in a case to say, *Once I was blind, but now I see*; once darkness, but *now light in the Lord*. If Christ be not received, you have no light in you. O poor ignorant soul, dark and blind creature, ready to fall into utter darkness! may not this be motive enough for you, to look after Christ and seek an interest in him, that if you follow him, you *shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life*; you *shall see the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ*? Said *I not unto thee, if thou wouldest believe, thou shouldest see the glory of God*? And that sight will be an introduction to the vision of his glory, for ever in heaven. Surely if you were not utterly blind, you would not reject this light. The light of the natural sun is desirable, to any that have eyes to see it; but ten thousand times more is the light of this Sun of righteousness; yea, infinitely more than the light of reason, or the light of learning, and human wisdom; for you may have that light, and

* *Viz.* On the fourth general head, p. 105, 106.

yet a dead man; but this is the *light of life*, John viii. 12. Therefore,

2. If you receive Christ, you receive *life*; spiritual life, *eternal life*; John vi. 47. *He that believeth on me, hath eternal life*: He is the *resurrection and the life*; and he came to give life, and to give it more abundantly. He himself is the *bread of life* that you should live upon; and for maintaining of your life, you should be fed with the *finest of the wheat*, and with *honey out of the rock*. Why, man, you would give much for your natural life if it was in hazard; but what think you of spiritual and eternal life? The life of justification and sanctification? the life of joy and consolation? the life of communion and fellowship with God? the life of begun glory? and to be in case to say, *To me to live is Christ*? Christ is the ALPHA and OMEGA, the giver and restorer of this life; the maintainer and preserver of it; the food and medicine of it; and the very business of the man's life: *To me to live is Christ*.

3. If you receive Christ, you receive *liberty*; John viii. 36. *If the Son make you free, then are you free indeed*. You shall have freedom from the iron yoke of the law, in its terrible threatenings, legal commandments, and dreadful curses, which now you are under: freedom from the wrath of God; freedom from your idols; for he proclaims *liberty to captives*; and he hath the key of the prison-house, to open your prison-doors.—It is a dark prison in which you are, wherein you can understand no more savingly of God, than the stones of the wall: but he says to the prisoners, *Go forth, and behold the light*.—It is a fearful pit wherein you are, in which you will be surprized with the fear of death and hell, if conscience but awaken upon you; but he comes to *deliver them, who through fear of death, were all their life-time subject to bondage*. Such freedom from the sting of death doth he give, that if you receive him, you may welcome death when it comes, saying, Come, stingless death; welcome, O friend!

4. If you receive Christ, you receive *advantage* by every ordinance, and particularly you receive the good of the word: *The word preached doth not profit, not be-*
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ing mixed with faith, Heb. iv. 2. But now, when it is mixed with faith, and receiving of Christ, then the word preached shall profit, and you shall pick out some spiritual advantage out of this word, and that word, as we use to pick out of every corner of the shell that is broken, (as of a walnut,) the kernel that is in it; so will you be in case to pick out the kernel of this and the other word and ordinance, and get foot and nourishment to your soul. Out of the same rose there is honey to the bee, and poison to the spider; so, the word and ordinance that proves the *savour of life* to one, proves the *savour of death* to another.

5. If you receive Christ, you shall receive *advantage* by every *providence*; Rom. viii. 28. *All things shall work together for good, to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose.* Merciful providences will make you thankful, and cross providences will make you humble; and you shall have occasion to *sing of mercy and judgement*. And though under a temptation, or the prevalence of unbelief, you may come to say in an hour of distress, *All these things are against you*; yet you shall find all moving for you, and that *he hath done all things well*.

6. If you receive Christ, you receive *righteousness* even a *rob of righteousness*, in which you may appear boldly before the tribunal of infinite justice, and before the throne of infinite holiness, without being ashamed or afraid: because holiness is vindicated, justice is satisfied, and the law is magnified, by the active and passive righteousness of Christ, which shall be imputed to you; so as you shall be in case to say, *Surely in the Lord have I righteousness*.

7. If you receive Christ, you receive *strength* as well as righteousness: strength to enable you in all your duties; and also strength to support you in all your difficulties: *Surely in the Lord have I righteousness and strength*. Yea, you shall be able to *do all things through Christ strengthening you*. You shall be *strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might*: and *strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus*. Let this be an argument to those who are

by nature without strength to receive *Christ Jesus the Lord*, that they may be strengthened to *walk in him*.

8. If you receive Christ, you shall receive *supply of all your wants*: when *the Lord is your shepherd, you shall not want*, Psalm xxiii. 1. You shall want no good thing; you shall receive the supply of all your spiritual wants; out of Christ's fulness, you will receive *grace for grace*: your *God will supply all your needs, according to his riches in glory by Christ*: Yea, you will get a supply of all your temporal wants and losses; you receive that which will be abundantly up-making to you, in all your losses. Have you lost husband, wife, children, or any dear and intimate relation? Well, this may be very afflicting, but Christ can well compensate all losses of that kind; for he is, and well be to his people, better than ten thousand wives, or children, or familiar concerns; for he is *all in all*.

And, in a word, in your receiving Christ, you shall receive more than *eye hath seen, or ear heard, or heart conceived* here, and an *immortal crown of glory* hereafter. Yea, he that receiveth Christ receiveth God; Matth. x. 40. *He that receiveth me, receiveth him that sent me* And what can be more said? He is an *hair of God*. As he that receiveth a tree, gets not only the fruit, but all that is in the tree, and all that it can produce to himself; so he that gets Christ, gets not only the fruit that grows upon the tree of life, but all that is in the tree to himself: and, since God is in Christ; he that receiveth Christ, receiveth God. A man may eat of the fruit of a tree, and yet have no interest in the tree: even so, many eat some of the sweet fruit of this tree, in common providence and grace; but he that receiveth Christ hath interest in the tree itself, as well as in the fruit: yea, here the believing eater grows into the tree, being a branch thereof; *I am the vine, ye are the branches*, John xv. 5. Yea, he hath the tree of life planted in his heart; *Christ dwells in their hearts by faith*, Eph. iii. 17. It were gross to ask, how Christ in heaven, and believers on earth, can be so closely united; for man and wife are *one flesh*, though a thousand miles asunder; much more Christ and the believer

believer *one spirit*, though the visible heavens intervene betwixt them, 1 Cor. vi. 17.

[4.] The *fourth* motive is, Consider what you RECEIVE if you receive not Christ: Why, there are four things you must receive, if you receive not Christ: you must receive lusts, for your laws; the devil, for your master; the curse, for your comfort; and hell, for your portion and reward.

1. If you receive not Christ, you must receive *lusts* for your *laws*: either you must receive Christ or Barabas. When you receive not Christ, you receive sin, and sin shall have dominion over you, while you reject the Saviour, who saves from sin: and what for a guest is sin, which you receive in Christ's room?—It is a God-opposing guest; for, it is *enmity against God*.—It is a God-provoking guest; for it exposes you to his fury.—It is a soul-defiling guest; it defiles all the house where it is; nay, makes you abominable to God.—It is a most expensive guest; it will cost you dear, even the loss of your immortal soul.

2. If you receive not Christ, you must receive the *devil* for your *master*; for there is no midst, either Christ or the devil must be your master: and when you receive such a guest as this, in the room of Christ, do you consider what for a guest, a dreadful guest the devil is? He is a guest that will blind you; for, *the god of this world doth blind the minds of them that believe not*.—He is a guest that will *harden* you so, as you shall be like the adamant, and get no good of word and rod, ordinances or providences.—He is a guest that will *deceive* you; either by persuading you that you have received Christ already, that you are a good enough believer; or by persuading you to believe untruths, and turn you into *damnable errors to believe a lie*. Whence come all the errors of our day, but from the devil, who is a *liar from the beginning*?—He is a guest that will not only delude you, but *destroy* you, and devour you; for, *He goeth about as a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour*. And as now he is your tempter, so afterwards he will be your accuser.

3. If you receive not Christ, you must receive the

curse for your *comfort*: no comfort in all the word of God belongs to you that are *rejecters* of Christ, but only the curse of the law; *Cursed is every one, that continueth not in all things that are written in the book of the law to do them.* You receive more and more of this sentence of condemnation; the more you live in unbelief, the more doth this curse take place, binding you over to more and more of wrath; *He that believeth not, is condemned already; and the wrath of God abideth on him.* You are under the wrath of God: and, oh! what is that? *The wrath of a king is as the roaring of a lion:* but, oh! what is the wrath of God like! Surely, *the thunder of his wrathful power none can understand.* Nebuchadnezzar was in great wrath and fury, when the visage of his countenance changed against the three children; and he commanded the furnace to be made seven times hotter: but, oh! what is the wrath of God when he is as angry as Nebuchadnezzar was! And truly he *is angry with the wicked every day.* Therefore,

4. If you receive not Christ, you must receive *hell* for your *portion*; Mark xvi. 16. *He that believeth not, shall be damned.* Do not think it is a minister only that says it; it is the word of God: and if you think not the *SAY* of a God, the word of a God of truth enough, he hath *SWORN* it, as well as said it; you have the oath of God interposed in the matter; Heb. iii. 18. *He swears in his wrath, that you shall not enter into his rest:* And to whom does he thus swear in his wrath? even to them that *believe not.* And, oh! what think you of this damnation which God swears you shall receive, if you receive not Christ? It will be damnation proportioned to the means you have enjoyed; damnation proportioned to the worth of the blood of Christ, which you have trampled under foot. And, O! what think you of that debt which is as great as the price of the blood of Christ? Will you ever be able to pay it? No, by no means: you will sink under it for ever. It will be wrath proportioned to the greatness of that salvation which you neglect. See Heb. ii. 3. and chap. x. 29, 30, 31.

And now, what do you think of all this, that I have been saying? Is there no weight in this consideration, namely,

namely, whom you are called to receive; and how the most part of the world are rejecting Christ; and what you shall receive if you receive Christ; and what you must receive if you receive not Christ? Do you think all these things fancies, or realities? If the devil be tempting you to think they are but fancies; I tell you, in the name of the great God, that they are realities: and you shall find them sadly to be so when death's cold sweat begins to break upon you; when your eye-strings begin to loose; and the union between the soul and body begins to be dissolved, and you called to go to the tribunal of God. O man, then, *to-day, while it is called to-day, harden not your heart as in the provocation.* Do you know that you shall hear another offer of Christ again? Nay, all the world cannot assure you, that you shall have another Sabbath-day; nor certify you that you shall have a to-morrow.

I think there is as much weight in what hath been said, as may, at least, engage you, when you go home, to go to your knees, and cry, "Lord, what a sad case am I in while without Christ! O give me Christ, or else I die! O give me the spirit of faith, that I may receive Christ! for I perish eternally without Christ!" —May the Lord himself awaken and quicken you.



S E R M O N XLII.

COL. OS. ii. 6.

As ye have received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk ye in him.

[The ninth Sermon on this text.]

AS it is not safe walking clofs by the sea-side, when the waves are tumbling out upon the shore; so it is not safe to walk in this world, according to the course thereof, when the deluge of God's wrath is certainly breaking

breaking out upon it: it is the safest course to get into the Ark, and walk therein. In this gospel there is an Ark provided, even Christ; and there is a window opened in the side of this Ark; yea, the hand of mercy put forth at this window, to pull in shelterless doves, that can find no rest elsewhere. Many hover without, till the flood wash them off from the sides of the Ark, and they perish eternally: but happy they that are taught to fly in, by the wing of faith; and this is what here we are called to, namely, to *receive Christ Jesus the Lord, and so to walk in him.*

In the preceding discourse, we mentioned four motives to engage you to receive Christ. We now proceed to the other two. The first of which we shall dismiss at the time.

[5.] The *fifth* motive we adduce is, Consider the *malignity of unbelief in rejecting Christ*, or not receiving of him, as he is offered to us in the gospel. Now, the *malignity of unbelief* will appear, if you consider both the *sinfulness* and the *hurtfulness* of it.

(1.) The *sinfulness* of unbelief in rejecting Christ, and not receiving him. If a man be guilty of murder, adultery, or the like, presently he is odious, and justly looked upon as a monstrous sinner; but yet your sin of unbelief goes a step beyond all these, if you duly consider it; for, when the Holy Ghost is sent to *convince the world of sin*, John xvi. 9. he pitches upon this sin, as if there was no other that the world needed to be convinced of; *He will convince the world of sin, because they BELIEVE not on the Son of God*: Why? because there is more sinfulness in it, than any other. Oh! what an abyss of iniquity is in the bowels of unbelief! What made the old world so secure, before the deluge came and swept them away, but unbelief? And, how comes it that now, both wise and foolish virgins do slumber, before the coming of the Bridegroom, but from unbelief? Unbelief is virtually all sin. Scandalous sins have more infamy, but unbelief hath more of obliquity and guilt in it, it being against the greatest laws, and strongest obligations. But, more particularly, we may take up
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the sinfulness of unbelief in the following particulars; such as these,

1. The sinfulness of unbelief in rejecting Christ will appear, if we consider it with respect to God; for, unbelief doth dishonour God more than any other sin, by calling in question all his attributes, and casting an affront upon all his perfections: no greater indignity can be done to the glory of God, than is done by unbelief; it hath a mouth full of blasphemy against God.—Why? by unbelief we trample upon the *authority* of God that commands us to believe: it is a proud contempt of the divine command, under the mask of humility; for, unbelief doth ordinarily pass veiled under the vizard of some refined virtue; and that is one of the reasons why it is so little seen, and that people are convinced of other sins and breaches of the commands of God, but not of this: besides that gross sins, the conviction of them may arise from a natural conscience, but the light of nature doth not lead men to the conviction of unbelief; it being a gospel, and more spiritual sin; however, the more spiritual it is, the worse, in trampling upon the authority of that God who is a Spirit.—By unbelief, as we despise his authority, so we deny his *faithfulness*, and charge him with a lie; *He that believeth not hath made God a liar; because he believeth not the record that God gave concerning his Son, 1 John v. 10. As he that believeth, sets to his seal that God is true; so, he that believeth not, sets his seal to that dreadful untruth, that God is a liar.* We may tremble to mention the evil of unbelief. To give the lie is reckoned the greatest injury among men; for, truth is the ground of commerce, and human society: so that to say that a man is a liar, is as much as to say, he is unworthy, and unfit to keep company with men: And, alas! what an injury is this to God, who stands more upon his word than any other part of his name! Pſal. cxxxviii. 2. *He hath magnified his word above all his name:* in so much that we have more experience of God, in making good his word, than in any other thing.—By unbelief we deny the *wisdom* of God, and charge him with folly. *All the treasures of wisdom are laid up in Christ,* and in the contrivance
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of salvation through him: here is the *manifest wisdom of God*; which the angels admire. Behold, unbelief imputes folly to *the only wise God*; and that in the most signal instance of it.—Again, by unbelief you deny the *power of God*, and question his ability: *Can God furnish a table in the wilderness?* Pſal. lxxviii. 19, 20. *Can the son of Jeſſe give you vineyards?* ſays unbelief. Though he be able to ſave to the uttermoſt; unbelief ſuppoſes there is ſomething too hard for God, that he cannot do, and which his power cannot reach.—By unbelief we deny the *love and mercy of God*, and charge him with unmercifulneſs, and defect of goodneſs, as if he was an implacable Judge ſtill, and not upon a *throne of grace*, nor a *God in Chriſt reconciling the world to himſelf*. *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. But unbelief contemns all the discoveries that God makes of his love and goodwill to men in Chriſt. God ſays, you need my Son, you are damned if you take him not; and I freely offer him to you that you may be ſaved, and yet we reject this grace.—Yea, by unbelief we ſtrike at the very *being of God*, and make an attempt upon God's life: ſo much *atheism* is in unbelief, that, at one ſtroak, we thereby take away the ſcriptures, God and Chriſt, and all the good things that belong to our peace. So much *blaſphemy* is in it, that every unbeliever, by his ſecret and open murmurings againſt God, doth raiſe many black ſcandals upon God. So much *idolatry* is in it, that every unbeliever idolizes himſelf, his own carnal wiſdom, pride, will, common gifts, ſelf-ſufficiency, legal righteouſneſs, and ſeeming good duties, and by ſelf-dependency maketh himſelf his God. Thus doth he deify himſelf and undeify the true God. As faith honours God, ſo doth unbelief diſhonour him. What God doth to the creature, that faith doth to God: God juſtifieth, ſanctifieth, and glorifieth the creature; and ſo faith doth juſtify, ſanctify, and glorify God.—Faith doth *juſtify God*, Luke vii. 29.; acquit him from all the jealousies that the carnal world, and the carnal heart doth caſt upon him.—Faith doth *ſanctify God*, Num. xx. 12.; by ſetting him above all, and believing

lieving that he can make good his word, when the course of all things seems to contradict it.—Faith doth *glorify God*, Rom. iv. 20. ; declaratively giving him the glory of his excellencies : but unbelief, instead of justifying, doth accuse him ; instead of sanctifying his name, doth but profane it ; instead of glorifying, doth dishonour him. And therefore it is the most heinous and hateful sin.

2. The sinfulness of unbelief will appear, if we consider it with respect to CHRIST. Unbelief reproaches him, betrays him, kills him, and curses him.—By unbelief, in rejecting Christ, you *reproach* him as if he was a deceiver ; for, the native language of unbelief is, he is not the Saviour of sinners ; he is but an impostor, and so we will have nothing to do with him : his words seem to you as idle tales, and you believe them not ; as if he was like Naphtali, cheating you with goodly words.—By unbelief you *betray* him, saying, *Hail, Master*, under a pretence of friendship. Many eat his bread, wear his livery, call him Master, and yet lift up the heel against him.—By unbelief you *kill* and *crucify* him afresh : know it from the Lord, Sirs, they may have a hand in crucifying Christ, that never saw his face ; Heb. vi. 6. *They crucify to themselves the Son of God afresh.*—Yea, by unbelief you *curse* him, and call him *accursed*, whom God hath blessed ; and of whom it is said, that *men shall be blessed in him, and all nations shall call him blessed*. It may be you will ignorantly reject this charge and say, you never cursed Christ, or called him accursed all your days : but in vain do you excuse yourselves, if you be an unbeliever under the gospel ; for, every one that hath heard the gospel, do, either by faith say, that *Jesus is the Lord*, receiving him as such ; or else, by unbelief, do practically call him *accursed*, and reject him as an horrible impostor : yea, every unbeliever doth *trample on the blood of the Son of God*, and *count the blood of the covenant an unholy thing*, Heb. v. 29. All unbelief hath something of this in it. The apostle shews how all that hear of Christ, do either by faith crown him, or by unbelief curse him ; *Wherefore I give you to understand, that no man speaking by the Spirit of God, calleth Jesus accursed :*

accursed: and that no man can say that Jesus is the Lord, but by the Holy Ghost, 1 Cor. xii. 3. And, oh! shall we reckon it a light matter, thus to tread upon the Son of God, and trample upon God's most precious jewel, wherein he is well-pleas'd; and to loath that which God loves above all things? What horrible ingratitude is it to slight that remedy, that the infinitely wise God hath been, at so great pains, and so much expences to prepare for us; and hath cost him more than the creating of ten thousand world would have done! And that we should slight the works, which he prefers to all his other works! How criminal must it be to undervalue that, and to prefer the devil and your lusts before it!

3. The sinfulness of unbelief, in not receiving Christ, will appear, if we consider it with respect to the SPIRIT; for unbelief bears its cursed opposition against a whole glorious Trinity: and seeing God, in the gospel, doth strive with people by his Spirit, and the motions thereof; people cannot, by unbelief, reject Christ, but they must sin against the Holy Ghost, as well as against the Father and the Son. Indeed, every sin is a sin against the Holy Ghost, though every sin be not that which is called eminently the sin against the Holy Ghost; for, there are manifold degrees of sinning that take place, before it comes to that dreadful and unpardonable sin. There are five or six degrees of unbelief, which all bear a reference to the Spirit of God, and every one of them is worse than another, and the last the most terrible.— One degree of unbelief is that whereby the Spirit is said to be *grieved*; *Grieve not the holy Spirit of God: Forty years long was I grieved with this generation.*— Another degree of unbelief is that whereby the Spirit is said to be *vexed*; *Isa. lxiii. 10. They vexed his holy Spirit.* Oh! to vex God is a sad matter.— A third degree of unbelief is that whereby the Spirit is said to be *quenched*; *Quench not the Spirit, 1 Thess. v. 19.* We are apt to put out the fire that God would kindle within us.— A fourth degree of unbelief is that whereby the Spirit of God is said to be *resisted*; *Do ye always resist the Holy Ghost?* said Stephen to his unbelieving hearers, *Acts vii. 5.*— The fifth degree is that whereby the Spirit is reckoned

reckoned to be *despised*; and when it comes to this, people are nigh unto cursing: *Behold ye despisers, wonder and perish.*—But then the sixth and last, and truly saddest degree of all is, when unbelief comes to that pitch, whereby the Spirit is said to be *despited*, Heb. x. 29. The man is filled with horrible malice, and *hath done despite unto the Spirit of grace*; and this is an expression usually taken to signify the unpardonable sin against the Holy Ghost.—There is a black and dark stair, with six steps; and as we would not chuse to go down to the lowest step, let us beware of the first: unbelief hath some ingredients of all these in it. And, oh! what sinfulness may we see from hence to be in it!

4. The sinfulness of unbelief, will appear, if we consider it with respect to the GOSPEL, wherein Christ is offered to be received. Unbelief doth just frustrate the design and make void the importance of the gospel to man; for, *he receiveth the grace of God in vain*, 2 Cor. vi. 1. As good, yea, better had it been for such a man, that Christ had never come into the world; or that he had never heard of him.—By unbelief we frustrate Christ's glorious expedition from heaven to earth; and, in a manner, give him cause to repent of his death and bloody agony. You say, in effect, Christ might have remained in heaven, kept his blood in his veins, and that he died as a fool; and you give him no thanks for his pains. Alas! sad is the language of unbelief!—By unbelief you declare a gospel ministry useless; you, in effect, not only call ministers *fools*, that preach the gospel, but the gospel itself *foolishness*; *The preaching of the cross is, to them that perish, foolishness: We preach Christ crucified, to the Jews a stumbling-block, and to the Greeks foolishness.*

5. The sinfulness of unbelief, in rejecting of Christ, will appear, if we consider it in the EFFECTS of it, with respect to other SINS: As it is the mother of all sin; so it is the mother of all misery. Many are ashamed of the daughter, but not of the mother: they are ashamed of theft, murder, and adultery; but not of unbelief, which is the mother of all these. The first sin was the fruit of unbelief, which opened the door to all sin and

misery: for, had not Adam disbelieved the word of God, he had not believed Satan, nor eaten the forbidden fruit: and still it is the prodigious womb of all these.—It is the mother of *hardness* and *stupidity* of heart; *He upbraided them for their unbelief and hardness of heart, because they believed not*, Mark xvi. 14.—It is the mother of *apostacy*; it is big with child of defection from God; *Take heed, brethren, lest there be in any of you an evil heart of unbelief, in departing from the living God*, Heb. iii. 12. Unbelief travails as in birth till that accursed child of apostacy be brought forth. Why, thro' unbelief, the man loses the thought of the excellency of Christ, and increaseth in thought of love to his idols: for, as love to Christ doth decrease, love to idols will increase. And again, as he that believeth not the threatening, will not stand to do any evil: so he that doth not believe the promise, will not be forward to do any good; hence unbelief makes apostacy.—Unbelief is the mother of *lukewarmness*: All our neglect and coldness in holy duties, comes from the weakness of faith or the power of unbelief; there is a decay at the root. Faith makes a man earnest and zealous; but unbelief makes him cold and careless. Unbelief doth even turn duties into sin, and pollutes every duty, every action: *To them that are unbelieving, is nothing pure; but even their mind and conscience is defiled*, Titus i. 15. *The plowing of the wicked is sin*: yea, the prayer of the wicked is abominable to God; for, *whatsoever is not of faith is sin*. And as it turns duties into sin and pollutes them; so it stops the mortification of all sin: it is impossible for one, in the exercise of unbelief, to mortify a lust or idol. You may allude to, Matth. xvii. 20. when the disciples asked this question, *Why could we not cast out this devil?* Christ answers, *Because of your unbelief*. So, why cannot you cast out that devil, that lust, that idol? It is *because of your unbelief*.—Unbelief is the mother of *instability*. Faith is a fixing grace; *My heart is fixed, trusting in the Lord*: but it is through unbelief that the man is *tossed to and fro*; *If ye will not believe, surely ye shall not be established*, Isa. vii. 9.—Thus it is the sin of all sins, the prolific womb of every other sin.

6. The sinfulness of unbelief, in rejecting Christ, will appear, if we consider it more closely with respect to ITSELF. It is the greatest act of folly to reject and not to receive Christ; *They have rejected the word of the Lord, and what wisdom is in them?* Jer. viii. 9. Though ye were the greatest heads of wit in the whole world, while ye reject Christ, ye are but arrant fools; ye can never be *wise unto salvation* while this is your case.—What a greater folly than to refuse a remedy, when it is in our offer? For an wounded man to slight a physician, or a condemned man to slight a pardon, is an argument he is not in his right wits. He is as guilty of self-murder, who rejects a proper medicine, against present death, as he that cuts his throat: and so is the case here. Nothing can be more foolish and unreasonable than to reject Christ: for, as he hath the only right to your souls; so he out-bids all other merchants; he out-bids sin, Satan, and the world. Can these give you more than Christ? Can the world give you more? Let them all declare their strength and treasure. Can any of them give redemption to you? Can any of them procure remission of sin to you? Can any of them satisfy God's wrath for you? Can any of them present you righteous before the judgment-seat, or settle eternal life upon you? All this Christ can do, and none else. How unreasonable is it then to reject him, and choose any thing else beside him? But the grievousness of this sin, and its aggravations, may appear, in considering further the folly of it, as it is a slighting the remedy, when you view what for a remedy you slight by unbelief. Why,

Your unbelief, in refusing Christ, is a slighting of a *needful* remedy. O Sirs! you have extreme need of Christ. Doth not a sinner need a Saviour? Were you in a state of innocency, as at the first creation, then there would be no need: but you are fallen, and broken, and sold under sin. Had you a stock in your own hand, to set up your broken souls again; and to purchase peace and salvation, there would be less need: but you are *by nature without strength*. Could any plank bring you ashore but Christ, then there were the less hazard: but, oh! Sirs, there is salvation in no other. It is not need-

ful that you come to Christ with your burden? for, otherwise the whole burden of sin and guilt lieth upon your back: a burden that will sicken you to the lowest hell. Your soul is naked, and swarms with the vermin of filthy lusts: Do you not need a garment to cover you, and a fountain to wash you? Your soul is enslaved to enemies and idols: Do you not need a Redeemer to loose your fetters? You are under the wrath of God: and do you not need a Reconciler? *God is angry with the wicked every day*; every day of the week, and every hour of the day: when you go out, or come in; when you rise up, or ly down, God is still angry with you. While in a state of unbelief, the flaming sword of justice is over your neck; and who can help you, if Christ be neglected? If you remain Christless now, surely you will be speechless at the great day, when the wicked shall have none to pity them; for the Judge will frown upon them; their own conscience will upbraid them; the saints will condemn them; their friends will forsake them; the angels will deride them; the devil will scoff at them; the heavens will thunder against them; earth will flame about them; hell will groan for them; and down they will go, roaring and howling for ever! Why, man; there is no remedy but one, and is not that a needful remedy? yet, by unbelief, you reject it.—Your unbelief is slighting of a *suitable* remedy, a remedy fitted to your need: look upon your need aright, and then judge who but Christ is fitted for a sinner. Are you a blinded sinner? Here is a Prophet to enlighten you: Are you a guilty sinner? Here is a Priest to satisfy for you. Are you an enslaved sinner? Here is a King to proclaim liberty. He is well furnished and qualified for your case: he hath gold, for your poverty; balm, for your wounds; a fountain, for your filth; a ransom, for your debt; yea, here is a broad plaister, for your broad sore; a deep fountain, for your deep guilt; a great ransom, for your great bondage; the chief of Saviours, for the chief of sinners. And, O what think you of unbelief, that rejects all this?—Your unbelief is a slighting of a *gracious* and *merciful* remedy: Ah! how would fallen angels value such a mercy! You slight your
own

own mercy, through unbelief, in rejecting of Christ: *God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son: and Christ so loved the world, that he gave himself.* Is not Christ saying in the gospel, *Behold me, behold me?* Is he not stretching forth his merciful arms? and shall not divine love melt, or move you? Why, says Christ, shall I veil my glory, die a cursed shameful death, and bear the scorn of men, the wrath of God, the curse of the law, the terror of death, and the pains of hell for you, and yet you care not a straw for me?—Your unbelief is a slighting of a *near* remedy; Rom. x. 6, 7, 8, 9. The remedy is brought to your very door: you need not say, *Who will ascend into heaven, to bring Christ down? or, who shall descend into the deep, to bring Christ again from the dead?*—*The word is nigh thee, even in thy mouth, and in thy heart.* You need not say, *Who will roll away the stone from the mouth of the well?* for, Christ hath done it for you; and now it is an open fountain, and running by your door. Well, Sirs, will it not be sad to have Christ so near, his righteousness near, and yet eternally to miss him! To perish, like the thief upon the cross, with a Saviour at your side! To be within a step of him, and yet never touch him! Yea, such is the nature of your unbelief, to suffer you to starve for want, beside infinite fulness at your hand in the gospel-offer.—Your unbelief is a slighting of an *easy* remedy; for the gospel lays no obstruction in your way of closing with Christ, and receiving of him: there is no impediment but your want of will, which you lay in your own way; *You will not come to me, that you might have life.* The gates of the gospel are cast open to all passengers; and whosoever will are commanded to enter. Christ is the door, and the door is open, and you may come in; yea, if you look but in, you are saved: *Look unto me, and be ye saved, all the ends of the earth,* Isa. xlv. 22. Faith is indeed the effect of the almighty power of God; but your powerlessness lies in your unwillingness: the gospel-offer lays no obstruction in your way; and there is no hinderance on God's part. In this respect it is an easy remedy; but unbelief slights it, notwithstanding that the Lord says, *Whosoever will, let him come: and, him*
that

that cometh, I will in no wise cast out.—Your unbelief is a slighting of a *seasonable* remedy, a *timely* remedy; and now is the time, now is the season: *Now is the appointed time, now is the day of salvation.* You know not but your days may be at a close, so as Christ shall never be offered to you again: you know not but this is the last sermon, or the last Sabbath-day; and yet such is the nature of your unbelief, that it neglects the opportunity, which it may never enjoy again.—In a word, this remedy is *pressed* upon you; Christ is in earnest offering himself; *Wisdom cries in the streets*: and what is his cry? See Isa. lv. 1. *Ho, every one that thirsteth, come ye to the waters; and he that hath no money, come ye, buy and eat; yea, come, buy wine and milk, without money and without price.* You will notice three times COME in that one verse: he is crying, *Come, come, come.* O! is he not pursuing you with his gracious offers, even when you are running away from him? As the rock followed the Israelites in the wilderness, with its running streams of water; so Christ, the spiritual Rock, is following you with the streams of his mercy and blood, to wash and save you. O how compassionately doth he complain of sinners! *Ye will not come to me, that ye might have life,* John v. 40. As if he should say: Why run ye so fast away from me? Why will ye not come to me, that am come from heaven to save you? It is not an enemy but a friend, that you run from. Oh! what madness are you guilty of? Yea, you are busy going to the devil to get death and eternal damnation: but ye will not come to me to get life and eternal salvation. Alas! Sirs, what horrid and unspeakable evil is there in unbelief!—Thus you see the *sinfulness* of unbelief. I should next speak of the *hurtfulness* thereof.

(2.) The *hurtfulness* of unbelief is another part of the *malignity* of it; and this will appear in these particulars following.

1. It is most *displeasing* to God, and so cannot but be most hurtful: as it doth most dishonour God, so it doth most displease him. Christ did never chide his disciples so much for any thing, as for their unbelief; *O ye fools, and slow of heart to believe; why do ye doubt? O*

ye of little faith! When they were afraid of perishing in the storm, he chides them before he chideth the wind; the storm first began in their own heart. Israel were *cast off for their unbelief*, Rom. xi. 20. If we would know what company are in hell, see Rev. xxi. 8. it begins with the *fearful and unbelieving*.

2. Unbelief is hurtful, in regard that final unbelief is an undoubted evidence of *reprobation*; *Ye believe not, because ye are none of my sheep*, John x. 26. Unbelief is God's prison wherein he keeps the reprobate world; *For God hath concluded them all in unbelief*, Rom. xi. 21. He hath shut them up under unbelief; *As many as were ordained to eternal life believed: The elect shall obtain*, and others are hardened. Why then, by unbelief you put a seal to your own reprobation, and continue a black note upon yourselves. While you slight Christ you increase your immortal bonds, and are twisting a cord wherewith to bind your souls eternally, in these unquenchable flames: therefore, *Be not mockers, lest your bands be made strong*, Isa. xxviii. 22. There is no back-door to escape God's wrath, if Christ be not received.

3. It is hurtful in that it *hinders the tokens of God's love*, and *deprives us of much good*. Nothing doth bar, and shut out God's operation, in order to our relief, so much as this sin; *He could not do many mighty works there, because of their unbelief*, Mat. xiii. 58. It is true, he could by his power destroy unbelief; but while unbelief remained, his hands were, as it were, bound; *Said I not unto thee, if thou wouldest believe, thou shouldest see the glory of God*, John ii. 40. It mars the comfort of ordinances; *The word preached did not profit them, not being mixed with faith in them that heard it*, Heb. iv. 2. It bars the gates of heaven: it excluded Adam out of paradise, the Israelites out of Canaan, and will exclude us out of heaven, if it be not removed, Heb. iii. 17, 18.

4. It is therefore also hurtful, in that it is the *great murderer of souls*: *If ye believe not, ye shall die in your sins*. The ruin of sinners is laid at the door of this sin, as if there were none other, and justly so: for, if the malefactor was offered life, upon his accepting the king's remission; if he refused this, it might well be said,

said, his refusal hanged him : even so here, *he that believeth not is condemned.* Indeed no other sin would condemn you, if you were not guilty of this sin : but this is the sin, that binds the guilt of all others sins hard and fast upon you ; because by unbelief, you reject the satisfaction for all sin, by refusing Christ ; and this will aggravate your perdition to the highest degree.—But having enlarged so much upon the *sinfulness* of it, the *hurtfulness* plainly follows thence.



S E R M O N XLIII.

COLOS. ii. 6.

As ye have received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk ye in him.

[The tenth Sermon on this text.]

IT was a heavy challenge the Lord Jesus gave to the Jews, John v. 43. *I am come in my Father's name, and ye receive me not.* He had challenged them for injuring themselves, ver. 40. saying, *And ye will not come unto me, that you may have life :* and again, ver. 42. for their disesteem of God, saying, *But I know you, that you have not the love of God in you ;* and now here, in this verse, for their not embracing Christ, though come in his Father's name. Where we see, that, though Christ be God over all, equal with the Father ; and Lord over his own house, and so acts in his own name ; yet he condescends, as Mediator, to come into the world clothed with a commission and authority from the Father, to make offer of himself, and life through him, Phil. ii. 5, —11. Mat. xiii. 17. Heb. v. 4, 5. Observe also, Christ, though thus coming, is to be received, embraced, and entertained : yet such is the perverseness of the world, as not to make him welcome. When Christ manifests himself to the world, it is usual with Satan to hound out seducers,

seducers, and false teachers, to study to bear him down, and make the way of truth odious. See Mat. xxiv. 5. 24. Acts v. 36, 37. John viii. 37. But the true disciple of Christ discovers himself at all times, by his firm attachment to his Master; and therefore is characterized by our Lord himself, as one that not only gives entertainment to the Father, but to the Son; *He that receiveth me, receiveth him that sent me*, Mat. x. 40. Though seducers may pretend to come in Christ's name, Mat. xxiv. 5.; yet they come but in their own name, having no commission from the Lord; making themselves, and their reputation an advantage, their chief aim in their undertakings, and speakings, and imaginations of their own heart and brain, without any warrant from God. Such as will not receive and embrace Christ, will easily receive and embrace seducers.

We now come to the last consideration to engage you to receive Christ.

[6.] The *sixth* motive is, to consider the *excellency* and *necessity* of *faith*, in receiving Christ. Faith is as helpful and advantageous, as unbelief is hurtful and disadvantageous.

All that I shall point at, concerning the *excellency of faith*, upon this head, shall be to discover these six advantages thereof, beside what I have said before: For, I have told you what it is we receive, when we receive Christ*, which discovers the unspeakable advantage thereof. But besides what was then offered, let us view it.

I. With respect to *Christ*, and then the first excellency of faith in receiving Christ is, that it *advances Christ's name*, and makes him very precious, and very glorious in the man's eyes: *To you that believe he is precious; yea, more glorious than mountains of prey.* And herein faith goes beyond sense, or spiritual sensation; for sense may take up the glory of his actings; but faith sees the glory of his person.—Sense beholds the love that is in his smiles; but faith beholds the love that is in his heart, even when smiles are out of view.—Sense looks to what

* What these things are, may be seen, p. 105, 106, 173,—176.

Christ is for the present ; but faith will look to what he hath been from eternity, before time ; and what he will be to eternity, after time : and faith's long journey, from eternity to eternity, makes it fall into an ocean of admiration, and raises the thoughts to a higher pitch of estimation of Christ.—Sense, in a word, will follow Christ for his love, and for the loaves ; but faith prizes him for himself. And surely this is the exercise of the higher house, to be dwelling upon the contemplation of Christ's beauty, and to be transported with love to him, and joy in him. —By faith we view the matchless excellency, and the transcendent properties of Christ. Faith makes long commentaries and precious encomiums upon Christ : “ It is the faithful spy, as one calls it, that “ brings the good report of glorious Christ.” Christ's and his Father's honour are both advanced at once by faith, when we receive Christ.

2. The second excellency in faith, is with respect to the *believer*, in that it advances the believer to the *highest dignity*, such as, the dignity to be a *member* of Christ ; for, by faith, Christ and the believer are so unite, that they are no more two, but *one spirit* ; *He that is joined to the Lord is one spirit*. And herein faith keeps a sweet correspondency with her sister love ; for faith is that nail which fastens the soul to Christ ; and love is that grace that drives the nail to the head. Faith takes hold of him, and love helps to keep the grip. Christ dwells in the heart by faith, and he burns in the heart by love, like a fire melting the breast. Faith casts the knot, and love draws it fast. —The dignity of being *God's children* ; *We are the children of God by faith ; and to as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe in his name,* John i. 12. And is this a small thing to be a son to the King of kings ; or to enjoy the privileges of his children ; *the son abideth in the house for ever ; to be heirs of God, and joint heirs with Christ* ? O if we knew the excellency of this dignity, it would stir us up to more concern after this grace of faith ! The dignity of *power* with God, like Jacob : for, he hath said, *It hath never ye ask in prayer, believing, ye shall receive it,* Mat. xxi. 22. And, indeed,
if

if ye receive Christ, ye shall receive whatsoever ye ask of God. It is strange to see his condescension, in that he puts a blank in the poor believer's hand many times, saying, *What wilt thou that I should do unto thee?*

3. The third excellency in faith, is with respect to other *graces*, in that it advances all other graces: faith doth quicken every other grace.—It advances *love*; and hence faith and love are put together in scripture so frequently: for, no sooner doth faith look to the glorious object, than love delights in it; faith draws aside the vail, and love sits down and solaces itself in the discovery.—Faith advances *mortification*; for, by this shield of faith, we *quench the fiery darts of the wicked*: *And this is the victory whereby we overcome the world, even our faith*. Faith makes the soul to esteem his idols to be as tasteless as the white of an egg: and that which formerly was sweet provision for their lusts, doth now become sorrowful meat, and bitter herbs.—Hence faith advanceth *humility*. By *what law is boasting excluded?* It is not by *the law of works*, but by *the law of faith*: yea, faith sees such glory in Christ, as makes the man vile in his own eyes.—Faith advances *joy*; for, *the God of peace doth fill with joy and peace in believing: in whom believing we rejoice*. The more faith the more joy.—And further, faith advances the grace of *hope*. We cannot hope for the thing promised, unless by faith we close with the promise itself; for faith lays hold on the promise, and hope to the thing promised. In a word, all the graces of the Spirit are quickened and advanced by this grace of faith; as, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, and temperance.

4. The fourth excellency in faith, is with respect to *duty*, in that it advances duties as well as graces: I instance in prayer and obedience.—It advances and excites to the duty of *prayer*: a believing person is a praying person; *Lord, I believe*, said the man, Mark ix. 24.; there is the confession and profession of his faith: *Lord, help my unbelief*; there immediately follows his prayer. Faith excites to the greatest diligence in attending upon the Lord in this duty. Little faith makes little prayer; little sweet diversion from sleep, in this spiritual

exercise.—Faith advances *obedience*: it makes obedience easy and pleasant; Heb. ix. 8. *By faith Abraham, when called to go out to a place which he should after receive for an inheritance, obeyed.* Why are God's commands a burden? Even want of faith is the reason: a pleasant obedience is impossible without faith. Faith discovers the invaluable excellencies that are in Christ, and this makes the person look upon his duty, more as his dignity than his duty. Faith takes hold of that infinite strength that is in Christ, and draws virtue from him; and this makes him obey. No holiness without faith. It facilitates every duty, and makes it sweet; but unbelief makes every duty a burden.

5. The fifth excellency in faith, is with respect to *acceptance* of every duty and action: neither our prayers nor services are acceptable but in faith; *By faith Abel offered up a more acceptable sacrifice than Cain,* Heb. xi. 4.; intimating, that without faith, no acceptable sacrifice. And ver. 6. *Without faith it is impossible to please God*; intimating, that by faith we do exceedingly please him. Many prayers are nothing else but a breach of the third command, in *taking the name of God in vain*; for which *the Lord will not hold them guiltless.* The duties of the most part are nothing but abomination; because, to the *unbelieving and impure, nothing is clean,* Tit. i. 15.

6. The sixth excellency in faith, is in respect of *communion with God.* Faith is that grace whereby a believer doth attain the most *intimate* communion with God, and correspondence with heaven; for, *Christ dwells in the heart by faith,* Eph. iii. 17. By the exercise of other graces, Christ is as a passenger that tarries at most for a night: but, by the exercise of faith, he is as an inhabitant, that comes and takes up house with us. The acts of faith are like the steps of a ladder, by which we go up to heaven, and converse with the higher house; it ulhers the believer to the throne.—Faith is the grace whereby the believer attains the most *sensible enjoyments*; for, it keeps the eye upon the most glorious object: and seeing it is a sensible act, and faith is a *seeing of him who is invisible,* Heb. xi. 27.; perhaps some may be saying, Whence so little seeing of the Lord? Alas! it is more
than

than *thirty days* since I saw the King: yea, some may be at that; I have lived these *two years* at Jerusalem, and yet have not seen the King's face: yea, the complaint of some may go higher; these *three years and six months*, it hath not rained upon me, but the clouds have been restrained and bound up, and the heaven hath become bras; and why? it is the want of the exercise of faith: many are less convinced of the neglect of the duty of faith, than of the neglect of the duty of prayer: but if we knew the excellency of this grace, we would have a holy impatience till we believed.—It is by faith the man hath a *clear sight* of the things promised; the great things in the promise, as well as the promise itself: by faith a man is brought within sight of God, and within sight of heaven; *Faith is the evidence of things not seen*, Heb. xi. 1. So by *faith Moses saw him who is invisible*, ver. 27. Why, is it possible to see things that cannot be seen? yea, faith's discoveries of God are as certain as the discoveries of our bodily eyes are: and, by this means, it comes to have such communion with God; for it is most mysterious and sublime in its actings; and therefore called the *mystery of faith*.—Hence faith can believe the word of promise, though sense seems to contradict the accomplishment thereof; for, it walks not upon the low ground of sense and reason, but upon the high road of the *sure word of prophecy*, and the divine faithfulness is engaged in the promise; as we see in Abraham's faith, Rom. iv. 19. Thus faith believed the falling down of the walls of Jericho, by the blowing of rams horns, which was impossible to sense and reason.—Faith can believe the promise, though the *providence* of God seems to contradict the accomplishment; saying with Job, *Though he kill me, yet will I trust in him*. Notwithstanding of killing dispensations, yet he would believe the Lord's word.—Faith can believe a word of promise even when the *commands* of God seem to contradict the accomplishment: thus when Abraham was commanded to sacrifice his son, the promised seed, yet he believed the promise would be accomplished: “He
“ had natural affection to wrestle with, and the com-
“ mand of God seeming to contradict the promise of
“ God;

“ God ; yet, over the belly of all these, as one saith, “ believing Abraham gives faith to the promise, and “ brings Isaac to the altar,” Heb. xi. 17, 18. 19.— Faith can believe a promise, though *challenges* for sin and *conviction* of guilt do seem to oppose and contradict the accomplishment of the promise ; 2 Sam. xxiii. 5. *Though my house be not so with God,* yet he believed the promise, saying, *he hath made with me an everlasting covenant, ordered in all things and sure.* Thus again, Psal. lxxv. 3. *Iniquities prevail against me ;* yet this doth not interrupt his faith ; *as for our transgressions, thou shalt purge them away :* And surely it is a noble act of faith to believe, notwithstanding of unanswerable challenges of guilt. The best way, both to crucify idols, and to answer challenges, is by receiving Christ, and hoping against hope. Now, the faith of a promise being the great medium, the grand mean of communion with God, and intercourse with heaven, we may see how it advances communion with God.—Yea, faith can believe a promise, though temptations, falls, and follies seem to contradict the accomplishment. Satan aims at nothing more, than to oppose and weaken faith ; but God turns his temptations, and their falls, to the further establishment of faith, which, like a tree, stands the stronger of its being shaken. True faith gets strength by every fall to the ground, it rises and fights more valiantly ; as we see in Peter, and other scripture examples. Temptation to faith is as fire to gold, 1 Pet. i. 7. It makes the true gold more pure ; and instead of destroying faith, it is the occasion of refining it, and adding to its strength.—I might enlarge this purpose, concerning the excellency of faith, to a great degree ; from the consideration of the worthy Prince that faith receives, *Christ Jesus the Lord ;* and the *walk* that issues from thence, and ends in glory.

3dly, The third thing here proposed, in this exhortation to receive Christ, was to give some *directions*, in order to the receiving of Christ : And the directions I would offer may be confined to these four. 1. Study the *sad state* you are in while without Christ, and faith in him. 2. Study the *right use* of the means of faith.

3. Study

3. Study to have the *obstructions* and *impediments* of faith removed. 4. Study the art of *pleading with God*, for this grace to receive Christ.

[1.] Study the *sad state* you are in, while without Christ, and without faith to receive him. While you are destitute of faith you are destitute of Christ; yea, you are yet in nature, and have neither part nor portion in him: and therefore, O man, be deeply impressed with the sad case and state you are in, upon this account; for, you will never seek after Christ, nor faith in him, till you see your need of him, by getting your natural state discovered to you. Though this be not the formal cause of faith, yet it is a forcible mean to engage the soul to be restless, till it get faith in Christ; therefore the law is said to be *our schoolmaster, to lead us unto Christ*. Study therefore, I say, the sadness of a Christless state. Why?

1. A Christless state is a *burdened* state: you lie under the burden of all your sins, original and actual: the burden of the guilt of all your sinful thoughts, words, and actions lies upon your back; because you never come to Christ with your burdens: and if you never come, the burden will sink you down to the lowest hell.

2. The Christless state that you are in is a *loathsome* state. All your actions, whether natural, civil, or religious, are vile and abominable in the sight of God: the very *prayer of the wicked is sin*. You are full of nothing but *putrifying sores, from the crown of your head to the sole of your foot*. There is no mire so unclean, no vomit so loathsome, no pestilence so noisome, no carrion so offensive, as thou art in thy Christless state, in the sight of a holy God, who cannot *look upon iniquity but with abhorrence*.

3. Thy Christless state is a *poor, blind, and naked* state. Your soul is naked, and you swarm with the vermin of filthy lusts: you are destitute of a garment, to cover you; of eye-salve, to enlighten you; and of gold, to enrich you; there seems to be an allusion to Christ's threefold office, Rev. iii. 18. *I counsel thee to buy of me gold tried in the fire, that thou mayest be rich; and white raiment,*

raiment, that thou mayest be clothed, and that the shame of thy nakedness do not appear; and anoint thine eyes with eye-salve, that thou mayest see. As a Prophet, he hath eye-salve; as a Priest, he hath a garment; and as a King, he hath gold: but now, you are destitute of all these, while you are without Christ, and without faith in him.

4. Your Chrattle's state is an *enslaved* state. You are a slave to Satan; he works in your heart, as in a thop, Eph. ii. 2. He says to you, *Go, and you go; do this, and ye do it.* Your state is worse than the Egyptian bondage; for, *Israel groaned under theirs*; but, alas! you are not sensible of yours; neither do ye believe it: the devil knows, that if you perceived your slavery, you would seek to make your escape from him; therefore he makes all sure. He does with you as the Philistines did with Sampson; puts out your eyes that you may not see your chains, nor look to Christ for liberty.

5. Your Chrattle's state is therefore a *wrathful* state, wherein God's wrath is burning against you; the flaming sword of justice is always over your neck; for, *God is angry with the wicked every day*, Psal. vii. 11. Every day of the week, and every hour of the day; when you go out, and when you come in; when you rise up, and ly down; God is still angry with you: he hath bent his bow, and made ready his arrows: and you are the butt of these arrows of his indignation: and if he let them fly, they will pierce you to the very soul; and who will heal that wound? Who can help you if Christ neglect you? No reconciliation but through him.

6. Your Chrattle's state is a *curst* state. All the curses of the broken law are levelled against you, and a just God is engaged, by his oath, to ruin you: to whom doth he *swear in his wrath that they should not enter into his rest, but to them that believe not?* Heb. iii. 18. Should not the thoughts of this make you tremble? Were it but the oath of a man, or a company of men, as these forty men, that bound themselves with an oath, that they would neither eat nor drink till they had killed Paul, it would bereave you of your night's rest and quiet, till you were made friends with your enemies: And will

will the oath of the great God have no effect upon you, nor move you to fly to Christ for protection?

Study this sad state you are in; for withal, it is a *weak* state; since, by nature, you are *without strength*, and cannot help yourselves. You can by no means redeem your own soul, or pay your own ransom. Therefore,

[2.] Study the *right use* of the means of faith. Now, when we speak of means, you would know, that faith is not a flower that grows in nature's garden; *By grace ye are saved, through faith, and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God.* Yea, though a natural man could gather together all the motives and arguments of the Bible, yet he could not make his own heart to believe, or receive Christ: God is the giver, Christ is the author, and the Holy Ghost is the efficient cause of faith; yet notwithstanding there are means which the Lord uses to bless, for working faith. And in general, the great mean and ministerial instrument is the gospel, which discovers a shore for a shipwrecked soul; and it is the *power of God to salvation.*

More particularly, the ordinary means are especially these six, in so many words. 1. *Mean* is *reading* of the scriptures; *these are they that testify of Christ*, the great object of faith. 2. *Hearing* of the word preached; for, *Faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the word of God:* 3. *Meditation*: for if a man never think upon his way, nor consider matters, he will neither know God, nor believe in him; *The ox knoweth his owner, and the ass his master's crib; but Israel doth not know, my people doth not consider.* Meditate on Christ's fulness, your own wants, the suitableness of the promises, and the freedom of grace. 4. *Prayer*; waiting at Wisdom's gates, and crying for Wisdom to *put forth her voice*, to *give understanding*, to *speak of excellent things*; and that the *opening of her lips may be*, that her mouth may *speak of truth and righteousness.* 5. *Conversation* with the godly; for, *He that walketh with the wise, shall be wise.* 6. *Self-examination*; *Examine yourselves, whether ye be in the faith; prove your ownelves; know ye not your ownelves, how that Jesus Christ is in you, except ye be reprobates?* Ma-

ny never believe, because they never examine, nor put the question, whether they have believed or not.— These are some of the means. Now, I say, study the *right use* of the means of faith.

QUEST. *What is the right use these means?* Indeed no unbeliever can rightly use these means: but you are to study to use them as rightly as possible; and to use them right, is to use them,

1. *Humbly*, knowing that means will not do without the Lord's blessing upon the means. Never think that God is obliged to give you faith, upon the account of your using the means; but use them, because he enjoins them as means: put them in their own place, not in Christ's room; and do, as the mariner; he cannot command the wind, yet he lies ready at the coast, and waits on the wind; and when the gale comes, he hoists up the sails; so, though you cannot command the wind of the Spirit, which *blows where it lists*; yet, wait humbly upon his blowing, and till he *come and move the waters*.

2. *Hopefully and believingly*; *It is good for a man both to hope, and quietly to wait for the salvation of God*, Lam. iii. 26. If God looks upon no motive in us to induce him to give us Christ; who then may not hope and expect against hope, and believe against unbelief? People, in using the means, should do it as believingly as they can, by trying what the Spirit of faith will help them to, pressing after faith, with an eye to the promised strength; and so study to mix faith with the use of the word; for, *the word preached did not profit, not being mixed with faith in them who heard it*. And the word read doth not profit, not being mixed with faith in them that read; neither do we receive any thing by prayer, but by believing. Therefore, cry for the spirit of faith to accompany the means.

3. Means are to be used *frequently*: be often about the Lord's hand, in the use of the means; *Blessed is he that sitteth beside all waters*. We have a common proverb, *A going foot is always getting*: If you be much about God's hand, there will be some oil-fallings now
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and then to be got. How frequent and industrious was Elijah in the use of the means! He went up to mount Carmel, and there fell on his face and prayed for rain; but not a cloud appears: he sent his servant to go up and look toward the sea, to know if there was any appearance of rain; he, on returning, tells there is nothing: he doth not leave praying; he prays again, and sends his servant again, even to seven times, 1 Kings xviii. 42, 43. Thus use the means frequently and industriously. And so,

4. Use them *fervently*: *Be fervent in spirit, serving the Lord*; be earnest in this matter, as a matter of eternal life and death; seeking the spirit of faith as what you cannot want; *Ask, and it will be given; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you*, Luke xi. 9. Why, all these words, *ask, seek, knock*, intimate fervency, as well as frequency, in the use of means: and what are we thus fervently to seek? even *the Spirit*, ver. 13.

5. *Patiently*; *Be patient therefore, brethren, unto the coming of the Lord: behold, the husbandman waiteth for the precious fruit of the earth, and bath long patience for it, until he receive the early and latter rain*, James v. 7. *Wait patiently for him*, Psal. xxxvii. 7. *The Lord is a God of judgment, blessed are all they that wait for him*, Isa. xxx. 18. The word may seem strange; for there is encouragement in waiting on a God of mercy, but what comfort in waiting upon a God of judgment; but *judgment* in this place is not to be understood as opposed to mercy, but to folly: he is a God of judgment; that is, of infinite wisdom, who knows how to time and order his gifts.

6. Use means *perseveringly*; Hos. xii. 6. *Wait on thy God continually*, till he come in with regenerating grace: do not *limit the holy One of Israel*: it is reasonable to wait God's leisure, for he gives grace freely and sovereignly: and if grace come in the end, what though we have waited long for it? — Use the means *honestly*, and *do not weary in well-doing; for, in due time, ye shall reap, if ye faint not*. Give not over the use of means, but wait on him who *waits to be gracious*. We never heard of any that got this disposition, but they found their wait-

ing on the Lord was not in vain; the Lord pitied them, and gave them a heart to believe and receive Christ.— This is the direction I offer then; study the right use of the means of faith.

[3.] Study to get removed from you all the *obstructions* and *impediments* of faith and receiving of Christ: and the impediments are these six.

1. One impediment of faith, that hinders the receiving of him, is *natural atheism*: *The fool hath said in his heart, There is no God.* And an atheistical spirit hath most fordid apprehensions of God; it doth not take him up in the greatness of his nature, nor in the authority of his word. God looks not like a God to that person: the word of God is not like the word of God; the sweet promises are but empty notions to the man; the sharp threatenings of hell and wrath, are but terrible fables to him. O seek that the power of God may remove this impediment; otherwise you will never believe, nor receive Christ.

2. Another impediment is *gross ignorance*; ignorance of God and of Christ. Many foolishly question, whether or not they have an interest in Christ, before ever they know that there is a Christ: they are ignorant of Christ, and his excellency; ignorant of the law, and its severity; ignorant of the gospel, and its condescendency; ignorant of themselves, and their sinfulness, and misery, and their absolute need that they stand in of this glorious gospel-remedy. If they knew the disposition of God towards sinners out of Christ, they would not take rest, while they are exposed to that consuming fire, and within the flood-mark of his wrath. If they were not ignorant of their natural state, they would not rest content in that state. If they knew Christ, they would not be content to live without him: *If thou knowest the gift of God, says Christ to the woman of Samaria, and who it is that saith to thee, Give me to drink; thou wouldest have asked of him, and he would have given thee living water,* John iv. x. *My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge.* O ignorant souls, you are nearer hell than others; your state is darkness, and it borders upon utter darkness. You swear, and lie, and drink drunk,
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and break the Sabbath, and commit uncleannesse; you slight ordinances, you slight duties, you slight prayer, in secret and family; you go on in sin without flying to Christ; and all is because of your ignorance: *They that know his name put their trust in him*; but you know him not, and therefore believe not. Why, say you, many have knowledge that make no good use of it; yea, they are more graceless and profane, than we that are poor ignorant creatures. I answer, That their knowledge is but head-knowledge, and not heart-knowledge; or else it would influence their heart and life; and they have a sad account to make, for sinning against so much knowledge: but this will not help you; for profanity kills them, and ignorance kills you; they die of one disease, and you die of another. Will you reject knowledge because some abuse it? Why, that is as ridiculous as to say, Because many die, who have both food and physic, and plenty of means for preserving life; therefore, I will use no means, for preserving of my life at all. They that have food and physic may die; but they that have none of them cannot live; so, whoever perish, ignorant persons, that slight the means, are sure to perish.

3. A third impediment of faith that you need to seek removed is *presumption*. Many presume they have Christ already, and thus they need not receive him: they will not confess that they want Christ. Many presume they have a righteousness of their own: Christ spoke a parable to certain persons that trusted in themselves, that they were righteous. If a proud man hath money in his house, he will scorn to be obliged to his neighbour: so it is with the proud sinner, his language is, *I have never wronged any man*; none can say, black is the eye of my head; I am neither whore nor thief; I have a good heart to God; and have done as well as I could. Alas! poor deluded creature, cannot the God, who *charges his angels with folly*, see a fault in you? yea, millions of deformities doth he see: and is this a sufficient bottom for you to sail in to heaven? There is a leak in the vessel that will sink you for ever into the bottomless pit: the soul is the passenger, graces are the sails, the Spirit is
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the wind, but Christ only is the bottom, in which you can fail safe to glory. It is said of some in the Acts, *They came and burnt their books, whenever they came and believed in Christ*: so, if ever you believe in Christ, that trash must be burnt; you must be forced out of yourselves, and obliged to relinquish every thing about you.

4. The next impediment of faith is *earthly mindedness* and *worldly dispositions*. The vanity of the world so possesses the mind, that there is no room for Christ: the thoughts of the world shut out the thoughts of God. As Saul hid himself among the stuff; so, many are buried and obfuscated in the midst of the world. And yet, all the best things of the world are like the shadow of the sun, which the least cloud can remove; like a heap of chaff, which the wind can blow away; and like Jonah's gourd, which any worm can eat out.

5. A fifth impediment of faith is a *heart-league with sin*, which hinders the match with Christ: why, we are married to other lovers, and in love with sin; Christ comes as a *Saviour to save from sin*; well, he is welcome; yea, but it is to save from such a beloved sin as your drunkenness, whoredom, lewd and carnal company: why, here the heart recoils; Oh! I cannot live without my nature; I cannot part with Benjamin. At the root of unbelief, try when you will, you will find the heart is in league with some lust which it cannot part with. O Sirs, Seek the removal of these impediments.

6. Impediment of faith is the *cunning artifices of natural unbelief*. The unbelieving heart hath a thousand deceits whereby it keeps off people from Christ, and from the receiving of him. Sometimes unbelief presents impossibilities before the man: O it is impossible that God will have mercy on you: it is impossible that the like of you can get to heaven. Unbelief will present a thousand difficulties and discouragements; *there is a lion in the way*: you will never be able to believe; never be able to pray; never be able to hold on in God's way. Unbelief doth harden the heart, and turn it so stupid, that they are no more moved with the word, than if they were a thousand miles from ordinances. Unbelief fills the heart with slothfulness, so as the man doth not
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put forth his hand, as it were, to receive the offered Saviour and salvation. Yea, unbelief presents a world of wrong objects of faith, and that hinders true faith, or believing in, and receiving of the Lord Jesus Christ, the only true object.

There are four things that unbelief doth cunningly lead men to build upon, that seem good things, and are so indeed; but yet wrong objects of faith, namely, sense, duties, graces, providence.

(1.) Through the cunning of unbelief, a man will build his faith upon *sense*, and not upon Christ: thus Thomas, *Except I put my fingers into the print of the nails, and thrust my hand into the hole of his side, I will not believe.* O Sirs, to believe in a bare word of promise, abstract from sense, is a great mystery: and therefore, when one makes sense and feeling his idol, God usually withdraws himself, and denies sensible tokens of his presence, that he may learn to build upon Christ only, or upon a bare word of promise, and not upon any sensible enjoyment.

(2.) Through the cunning of unbelief, a man will build his faith upon his *duties*, and *establishing a righteousness of his own, and not submitting to the righteousness of God.* And thus he builds upon self: or, like the whorish woman that divided the child, he makes the object of his faith, half Christ, and half self, when unbelief cannot prevail to exclude Christ wholly.

(3.) Through the cunning of unbelief, a man will build his faith upon his *graces*; and so lies open to that challenge, Ezek. xvi. 15. *Thou didst put thy trust in thy beauty.* And thus, through the cunning of the old serpent, and of unbelief, the man will build his faith upon his faith, and not his faith upon Christ: it is not Christ that is the righteousness of such persons, but their faith is their righteousness. Hence many can give no other ground of their faith, but just this, *they believe*: and what is the foundation of their faith? Why, they believe, because they believe; they hope to be saved, because they believe: and whence do they believe, but because they believe? Alas! it is a fancy instead of faith; and a fancy built upon a fancy.

(4.) Through,

(4.) Through the cunning of unbelief, a man will build his faith upon *providence*: hence, ask at some people, what is the ground of their hope for heaven? O, say they, God hath been good and kind to me all my days; he hath many times protected me from danger, and provided for me in difficulties, and fed me in my straits; yea, perhaps, he is only feeding you for a day of slaughter: no man can know love or hatred by these outward providences.—These wrong objects of faith, and grounds of believing, are great obstacles and impediments, in the way of true believing and receiving of Christ.

Now, O Sirs, seek that all these impediments of faith may be taken out of the way; whether it be atheism, ignorance, presumption, earthly-mindedness, a heart-league with sin, or the cunning of natural unbelief, presenting wrong objects of faith. Another direction is,

[4.] Study the art of *pleading with God for grace to receive Christ*. It is true, God is not bound to hear an unbeliever's prayer; but he that *bears the ravens when they cry*, may hear you when you plead with him for the blessing. And, if you would learn the art of pleading, there are six pleas, or arguments, wherewith you may urge him to pity you.

1. Plead his *promise*, Ezek. xxxvi. 26, 27. *A new heart also will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you: and I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh, and I will give you an heart of flesh. And I will put my Spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes; and ye shall keep my judgments, and do them.* It is a free and gracious promise: cry to him to make good that word to you, seeing he hath said, *For this will I be enquired of by the house of Israel, to do it for them*, ver. 37. Tell him, that now you are come to enquire, and request him to do it.

2. Plead your own *impotency* and *inability* to help yourselves; this was the impotent man's plea at the pool of Bethesda, John v. 6, 7. *When Jesus saw him lie, and knew that he had been now a long time in that case, he saith unto him, Wilt thou be made whole? The impotent man answered him, Sir, I have no man, when the water is troubled,*

troubled, to put me into the pool; but while I am coming, another steppeth down before me. So say you, Lord, I have lain many years with this dead plagued heart, beside the open fountain of thy blood; I am unable to move to it of myself; I have none to put me in: ordinances cannot do it; ministers cannot do it; thou must put to thy helping hand, or else the work will remain unperformed.

3. Plead his *power*, in a sense of your own impotency. Do you feel the power and multitude of your corruptions within you? Say with Jehosaphat, *Lord, I have no might against this great company; neither do I know what to do: but mine eyes are upon thee.* With thee all things are possible. Though I may despair of help in myself and others; yet, thou hast forbid me to despair of help in thee. *Thou saidst, Let there be light, and there was light;* O say, let there be faith, and it will immediately take place; for faith is thy work and thy gift: it is *the WORK of God that we believe; By grace we are saved, through faith, and that not of ourselves, it is the GIFT of God.* He is *the author and finisher of faith.*

4. Plead your *necessity*, your extreme need of Christ, and of faith in him. O man, there is not a starving man that needs meat so much, as you need Christ: there is not an wounded man, that needs a physician; a shipwrecked man, that needs a plank; a dying man with the dead rattle in his throat, that needs breath so much, as thou dost need Christ. O then, cry, *Give me Christ, or else I die.* I may live without friends, without wealth, and honour, and pleasure; but I cannot live without Christ, and without faith.—Plead his *power*; how easy is it for him to help, saying, as in Psal. lxxx. 1. *O thou that dwellest between the cherubims, shine forth?* it will cost thee no more pain to work faith in me, than it doth the sun to shine forth. Yea, he can more easily put forth his power and grace, than the sun can dart out its beams. It is no trouble nor loss to the sun to shine forth; so neither will it be to him, to shew forth his power and mercy: a look, or a touch, will do it; since he can so easily do it. You may cry with hope; he will never miss an alms bestowed on a beggar, out of the ocean of his bounty. Nay, as the sun, the more it shines, displays

plays its glory the more ; so will he gain glory by putting forth his power to help you.

5. Plead his *mercy*, and the *freeness* and *communicativeness* of it. — Plead the *freeness* of his mercy, that needs no motive, and expects no worth : it runs freely, so that the mountains cannot stop the current thereof, no more than the rocks can stop the ebbing and flowing of the sea. — Plead the *communicativeness* of his mercy to others : he had compassion on men's bodies, that came to him for healing, and will he not have compassion upon souls, that come to him for life ? Is not mercy the work that he delights in ? that perfection of his nature that he takes pleasure to display ?

6. Plead Christ's *commission*, Isa. lxi. 1. that he came *to proclaim liberty to the captive, and the opening of prison-doors to them that are bound.* Cry, Lord, here is a *poor* prisoner, a locked and bound up heart ; here is employment for thee : O loose and knock off my fetters, and bring my soul out of prison. — O here is a *naked* sinner for thee to cover, a wounded soul for thee to cure, a lost sheep for thee to seek and save ; and, was not this thy errand ? Thou didst *come to seek and save that which was lost.* And, wilt thou not be found of a lost sinner, that desires to seek thee, through thy grace ? — Plead his commission under the broad seal of heaven ; for, *Him hath God the Father sealed.* And plead the value of his blood, and merit of his righteousness ; and upon that ground whereby all grace is purchased : plead for faith, and grace to *receive Christ Jesus the Lord.*

Thus I have laid before you some directions, in order to the receiving of Christ. O cry for grace to follow them, and put them in practice, so as you may indeed close the bargain with him. — I should now answer some *objections*, but am prevented with your time. O shall all these directions be lost, and Christ be still slighted and rejected ! O Sirs, you cannot please God better, than by coming to Christ, and embracing the offer of him : and you cannot please the devil better, than by refusing the offer of Christ ; and putting him off with delays, till you inevitably perish in your unbelief.

And now, after all that hath been said, what are you
resolved

resolved upon? Will you receive Christ, or not? Our glorious Lord and Master hath sent us to pose you, man, woman; and demand whether you will receive him or not? O! What answer shall we return? Must we go and say, that all this people, upon no terms, will receive him; none of them are for precious Christ? Oh! God forbid! shall he not *see the travel of his soul*, who travelled thro' all the armies of God's wrath for you, and gave his soul an offering for your sin? O give your soul to him, saying, Lord, in spite of the devil and of unbelief, through grace I will open my heart and arms to receive Christ! —The Lord himself help you to *receive him*, and *walk in him*.



S E R M O N XLIV.

COLOS. ii. 6.

As ye have received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk ye in him.

[The eleventh Sermon on this text.]

THERE are two things, that the sum of Christianity, and the whole of a gospel-life doth consist in; and they both have a respect to Christ; and are these, in short, 1. To *take* him; 2. To *use* him. Now, behold Christ's name sounds in the ears of multitudes, that never yet could be persuaded, to take him and use him: to take him as he is offered, and to use and improve him as he is taken; yet this is the great call of God in the words of our text; *As ye have received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk ye in him*: where the way to heaven is described, by *taking* Christ, so as to receive him as Christ Jesus the Lord; and then by *using* and *improving* him, so as to walk in him suitably to that reception. The receiving of Christ being the leading thing here, without which there can be no walking in him; therefore, I have insisted a considerable time on this exhortation to receive Christ. But

after all that hath been said for conviction, excitation, and direction, perhaps the hearts of hearers are filled with a thousand objections, against this great and necessary duty of *receiving Christ Jesus the Lord*. And this leads us,

athly, To the *fourth* thing, upon this use of exhortation to receive Christ, which was to answer some *objections*. We cannot answer the half of them; yea, no man or angel can answer one of them without Christ. All objections whatsoever would vanish before the grace of the gospel, rightly understood, and powerfully displayed. Christ stands in the gospel ready, to hear and answer all your objections; and he can do it with a word.

If the soul say, I have no right to receive Christ, for I am a great sinner: his answer is ready; *I came not to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance*.—O, says the soul, my sins are red as crimson; Well, says Christ, *I can make thee white as wool*.—Oh! but I have no reason to hope; for I am a lost creature: nay, says Christ, *I came to seek and save that which was lost*; and many a lost sheep I have sought and found.—O but, says one, I am past cure, for I am dead and rotten in the grave of sin: nay, but says Christ, *I am the resurrection and the life*.—O but, says the soul, I am a slave to sin and Satan, and a prisoner to justice: Well, says Christ in his word, *I am come to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to them that are bound*.—O but I have many burdens of sin, and guilt, and confusion; and innumerable burdens, that I cannot mention: well, says Christ, *Come unto me all ye that are weary and heavy laden, and I will give you rest*.—O but, my hand is withered, I cannot receive Christ: well, in this case, Christ bids you *stretch forth the withered hand*, believing in him for grace to believe; and coming to him for grace to come.—O but, says the soul, I am lame, and cannot walk in Christ, or in his way: well, says Christ, *I will put my Spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes*.—Ah! but he may withdraw his Spirit, and depart from me: no, say Christ, *I will make an everlasting covenant with thee; I will not turn away from them*

to do them good.—O! but I may depart from him, and make apostacy: no, says Christ, Jer. xxxii. 4. *I will put my fear in your heart, that ye shall not depart from me.* And Jer. iii. 19. *Thou shalt call me, My Father, and shalt not turn away from me.*—O! but I may be overcome with strong temptations: well, says Christ, *Fear not, for I am with thee; my grace is sufficient for thee.*—Alas! but I have been a great backslider already: well, says Christ, there is a word for you to rely on, in answer to that, *I will heal your backslidings, and love you freely.*—And thus Christ, in the word of grace, and gospel of salvation, stands ready to answer every objection.

But more particularly, we might open the *grounds* of manifold objections, that sinners make against believing in, or receiving of Christ.

1. Objections are drawn from the *greatness* and *multitude of sins*. It is true, there are some who have no such objection as this at all; they are as secure, senseless, and stupid, as a stone of the wall: there is no hope of saying any thing, to move and affect such, unless the Lord himself awaken them. But if any here were objecting to this purpose, though it was but one in all this company; “Oh! my guilt is so grievous, my sins are so great, and my transgressions are so multiplied, that you would tremble to think of the sins I have been guilty of, and what light I have sinned against; and this makes my heart sink: none knows, but God and my own conscience, what a sinner I have been; and will Christ ever accept of me?” *Ans.* The greatness of your sins should be a great argument to engage you to come to Christ, and receive him. Your sins are not greater than God’s mercies; your guilt is not greater than Christ’s merits. It is hardly to be supposed, that you are worse than some who yet have obtained mercy; such as Paul, a persecutor and blasphemer; Manasseh, a murderer and wizard, in compact with the devil; Mary Magdalene, in whom were seven devils; and many of the Jews that crucified the Lord of glory, who yet were washed in that blood of the Lamb, which they shed. The merit of Christ’s blood is infinite; though your sins were greater than all sins, yet there

there is virtue in his blood to expiate them; for, it *cleanses from all sin*. Though the sands be many and large, yet the sea can overflow them all: so, though your sins be numerous and great, the blood of Christ can cover them all.—In a word, the question is not about the *greatness* of your sins, but your *present duty*: be your sin what it will, the Lord calls you to come to Christ and receive him: and your unbelief, in your rejecting Christ, is greater than all your other sins; for it is a refusal of the remedy, whereby you may be relieved of all your sin and guilt. Your other sins are but against the law; but this sin, in rejecting Christ, is against the law and the gospel both. Other sins are against God; but this sin, in rejecting Christ, is against God and Christ both. It is a great sin to think any sin little; but it is a greater sin, to think the righteousness of Christ is not above all sin. Our disobedience is the disobedience of man; but Christ's obedience is the obedience of God: therefore, our believing in Christ doth please God better, than if we had continued in innocency, and never sinned. The least sin is unpardonable without this obedience and righteousness of Christ; and the greatest is pardonable by it. Therefore, O seek in to Christ, to be clothed upon with this righteousness.

2. Objections are drawn from the *justice of God*. “Oh, God is just, and will not hold the sinner guiltless: therefore, though I should fly to the horns of the altar, there I fear justice would be avenged upon me.” *Ans.* This is also an argument why you should receive Christ. God's justice indeed must be satisfied; and there is no way in the world, to give satisfaction to God, but by believing in Christ; for, *God is in Christ reconciling the world to himself*: he hath endured the wrath of God, and so there is no way to answer justice, but by flying to that satisfaction he hath made; and if you do, justice will not demand a double satisfaction; one from thee, and another from thy Surety: no, he will *deliver from going down to the pit, because he hath found a ransom*. It is contrary to the nature of justice, to demand a double satisfaction, when the satisfaction given by Christ is infinite.

3. Objection is drawn from the *sinner's unworthiness*.
 " Oh! I am utterly unworthy, and have nothing to
 " move God to pity me; will he accept of the like of
 " me?" *Ans.* What think ye is the strength of that
 reasoning? It comes just to this: I have no merit;
 therefore, God will have no mercy: there is no salva-
 tion for me by the law; therefore there is no salvation
 for me by the gospel. If you look at God with a legal
 eye, the least sin makes you incapable of mercy; but
 if you look at him in Christ, or with an evangelical eye,
 the greatest sinner is capable of mercy; yea, the sense
 of unworthiness makes a man the more capable. It is
 an unworthy objection, and argues lamentable ignorance
 of the gospel. Come to him as deserving nothing but
 wrath, and flying to God's free grace, and Christ's full
 merit, and the covenant's rich promise. It is with faith,
 as it is with a bird cast into the water, it cannot fly, the
 element is so gross; it cannot clap its wings there; but
 cast it into the air, then it will clap its wings and mount:
 so, faith is the wing of the soul; when it looks to the
 man's self, and his own worthiness, this is such a gross
 element faith cannot mount: but let it out to the air of
 God's free grace and promise in Christ, then it will act
 and fly: yea, grace cannot act but upon an unworthy
 object, and without any cause from the object. Justice
 hath an eye upon the disposition of the person, in its
 rewards; but grace and mercy hath an eye upon itself.
 Thus, if a king execute a malefactor, this is an act of
 justice, and the cause of it is in the offender; but if a
 king pardon a malefactor, this is an act of grace, and
 the cause of it is in the king's breast, not in the worthi-
 ness of the delinquent: so here, if you was worthy, you
 were not capable of this free gift. If ever there was a
 gift freely given, it is Christ; and will you reject him
 because you are unworthy? Why, if you was worthy,
 it would not be a free gift. Nay, your refusing of Christ,
 and standing aback from him, for your unworthiness, is
 great pride: you would have a bladder of your own,
 that you might swim to heaven, without being obliged
 to Christ. If you meet a poor beggar, and see nothing
 but misery and poverty in his face, and draw your purse
 and

and offer him a shilling; would it not be strange to hear him say, No, I will not have it; I am not worthy; yonder is a gentleman in gay clothing, give it him, for he is worthy? Just as ridiculous is the case here, while you stand aback from Christ, because of your unworthiness. In a word, Christ is worthy enough of your taking. What if the greatest prince in the world should make suit to the poorest beggar, that hath neither beauty nor dowry, though she be unworthy to hear of the proposal, yet the person is worthy who hath made it, and the acceptance of the motion is reasonable: so it is here, if Christ, the *Prince of life*, and *King of glory*, be worth the receiving, then reject not his offer that he makes of himself: and indeed never will you be worthy till you receive him.

4. Objection is drawn from a doubt and suspicion arising in the mind if Christ be *willing*: "Oh! I fear he is not willing to accept of me." *Answe.* He declares, in his word, that he is not *willing that any should perish*; and he *feels* that he hath *no delight in the death of sinners*. And, O sinner! will you look up to God's face and say, though he hath both said and sworn to that purpose, yet he is not willing? His purpose of grace in saving some, doth not say that he is willing to destroy any; it only says, that, as he is not willing that any should perish, so, he is resolved that all shall not get leave to destroy themselves; as all would do, if he did not catch hold of some, and pluck them as brands out of the burning; and his doing so says, that none are destroyed by him, unless they destroy themselves. None are willing to be saved by him, until his willingness prevents theirs. His not saving all, is no more an argument of his willingness that any should perish, than a king's not pardoning all rebels, is an argument of that prince's willingness, that any should live in rebellion against him, and fall under his furious resentment: and though it was possible for that earthly prince, to make them all willing subjects to him, yet it were not inconsistent with a merciful disposition, for him to suffer some to take their will; that he may shew how obstinate their nature is, and how equal and just he is in the administration

tion of his government : for, acts of justice toward some is not inconsistent with a will to show mercy upon all. Carnal reason and unbelief still suspects the willingness of Christ ; especially because of a decree past in heaven, which the word mentions concerning the *salvation of some*, from which they know not but they may be excluded : but as this is a powerful temptation of Satan, leading men boldly and arrogantly, to meddle with the records of heaven, that are locked up from men and angels, till the *decree break forth* ; so it is an evidence of our cursed enmity against God, that we will not believe his good-will in Christ, revealed in the gospel toward sinners, by so many commands and promises, calls and invitations. If you would observe instances of Christ's willingness ; behold how he *wept over Jerusalem*, self-destroying Jerusalem, rejecting his offer, Luke xix. 41, 42. *And when he was come near, he beheld the city, and wept over it, saying, If thou hadst known, even thou, at least in this thy day, the things which belong to thy peace ; but now they are hid from thine eyes.* What a moving sight was this, to see the Son of God in a flood of tears for lost sinners ! Had he been enquired at, as he did Mary, in another case, *Blessed Lord, what seekest thou ? why weepest thou ?* His answer readily would have been, " I seek not myself ; I weep not for myself ; for, I shall be glorious in the eyes of the Lord, though sinners be not gathered ; but I weep to see sinners so mad, as to reject their Saviour and salvation, rather than part with their lusts that have damnation attending them ; I weep to see them content, rather to cast themselves headlong into the devil's arms, than throw themselves into my arms of mercy, or receive and embrace me." Oh ! how did Christ's heart melt with pity for you, and will not your hearts melt with desire toward him ! Surely, all the rivers of tears, that flowed from his eyes, and the rivers of blood, that flowed from his pierced head, and feet, and hands, and side, will be standing monuments of his good-will to save sinners. How would you have him to discover his willingness ? Why, man, woman ; he just turns a humble supplicant to you ; and, as it were, upon his bare knees beseeches you to be re-

conciled to him; 2 Cor. v. 20. *We are ambassadors for Christ, as though God did beseech you by us; we pray you in Christ's stead, be ye reconciled to God.* O stupenduous and amazing condescension! Behold, divine mercy stooping down to a sinner, in the humblest posture, importuning him to receive a Saviour, and to receive a free remission through him! Surely the humble intreaties of the great God should both convince us of his willingness to receive us, and shame us out of our unwillingness to receive Christ, and salvation through him.

5. Objection is drawn from a doubt or suspicion of our being *prepared* for receiving of Christ. "Oh! says the sinner, that is any way sensible, I am not humbled enough; Christ comes to *bind up the broken hearted*; but my heart is not broken: to *give the oil of joy for mourning*; but I have not a mourning or melting spirit: therefore I may not believe, or receive Christ." *Ans.* You will never reckon yourself humbled enough, if you would have humiliation proportioned to your sin, which is an infinite evil. Legal humiliation, though never so deep, though your heart should be broken in as many pieces, as the quails doth shudder against the wall; and though you were roaring day and night, under the disquiet of a guilty conscience, and fearful apprehensions of God's wrath; yet all this will not say, that you are now fit for Christ: these humiliations may be merely judicial, and punishments of sin, as were those of Cain and Judas; therefore, you cannot judge yourself by your legal humiliations, but only by the issue and event of them. Think not, then, to bring humiliation in your hand as a price; this will but more unfit you: the best humiliation is, to see your want of humiliation; the best preparation, to see your want of preparation, and your want of all good things about you: and to receive Christ is the only way to true gospel-humiliation. The law is like a thunder-clap, that terrifies; but the gospel is like a warm sun that dissolves the ice. Nothing melts the soul more than Christ apprehended by faith; *They shall look upon me whom they have pierced, and they shall mourn,* Zech. xii. 10. Faith sees

fees the greatest love, the sweetest kindness; and this melts the heart. No doubt, the prodigal was more melted and broken, by his father's embracing of him so kindly, than by all his former miseries. What! art thou embracing me, a stubborn child, and unworthy spendthrift! So Christ comes in the gospel, saying, Come thou, poor sinner, that hast done evil as thou couldest; though thou hast wronged me, and my Spirit, and my Father, and thyself, yet come and I will get you a pardon for all that; fear not, I will be thine to save thee; my blood thine, to wash thee; my righteousness thine, to justify thee; my Spirit thine, to sanctify thee. O this melts the heart! What! is this for me, guilty me, rebellious me! Yea, it is for thee graciously and freely! O! how doth the soul now dissolve into tears!

6. Objection is drawn from *fear* that the *day of grace is gone*. "Alas! I have refused many calls, invitations, and offers, in so much that Christ will not regard me! I have often slighted the gospel-offer, trampled on this precious blood; and with what confidence can I now claim it?" *Ans^w*. It is to be hoped, that while you have this call, yet to receive Christ, that *now is the accepted time, now is the day of salvation*; if your former refusals of Christ have not yet been malicious and deceitful, but rather timerarious and inadvertant, which, though a grievous sin, yet not unpardonable: and now, since Christ doth not yet exclude you from the gospel-offer, why do you exclude yourselves? The more you have refused his offer formerly, the more you have need of a pardon. You should go to God, as David, saying, *Pardon mine iniquity, for it is great*. This would indeed be a strange argument with man, Pardon my crime, for it is great; but it is a strong argument with God: Lord, it is great, and so I have more need of a pardon; it is great, and so thou wilt have great honour in pardoning: even as a physician hath in curing a desperate disease. The sinning against Christ's blood, or slighting it, is indeed a heinous sin; but the more heinous it is, the more need you have to hasten to this blood, as the only fountain that can wash away the guilt of trampling upon

it. Nay, though you had shed this blood, as the Jews did, yet you are welcome to come to it for mercy: see the commission that Christ gives to his apostles, Luke xxiv. 46, 47. *Preach repentance, and remission, in his name, to all nations, and begin at Jerusalem.* O! why at Jerusalem, where he was mocked, pierced, crucified? Nay, begin there; for they have most need of my blood to wash them. If any thing could alienate Christ's heart from sinners, surely the consideration of their crucifying of him, and using him so deceitfully, might have done it; yea, says he, go make offer of my blood and mercy to these my murderers; and accordingly, it was done by Peter, Acts ii. and many of them got this blood applied to them. Again,

7. Objection is drawn from the *long continuance in sin*. "I am an old sinner; my sins are of very long continuance; I have remained long in the grave of sin: and I am just an old rotten sinner." *Answe.* I fear there are some old sinners here very near to hell and damnation; the devil hath got the prime of their age, and he is likely to get the dregs. Oh! if gospel-grace would draw you, I would let down the cord of love, by telling you, that, though your sins be old, yet they are not so old as Christ's mercies, which are everlasting mercies. It is not the first old distemper that Christ hath cured; he raised Lazarus with a word, though he had been four days in the grave: he stopt a bloody issue, with the hem of his garment, that had run twelve years: he loosed a poor woman, whom Satan had bound eighteen years: he cured an impotent man that had an infirmity thirty years: and, can he not easily cure all your old soul-distempers? He received those that came at the eleventh hour: he received some that came at the last hour; particularly the thief on the cross, whom the devil thought he was sure of, having drawn him the length of the mouth of hell, just ready to cast him in; yet, even then, upon his look to Christ, did the arms of mercy take hold of him. This is encouragement to you to look to him.

8. Objection is drawn from a doubt or jealousy about our *right* to receive Christ. "Oh! says one, though
" Christ

“ Christ can save me, yet I have no right to receive
 “ him: though his blood is sufficient to wash me, yet
 “ I have no right to it.” *Ans^w.* You have a full right
 and warrant, from the very call of the gospel, to fly to
 it: see what Christ enjoins ministers to do, Mark xvi.
 15. *Go into all the world, and preach the gospel to every
 creature:* Make offer of me and my blood to all, with-
 out distinction; whatever be their age, sex, or circum-
 stances; man, woman, and child. Let no children
 hearing me think, they are too young to be included in
 this call to come to Christ: nay, the gospel is preached
 to you as well as to old folk: you may die in your youth;
 and if you die without Christ, you will perish as well as
 old Christless persons. *Preach the gospel to every creature;*
 even to the worst of sinners: *EVERY creature*, be they
 never so wicked; even though they have sinned them-
 selves into the likeness of beasts or devils; yet, if they
 be creatures, offer my blood, my mercy, my merit, my
 righteousness to them: invite and press them to come to
 me and receive me; and, *him that cometh, I will in no
 wise cast out.* O sinner, let the gospel-offer be accepted;
 and you shall find, whatever you have been, that there is
 mercy enough in God’s bowels to pity you; merit e-
 nough in Christ’s blood to pardon you; and power e-
 nough in his intercession to procure and apply it to you.
 Look to him for a share of this grace offered to you;
 and *receive not the grace of God in vain.*

9. Objection is drawn from the *power of sin.* “ Alas!
 “ I find sin to be strong in me; how should I believe or
 “ receive Christ? none have such an abominable heart;
 “ surely the Lord will loath me.” *Ans^w.* That as a
 sense of the power of sin, is better than to be senseless and
 stupid under it; so, consider the nature of unbelief more
 than the strength of sin; for, it is *an evil heart of unbe-
 lief*, that gives strength to sin. There are two things
 you must be obliged to Christ for: his merit, to get the
 guilt of sin pardoned; and his Spirit, to get the power of
 sin subdued. There is no healing, but under the wings
 of Christ; and therefore you must go to him for it.
 What think you of faith, man? Is it an enemy to holi-
 ness? No, by no means; it is the only way to it. And
 do

do you find sin opposing you? Why then, know, that a time of contrariety, is a time for faith to work. When a man sees death, then it is time for faith to believe life; when he sees the grave, it is time for faith to believe the resurrection; when he sees guilt, it is time for faith to believe pardoning mercy; and when he sees sin, it is time for faith to receive a Saviour: when he sees strong corruption, then it is time for faith to lay hold on Christ's strength, and cast yourself upon his faithful promise, for healing and pardoning of it. You may try other ways, but they will not do; you may wash in other waters, but they will not cleanse you; you may perplex your own thoughts, with a thousand shifts besides this, but they will not avail you: in Christ, and the promises of the covenant, are the cures of your sinful nature; and faith doth apply the healing medicine. But now, to name no more,

10. Objection is drawn from the *weakness of the creature*, and of *means*. "Why, say you, I have no strength to believe; no strength to pray; no heart to duty: or, if I essay it at any time, I have no success in it, no benefit by it." Here are two scruples, and I shall divide them, in order to give a more distinct reply.

Well then, the *first* part of the objection is: "Oh! I have no strength to believe, no power to receive Christ; yea, no heart to pray for faith." *Ans.* It is fit you know your own *utter impotency to believe*; they who think they can believe well enough of themselves, they mistake the faith of God's operation for fancy, and strong imagination of their own brain. But, whereas you say you have no *strength*; see that the disease lies not rather in this, that you have no *will*: if you were made willing, you undoubtedly would find yourselves made able in due time: therefore, cry for one pull more of omnipotent grace, to make you *willing in the day of his power*. And whereas you say you cannot cry, you have no *heart to pray*; it is perhaps your mercy, to be kept empty handed, that you may not make a Christ of your duty, or a Saviour of your frame; for, perhaps, you would rest there. However, know, that unbelief is the
great

great cause of indisposition for duty; for it fills the man with hard thoughts of God: "Oh! says unbelief, God is so holy, he will never regard you; God is so just, he will never endure you." Unbelief makes God all full of frowns and anger; and so the man's spirit sinks within him: but faith would bring up the soul; Psa. xxvii. 13. *I had fainted, unless I had believed to see the goodness of the Lord, in the land of the living.* Faith shews God to be on a throne of grace; and this raises the heart: and faith sets the soul upon prevailing motives in prayer; such as, the name of God, the blood of Christ, the promise of the covenant, the intercession of Christ, the faithfulness of God. In the mean time, think not either to believe or pray aright, without opposition from Satan, an evil heart of unbelief, the prevalency of sin, and an ensnaring world. You must wrestle, through grace, all the way to glory: *The kingdom of heaven suffereth violence, and the violent take it by force Be strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus. Press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus.*

The *second* part of the objection is, "That, though you essay, you find no success in duty, no benefit by it; I am still where I was." *Ans.* True seeking comes always to something: it is pride and impatience that says, *It is vain to serve the Lord:* See Mal. iii. 14, 18. and Isa. lx. 22, 23, 24. *God is faithful who hath promised.* It is true, many *ask and receive not, because they ask amiss, and do not ask in faith, nothing wavering.* How should we speed, or what success can we expect, if we tell the true God to his face, that he is a liar and dissembler; that he will not make good a word that he says? Therefore, seek the removal of this unbelief.

Besides, remember that there is a twofold answer that God makes; real and sensible. A king may sign a pardon and yet the criminal not know it, for a time: an answer may be given sometimes when we know not of it; *e. g.* You seek, perhaps, a heart to pray, and a heart to hate sin: well, upon this, perhaps, you find your heart harder, to your feeling, than it was; and your corruption bursting forth upon you; which makes you

you ly grovelling, with the most fervent importunity, at heaven's gate, and begets the most extreme loathing of your depraved nature: why, here you get the very thing you was seeking, yet you are not sensible that these things are answers; because the answer comes in a way, contrary to your expectation: for the heart may have such thirstings after grace, such an abomination of sin, that these present answers from heaven may seem to be nothing; there is something more the man would have: present grants are not a satisfying of his desire; yet something is got by every faithful seeking: the man gets either more addition to some grace, or more aversion to some sin; or more grace to seek, or more strength to wait. But though ye get not so much as you desire, surely you get more than you deserve; though not so much as to satisfy, yet as much as to help for the present. But suppose you be not answered at all, it is your sin to murmur, and your duty to wait: and remember, that God never gives his people so large an alms here, but that they need to become beggars, the next hour, at the throne of grace again: and know, that God loves to be urged, but he does not love to be hastened. If God doth promise, it is your duty to believe: if he delays, it is your duty to wait; for, *he waits that he may be gracious*; and, *blej'd are all they that wait for him*. In a word, the Lord may keep his door bolted, that you may be provoked to knock the harder. The woman of Canaan took up the design of Christ's refusing to answer her; therefore she turns the more importunate; and so gets all her will. Therefore, whatever discouragement you meet with, resolve never to quit the throne of grace, but always to lay yourselves in Christ's way, and never to go to another for help; yea, that you will die waiting on him. Remember David's experience, Psalm xl. 1. *I waited patiently on the Lord, and at length he inclined his ear, and heard my cry*. You may meet with discouragement and temptation, and be put to very hard thoughts; but you must be resolute in looking to Christ for help; reasoning with yourselves like the four lepers at the siege of Samaria, 2 Kings vii. 4. *If I live at a distance from Christ I will infallibly perish, there is*

no hope for me: if Christ pity me not, when I am waiting on him, I but perish; but yet there is hope, he will have pity at length; therefore, if I perish, I will perish at Christ's feet; still looking up to him, where never one yet perished: and I hope he will not let me be the first.

Thus I have essayed to answer *some objections*: but after all there may be thousands of objections that remain; and it is the Lord only that can effectually and powerfully answer them, or any of those already mentioned. But whatever be your objections, against receiving Christ, pray to Christ himself to answer them: he is content that you receive him for this end, to answer all your objections, as well as to pardon all your sins, and subdue all your corruptions.

Notwithstanding of all that hath been said, perhaps some are ready to think, my objection hath not been mentioned; my case has not been touched; for, it is a singular case: I am no more moved with all that hath been said, than a stone in the wall. Well, it might give some ground for faith, if you consider that Christ can, *out of these stones, raise up children to Abraham*; and that he hath promised to take away the heart of stone. O Sirs, will ye put him to his word? Nay, say you, my heart is raging in enmity against him, like a devil. Well, say not, for all that, there is no hope; for, Christ can cast out devils; and it is his work and business to put evil spirits out, and to put his own Spirit within you: only give him employment; for it is one of the ways of receiving him, even to employ him to receive you, and to destroy the works of the devil within you. If Christ get no employment here, among all this large company, wo is us, that you should all give such a vile slight to precious Christ, as that you prefer your base lusts to him, and will not so much as desire him, to put the sacrificing knife to the throat of your lusts; and though he stand knocking at your door, yet you will not so much as desire him to come in; nor invite you to shut up the door. If any body knock at your door, you will readily desire them to open, and come forward: and shall not precious Christ get so much reception as

that from you? O invite him, at least, to *put in his hand by the hole of the door*, and then *your bowels will move for him*, Song v. 4.—May the Lord persuade you to receive Christ, and answer all your objections against him!



S E R M O N XLV.

COLOS. ii. 6.

As ye have received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk ye in him.

[The twelfth Sermon on this text.]

GRACE is not an idle habit, but an operative principle: religion doth not make men loiterers, but labourers. After a man hath believed in Christ, and received him, he is not then to ly down upon a bed of slothfulness, as if he had no more ado: nay, he hath much work, relative to God's glory, and his own good, to be employed about: he hath duties to be performed; many evils to be reformed; many ordinances to be improved; many heart-plagues to be healed; many temptations to be resisted; many enemies to be vanquished; many graces to be exercised; many corruptions to be mortified: much employment to give to Christ all his days; therefore, *As he hath received Christ Jesus the Lord, so he is to walk in him.*

We have already handled, at considerable length, the first branch of the exhortation, which was to *unbelievers* to receive Christ. We now proceed,

Secondly, To the second branch of the exhortation, which was to *BELIEVERS*, who have *received Christ*, that they *walk in him*. It is a *walking*, and a *walking in Christ*, that they are called unto.

I have already, on the doctrinal part, handled this branch of the text, at some length, and spoken of the
duty

duty of walking; the qualification of it, as it is a walking in Christ; and also the rule of this walk, or the proportion it should bear to our reception of Christ, by considering the AS and the SO in the text: *AS ye have received Christ Jesus the Lord, SO walk ye in him.* And therefore, all that now remains is, (by way of exhortation and direction) to press, excite, and direct unto this walk. And in order to the more distinct pursuing of this exhortation, I would, 1. Offer some *considerations*, for clearing our thoughts and conceptions, concerning this walk. 2. Some *qualifications*, or *properties* of this walk, and of the way wherein we are to walk. 3. Some *motives* and *persuasives* that believers have to walk in Christ. 4. Some *directions* in order to our walking in Christ. If in prosecuting any of these particulars, any head shall occur, that may coincide with what was said on the doctrinal part; yet the different enlargement will, I hope, make the whole tend to be of new usefulness.

1st, I am to offer some *considerations*, for clearing our thoughts and uptakings concerning this walk; and for paving the way to what may afterward be offered upon this exhortation. And the

1. Consideration I offer is, that this *Christian walk* is not to be expected in any, that are not *Christians indeed*: yea, it is impossible for a man to have a truly Christian walk, if he be not truly a Christian. What is it to be a Christian? Why, it is for Christ to be in a man by his Spirit, and the man to be in Christ by faith.—It is for *Christ to be in a man by his Spirit*: and indeed Christ must be in us by his Spirit, as a Spirit of regeneration, before we can possibly come to him by faith: and as regeneration is primarily supposed to this walk, none can walk in Christ if Christ be not in them, and if they be still in a state of nature and unregeneracy: the regenerating Spirit is the spring of this walk. Men, in their natural state, are dead, and cannot walk. I have read of one that attempted, by art, to make a statue to walk and speak; but after all, when he found his art fail him, and the thing impracticable, he was obliged to cry out, *Aliquod deest intus*; “There is something wanting within.” Why, there wanted a soul, a living principle

ple within. So it is here; men in nature are but like dead statues, they want something within to make them walk in Christ. It is true, as watches may go right for an hour or two, but will not hold on, if the spring be amiss: so, natural men, may take a pace or two, in the ways of God, but they cannot walk unless the spring be right, the heart be renewed, and the Spirit of Christ be put within them.—Again, to be a Christian, it is for a man to be in Christ by faith: there is no walking in him, till there be a receiving of him, and closing with him: if a man be not in Christ, he cannot walk in Christ. Without faith there is not so much as a good thought, or consideration about a Christian walk: Now, serious consideration is requisite thereunto; *I thought on my ways, and turned my feet to thy testimonies. Without faith is impossible to please God:* but to walk in Christ is a walk that pleaseth God; and therefore without faith it is impossible to walk in Christ. Faith takes in the strength of God to enable us to walk: and without this strength we cannot walk; for, *The way of the man is not in himself, it is not in man that walketh to order his steps.* Therefore, without faith, drawing strength from him, we cannot walk in him: Why? because we cannot walk with God, without God; nor walk in Christ, without Christ. In a word, it comes all to this: A Christian walk cannot be without a Christian state. O then, seek to be Christians indeed; *i. e.* To have Christ in you by his Spirit, and you in Christ by faith: and not only to be in him by faith in the habit; but to abide in him by faith in the lively exercise thereof; for, without this, *you cannot bring forth fruit in him,* John xv. 5.

2. Consideration I offer is, that there are not a few professors, whose walk doth give their profession the lie: as those spoken of, Psalm lxxviii. 34,—37. *They returned, and enquired early after God: and they remembered that God was their rock, and the high God their Redeemer: nevertheless they did flatter him with their mouth, and lied to him with their tongues; for their heart was not right with God, neither were they stedfast in his covenant. Many profess to know God, but in works they do deny him. Many profess the name of Christ, who never set upon*
the

the business of renovation, to be renewed in the Spirit of their mind; and so they are in the case of those, Psalm l. 16,—22. to whom God saith, *What hast thou to do to declare my statutes, and take my covenant in thy mouth; seeing thou hatest instruction, and castest my words behind thee?* &c. Yea, many walk, of whom the apostle tells us weeping, that they are enemies to the cross of Christ; whose end is destruction, whose God is their belly, and whose glory is in their shame, and who mind earthly things, Phil. iii. 18, 19.

3. Consideration is, that they who profess to be Christians, and yet have no Christian walk, or know nothing of walking in Christ, they deceive themselves with their profession; they get no good of it, and God gets no glory by it.—They deceive themselves. Professors, who are not practical, they are but soul-cheaters, self-cheaters: they are the worst of all cheats that cheat themselves; *If any man among you seem to be religious, and bridleth not his tongue, but deceiveth his own heart, that man's religion is vain*, James i. 26. And so, *if any man among you seem to be religious, and bridleth not his HEART, but giveth way to all carnal thoughts, worldly thoughts, while God is not in all his thoughts; that man's religion is vain.*—*If any man among you seem to be religious, and bridleth not his APPETITE, but giveth way to gluttony and drunkenness, that man's religion is vain.*—*If any man seem to be religious, and bridleth not his PASSIONS, but giveth way to anger, and wrath, and malice, and revenge, for every injury, that man's religion is vain.*—*If any man seem to be religious, and bridleth not his LIPS, but giveth way to lying, and swearing, and cursing, and obscene filthy talking, that man's religion is vain.*—*If any man seem to be religious, and bridleth not the FACULTIES of his soul, and members of his body, his hands and his feet from working mischief, and walking in the broad ways of whoredom, and Sabbath-breaking, and neglect of God's worship, in secret, private, and public, that man's religion is vain; he deceiveth his own heart.*—It is true, the godly have sometimes cast off the bridle, or kept very slack reins, and so stumbled greatly, and fallen foully: but this is not the tenor of their walk, nor the

way that, as Christians, they can take pleasure in. And, therefore, the proposition remains thus ever firm: they that profess to be Christians, without having a Christian walk, they *deceive themselves*.—Yea, they get no good of their profession, and are in the case of those, Ezek. xxxiii. 31. *They come and appear before God as his people; they sit before him, and hear his words, but they will not do them: for, with their mouth they shew much love, but their heart goeth after their covetousness.* They got no good of their profession, who know nothing of the life and power of godliness: their religion is vain; they please themselves with the empty shell, but never eat the kernel.—And as they get no good by it, so God gets no glory by it, nor the gospel any credit. A profession without a Christian walk, is no ornament to religion: we ought to *adorn the doctrine of God our Saviour, in all things. Let your light so shine before men, that others, seeing your good works, may glorify your Father which is in heaven.* The man that hath nothing of this, deserveth not the name of a professor. Oh! how many plagues are in our bosom, that make, instead of an ornament to religion, a stain to the Christian name! like those, 1 Tim. v. 24. *Some men's sins are open before hand, going before to judgment; and some follow after.* Which words seem to be spoken concerning church censures: some men's sins are open, and obvious, and evident, before ever they be brought under any censure: others they follow after; they are not reformed by any censure.

4. Consideration is, that those who, through grace, have a Christian walk, they have the *happiest life* of it, as well as the holiest: hence says Christ to his disciples, John xiii. 17. *If you know these things, happy are ye if do them.* And Psal. cxix. 1. *Blessed are the undefiled in the way, who walk in the law of the Lord.* A Christian walk, indeed, is not the meritorious or procuring cause of this happiness; but it is the character, property, and quality of happy men: blessings, both spiritual and temporal, are entailed upon such; yea, it is only such who have a well-grounded, well-settled hope of heaven: and hence this walk, and this hope, are joined together, Tit. ii. 11, 12. *The grace of God that bringeth salvation, hath appeared*

appeared to all men, teaching us, that denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and goaly in this present world; looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God, even our Saviour Jesus Christ. Here they are knit and buckled together; and if this buckle be loosed, the man will have little hope: hence if a professor drink drunk, and swear, and lie, and whore, and cheat, he cannot have the hope of heaven in such a course; for, such folk do not answer Christ's design in the gospel; *to be a peculiar people, zealous of good works.* For, though good works, and a Christian walk, be not the ground of the man's hope, (for that alone is Christ and his righteousness,) yet it is the garment wherewith true hope is adorned, and by which it is known; and therefore, *he that bath this hope, purifieth himself, even as he is pure,* 1 John iii. 3.

5. Consideration I offer is, that this Christian walk is many ways pressed and urged in scripture: it is both commanded and commended; and there are both threatenings and promises relating to it.—The Lord doth command it, saying, *Walk worthy of the vocation wherewith ye are called,* Eph. iv. 1. Believers in Christ are expressly commanded in this, *as they have received Christ, so to walk in him.* And we may see the Lord commanding this very walk in his own name and authority, Jer. vi. 16. *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.*—The Lord not only commands it, but commends it. Thus was Noah commended, Gen. vii. 1. *Come thou, and thy house into the ark, for thee have I found righteous before me in this generation.* Thus was Enoch commended; for, *by faith he walked with God, and was not, for God took him; and before his translation he had this testimony, that he pleased God.* And indeed all that thus walk, shall be thus translated; though not corporally at the first, as he was. The body, like Elijah's mantle, stays a little while behind, to be locked up in a cabinet of dust, while the soul is translated at death, to be with God: What is that? never to sin more; never to sorrow more; always praising God; always rejoicing in him;

him; and pressed down with nothing but a weight of glory. Thus it shall be with all who walk in Christ: for they are *made meet for this inheritance of the saints in light*. Others are not fit for heaven, and so could not dwell in it. But I was saying, that God commends this walk; and to give all the instances of commendation, that he gives this way, would lead me to enlarge too far.—There are *threatenings* relating to this walk. God threatens to bring sad strokes upon such as are strangers to this Christian walk; Lev. xxvi. 27. *If ye will not for all this hearken unto me, but walk contrary unto me; then I will walk contrary to you also in fury; and punish you seven times more for your sins.* Yea, if God's own children step aside, and take not heed to their walk, they shall smart for it: though he *take not his loving-kindness from them*, yet, if they *break his laws, and walk not in his commandments, he will visit their transgressions with the rod, and their iniquities with stripes*, Psa. lxxxix. 30,—33.—Again, there are *promises* relating to this walk. There are promises of it, and to it. Promises of it, like that, Ezek. xxxvi. 27. *I will put my Spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes:* And indeed none would walk so much as a right step, without the Spirit to guide them. Then there are promises to it; hence *godliness is said to be great gain, having the promises of this life, and that which is to come*. This Christian walk hath promises, not in the way of the first covenant, when the promise was made to works itself; but here it is made to the worker, or walker in Christ; or to the walk, as it is an evidence of union to him, *in whom all the promises are Yea and Amen*.

6. Consideration I offer is, that this Christian walk hath a *reference to all the duties of religion*, to all the *graces of the Spirit*, and to all the *directions of the word*, which is the rule of this walk.—It hath a reference, I say, to all the *duties of religion*; and so they cannot walk in Christ, who neglect the duty of prayer, the duty of watchfulness, the duty of vowing, and paying our vows to the Lord, as David, Psa. cxvi. 9, 14. compared.—It hath a reference to all the *graces of the Spirit*. Christ is the way that the believer walks in: but, as

in a high way, there are several foot roads, some on this side, and some on that side of the way, which a person may conveniently walk in, and yet never go off from the high way: so here, the several graces of the Spirit are like so many branches of the way and road, for believers to walk in, so many little walks by the way-side.—There is the walk of *faith*, which we are daily to step into, acting faith on Christ's righteousness, for acceptance; acting upon his strength for assistance; acting upon his fulness, for supply; acting upon him for grace, to kill sin and to quicken the soul; and acting upon him for glory, and for another life to come.—There is the walk of *repentance*: while the soul looks to him whom it pierced, and mourns. O Sirs, when the soul looks to Christ crucified, it sees more of the cursed nature of sin, and more of the cursed desert of sin, than it is capable to express. He that was infinitely pleased with his Son, could not but be infinitely displeased with sin, that made him to bruise him, till he melted under the burden of these fiery mountains of wrath, that were heaped upon him: *It pleased the Lord to bruise him.*—There is the walk of *love*, Eph. v. 2. *Walk in love, as Christ also loved us, and hath given himself for us; an offering, and a sacrifice of a sweet-smelling savour.* O! here is a pleasant walk: *God is love; and he that dwelleth in love, dwelleth in God, and God in him,* 1 John iv. 16. Many walk in doubts and fears; but if we were more in the sweet element of love, we would doubt less; for, ver. 18. *There is no fear in love; but perfect love casteth out fear; because fear hath torment: he that feareth is not made perfect in love.* And if we were more in this happy region of love to God, we would be more in love to one another.—There is the walk of *joy*, that the believer should be stepping into; *Rejoicing in Christ Jesus; Rejoicing evermore.* This joy is not only a privilege but a duty: not only a part of our happiness, but a part of our holiness; a part of this walk; a commanded duty. This *joy of the Lord* is the *strength of the soul*: and this walk, in holy joy, is not inconsistent, with a walking in holy fear; they are both put together, Acts ix. 31. *Walking in the fear*

of the Lord, and in the comfort of the Holy Ghost, they were multiplied. Is the believer married to Christ, and should he not delight in his Husband? He delights in them, and should they not delight in him? Believers should mourn all their lives for sin, and yet rejoice all their life in Christ: *These things have I spoken unto you, that my joy might remain in you, and that your joy might be full,* John xv. 11. It is Christ's joy to see his people rejoicing in him; in his love, in his death, in his resurrection and intercession, in his fulness and righteousness, in his merit and Spirit: for this holy and spiritual walk is from the Spirit, as the principle; in the Spirit, as the mover; and after the Spirit, as the guide.—But again, this walk, it hath a reference to all the *directions of the word*, as the rule of it. The man that walks in Christ, hath a *respect to all God's commandments*; and a respect to the whole word, as the rule: for, *Whoever walketh according to this rule, peace be on him, saith the apostle, and on all the Israel of God.* Oh! how few discover a Christian walk, from this very particular, that they are so unacquainted with the rule of the Christian walk; such strangers to the Bible! Many cast the rule of the Bible behind their back. Would she not be counted a whorish woman, who had received a letter from her long absent husband; and when she had read it, she rent it in pieces, and tread it under her foot? And, indeed, all of you are doing this, while you are flighters of the Bible, from Sabbath to Sabbath; and make no conscience of walking by the rule of the word.

7. The seventh consideration I offer is, that this walk hath a *preference*, beyond all other walks; even the best walk of any in the world, that are but pretenders to religion and Christianity. As the worshippers of the beast have the mark of the beast: God's children have God's seal; 2 Tim. ii. 19. *The foundation of God standeth sure, having this seal, the Lord knoweth them that are his. Let every one that nameth the name of Christ, depart from iniquity.* God's seal hath a double motto: the one denotes their security: *The Lord knoweth them that are his*: the other denotes their sanctity; *They depart from iniquity.* There are many wild flowers in the field, that bear

bear a resemblance unto, and look like the flowers in the garden; but are really not the same: so, many things, at a distance, look like sanctification, and a Christian walk; but at a nearer view are quite different from it.

There is a threefold walk, that looks like a Christian walk, but yet it is not only different from it, but opposite to it: and this Christian walk is so far beyond it, as heaven is above earth.

(1.) The walk of *civility*, which is nothing else but a fair shew in the flesh; rather a heathenish strictness, than a Christian holiness. For, mere civility is usually accompanied with *ignorance of God*, and the *mysteries of his kingdom*. Men may be no drunkards, no swearers, no adulterers, no rude debauched persons; and yet grossly ignorant of spiritual matters: so Nicodemus, a ruler in Israel, a strict Pharisee, a civil man; and yet a mere *ignoramus* in the new birth, John iii. 10. Whereas a Christian walk begins with *knowledge*, and with the *Spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of Christ*.—*Jesus Christ* is usually *little prized* by civil men: they are satisfied with their own righteousness; they do not hunger and thirst after Christ's righteousness. The law is more natural to men than the gospel; yea, the gospel is not at all what nature can duly imagine about: therefore, legal strains, and moral maxims, suit more with them, than gospel-doctrine: but, to the Christian, *Christ is all in all*.—Some *reigning lust* usually keeps company with civility; such as covetousness, for ordinary. The young man in the gospel, that was a civil honest man, a fair dealer in the world; and could say, *I have kept all these things, from my youth*; so he might, as to the letter of them: yet, behold, his possessions were a snare to him; at the narrow bridge of self-denial, Christ and his soul parted.—In a word, the civilian usually takes *more care* about his *actions*, than about his *lusts*: he can digest all the lusts of wrath, malice, pride, worldly thoughts, and unclean affections; because the conversation seems to be smooth and fair, these crawling vermin swarm in the heart without controul: why, civility is all for outward carriage; it minds not the heart. But

the Christian walker complains, even of the *law in his members*, the *sinful workings of the heart*: his eyes, like the windows of the temple, are broad inward; he looks much within, and mourns over the sins of the heart, as well as those of the life. But there is,

(2.) The walk of the *Formalist*, that hath but a dead form: this Christian walk is vastly beyond that. Why? the formalist acts from *foreign* considerations, motives from without; such as popular applause, carnal respect, worldly honours, preferments, and the like. Just like puppets, that want the natural motion of life within, and are artificially moved by an outward force. The Spirit of God may assist the hypocrite in some duties; but he is not in him as an informing, quickening, renewing principle: but the Spirit is in the believer, like a *living fountain*, natively bullering up; *Out of his belly floweth rivers of living water*, John vii. 37. Formalists are *careless of God's sight and presence*; they can neither appeal to God for their sincerity; nor live in his presence, as in the eye of his omniscience: but their great care is, to blind the world. The Christian can appeal to God, with Peter; *Thou that knowest all things, knowest that I love thee*. At other times he loaths himself, at the sight of God's glorious majesty and purity, in the sense of his defects; *Now mine eyes see thee; therefore, I abhor myself, and repent in dust and in ashes*.—The formalist is *proud of his false grace*; but the Christian walk is always attended with spiritual poverty. The more knowledge the saint hath, the more he is sensible of his ignorance: the more faith, the more he bewails his unbelief: the more love, the more he blames his heart for want of love. It is a good sign, when the soul is kept hungry and humble, in the sense of its wants, amidst the height of its enjoyments.

(3.) The walk of the *temporary Christian* seemeth excellent; but this true Christian walk hath the preference.—Some hypocrites are under the influence of *restraining* grace, chained up by their own fears; but not moved by gospel-grace, nor restrained by love and mercy: this restraining grace, where there is no more, never destroys sin; but only discharges the acts of it: but true

true grace sweetly inclines the heart, to *hate every false way*, and to *run the way of God's commandments*.— Other hypocrites are under the influence of *common temporary* grace: this hath a degree of excellency beyond all the former, and yet comes to nothing. It differs from *civility*, because it is more Christian and evangelical. It differs from *formality*, because that is only a shew, and this is a real work on the soul. It differs from *restraining* grace, for that avoids sin, and performs duty from slavish fear; but this seems to have some affection for Christ and his word: this a man may have, and yet fall away, like the *stony-ground bearers*. This is the nearest to true grace, and it is called, Heb. vi. 5. an *enlightening*; a *taste of the heavenly gift*, a *partaking of the Holy Ghost*, namely, in his gifts, that are common: but yet the light here spoken of, is not humbling; the taste is not ravishing; the gifts are not renewing: all that they have puffs them up. The foundations sink that are not laid deep enough. The true Christian walk doth magnify Christ, and debase self: this Dagon falls down before the ark. In a word, a formalist and hypocrite, or legalist, may have the Spirit, and yet not be *born of the Spirit*: he may have the Spirit shining on him, like the glancing of the sun-beams upon a glass window: but the saint hath the Spirit in him, like a *well of water springing up to everlasting life*. He enjoys his indwelling presence and his gracious working; not only in his inferior operation, but in effectual regeneration, and spiritual transformation; and so the Spirit of adoption, crying, *ABBA, Father*, Gal. vi. 5, 6. But in order to clear this difference further,

8. The last consideration I offer is, that this Christian walk is different from all other *pretenders* to it, especially in its relation to Christ. And it hath chiefly a threefold relation to Christ. *As of him*, and *through him*, and *to him are all things*: so, this walk being a walk in Christ, is of him, as the author; through him, as the altar; and to him, as the end: it is of him as the Alpha; through him, as the way of acceptance; and to him, as the Omega: it is of him as the efficient cause; through

through him, as the accepting cause; and to him, as the final cause.

(1.) This Christian walk is *of him* as the ALPHA, the principle, the efficient cause: *I live*, says Paul; *yet not I, but Christ liveth in me*. Every step of this walk is an act of the soul, made alive unto God through Christ, and his quickening it by the supereminent influences of the Spirit of Christ, *without whom we can do nothing*. We have neither life nor legs to walk without Christ: it is *he that worketh in us, both to will and to do*. It is he that *giveth power to the faint, and increaseth strength to them that have no might*. Then they *run without wearying, and walk without fainting*. The man is able for all things through Christ strengthening him: now he surmounts all difficulties, which before were insuperable. Though the soul be the formal agent, yet the power and efficiency, by which it acts, is from him: as the soul animates the body; so Christ animates the believer's soul in this Christian walk. Here is a mystery which is but madness and melancholy to an ignorant world; and particularly to blind moralists.

(2.) This Christian walk is *through him*, as the ALTAR, the mean of acceptance, and the accepting cause; for, *we are accepted in the Beloved*. It is in him alone that *God is well pleased*: this is the altar on which the gift is to be laid. As the believer draws all his strength from him; so he expects all his acceptation through him: no action, no duty is accepted but as perfumed by the merit of his oblation. Though they should be melted down into tears of gospel-tenderness; yet they dare not present them to God, for acceptation; but only by Christ: they carry back these tears to be bathed in his blood; knowing that their salt water is of little value with God; expecting only to be accepted upon the value of the blood of the Lamb, and the virtue and efficacy of his intercession.

(3.) This Christian walk is *to him*, as the OMEGA, the final cause, and the end of it: it is all directed to the praise of his grace, and to the glory of God in Christ. The very thoughts of robbing God of his glory, and clothing himself with the spoils of his honour, are sometimes

times terrible to him : why, he is upon a God-exalting, Christ-honouring, and grace-magnifying design. This is the very nature of the Christian walk, and that which completes the image of God, when his glory, and the exaltation of his grace, and the manifestation of his glorious perfections, is uppermost in the man's thoughts, desires, designs, and endeavours. When it is the man's greatest wish on earth, to shew forth the glory of his name; and his greatest errand to heaven, to see this glorious object, and be in case to extol him up for ever. This is the walk we are called to, and herein it is distinguished from all that moralists, formalists, legalists, and hypocrites can attain.—May these considerations be indeed the matter of your consideration; and may the Lord acquaint you with this walk; that receiving Christ, you may so walk in him.

2dly, I am to offer some *qualities* and *properties* of the way. Having considered the walk already, at some length, I shall now confine myself to speak a little of the way: and indeed every property, that I am to offer of this way, that you are to walk in, may be a strong inducement to those that are out of the way, to come to it; and those that come to it, to walk in it. All men are walking in some way or other: What is the way most part are walking in? Why, they are walking *after the flesh*, Rom. viii. 1.; walking in *the way of their own heart*, Eccl. ii. 9.; walking *after their own devices*, Jer. xviii. 2.; walking *after vanity*, Jer. ii. 5.; walking after their *own ungodly lusts*: this is far from walking in Christ; and yet, this is the walk of the most part in the world. The lascivious man walks in his lusts; the covetous man walks in his wealth, as in his strong tower; the voluptuous man walks in his pleasures; the hypocrite walks in his formal duties, &c. Oh! how few walk in Christ! They who do so, are a few persons by themselves; and of another spirit, like Caleb, Numb. xiv. 24. However, this is the walk of true believers; and if they do not walk so, they do not act like themselves: *As ye have received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk ye in him.* Christ says, *I am the way*, John xiv. 6.; and here his apostle says the same: *As ye have received Christ Je-*
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fus the Lord, so walk ye in him: in him, who is the way, wherein ye are to walk. And now, to shew what sort of a way this is, we need not be at a loss, if we were under the conduct of the word and Spirit of Christ, who is the way. There are these ten qualities and properties of this way, wherein you are to walk: all the conveniences that the heart of man can conceive or devise; all the accommodations, that may either gain people to this way, or refresh people that are in this way: and therefore apply it still, as we go along, by way of motive to quicken you to set footing in this way, if you be out of it, and to make progress therein, if you be in it.

1. One property is, that it is a *free* way for all comers to enter into, and for all intrants to walk in.—It is free for all *comers* to enter into. It is a way barred up to no person whatsoever; a way whose gates are cast off from the hinges: *Whoever will may come* freely to it; *without money and without price.* There are some ways, some bridges over certain rivers, which we cannot be allowed to pass without paying some little money, for defraying the charges of the building, or support thereof: but here is a way, a bridge, built over the ocean of God's wrath; a way for sinners to get to God. And, indeed, it is a costly way, built at the greatest expence that God and Christ could be at, yet free to us; nothing to pay for the passage.—It was indeed, a costly way to the *Father*, and cost him his own Son; not so as to lose him for ever, but so as to kill him for a time. Though a man do not lose his child; yet it goes to his heart to see his child tormented; much more when he himself is forced to be the tormentor. Christ was the Father's *beloved Son, the delight of his bosom*; yet, *it pleased the Lord to bruise him*: he not only beheld the tragedy that was acted upon him by man, but allowed the suffering; yea, and was the chief actor of it himself: it pleased him to bring about the salvation of sinners this way.—It was costly to *Christ*; he parted with the glory of his divinity, for a while, though not with the essence of it: and though he was *King of kings*, underwent the notion of a beggar, and *took upon him the form of a servant*; yea, and *died the cursed death of the cross.* But yet it is

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a free way to us, without any cost or charge: Christ is freely given of the Father, to be the sinner's way to him; and it is by way of absolute free gift; *I will give thee for a covenant of the people. Not for our sake doth he it, but for his own name's sake*: in so much that the greatest of sinners may freely enter into this way; *By grace ye are saved through faith, and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God.* If any thing was to be done on our part, to partake of Christ, we might have whereof to boast; Rom. iv. 2. *If Abraham was justified by works, he had whereof to glory*: therefore God gives Christ freely, without any consideration in us, to move him thereto; yea, contrary to all the evil in us, that might move him to deny Christ unto us; and all to the praise of the glory of his grace; that we may come boldly to this throne of grace. If this way of access to God was not free, we could not come boldly. If God shewed a regard to any previous good in us, it would mar our boldness; but, *we have boldness to enter into the holiest*; not by his blood and our actions, but only *by his blood*. If a man hath a mind to step into the king's high-way, out of his house, which is the subject's privilege, no man can say to him, you trespass in so doing; it is made to be common for all: so Christ is a free common good; a common way to all sorts of persons whatsoever, to whom there is a heart given to step into the way. Christ allows all sorts of sinners to come to him and enter into this way: but he allows none to live in sin, that have come to him; nay, he purges out their sin. Let none take it amiss that we say, the vilest of sinners are freely welcome to this way, that they may walk in it; and then surely they will walk at another rate, than they have done: in this sense it is that Christ says, *Publicans and harlots may enter into the kingdom of heaven, before the self-righteous Pharisees*, Mat. xxi. 31. Men's thoughts run another strange way: if I have little holiness and righteousness, then the man thinks, now I may, in regard of that holiness and righteousness, without presumption, close with Christ: why, this is to overthrow the gospel of the grace of God in Christ; who says, that *he came to save that which was lost*; and came *not to call the righteous, but sinners.*

It is a free way for all comers to enter into.—And it is free for all that have *entered* into it to walk in, and to walk freely. Walking is a voluntary motion, and the regenerate soul walks freely, without force or compulsion, or a base mercenary spirit; *The love of Christ constrains him*: love is a golden weight that hangs upon the soul, and makes every wheel of it to move. Christ is such a free way, as makes all his people volunteers in his service; *Thy people shall be willing in the day of thy power*. It is their choice, their delight, their option: *I have chosen the way of truth*, Psal. cxix. 3.

2. Another property is, it is a *safe* way to walk in; and so as there is here the freest walking, so there is here the safest walking; hence it is said of the man that walketh in this way, Isa. xxxiii. 16. *He shall dwell on high, the place of his defence shall be the munition of rocks*. In this way the man is so safe that he needs fear no evil. O how sweetly do thy walk, who can sing the twenty-third Psalm in the very view of death! *Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, yet will I fear no evil; for thou art with me, thy rod and thy staff they comfort me*. There is the greatest security in this way; *He that walketh uprightly, walketh surely. He that dwelleth in the secret place of the most High, shall abide under the shade of the Almighty*, Psal. xci. 1. Let a man take any other way in the world to heaven, but Christ, and there are a thousand dangers in it, and hazards of miscarriage: but let a man take this way, and walk in it, and *the gates of hell shall not prevail against him*. It is said of this way, Isa. xxxv. 9. *No lion shall be there, nor any ravenous beast shall be found there: but the redeemed of the Lord shall walk there*. Those that keep close to this way, they keep out of the reach of Satan, the roaring lion; that wicked one toucheth them not. It is true, they are the objects of his greatest spite: but they are out of his reach; he can do them no real hurt, while they keep close in this way. They that walk in their lusts, and in sin, they are in Satan's way, and he hath them at his will: this is the way to hell. They that are walking in their own righteousness, as their way to heaven, Satan hath continual advantage against them; because
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there is so much sin in all their righteousness, and so much of the devil in all their goodness, they are not out of the reach of the lion: but there is no lion in the way, Christ. It is a safe way to walk in, you cannot be safe in any other way, that hath salvation at the end of it; for it leads to eternal glory and eternal happiness; Heb. xii. 1, 2. *Let us lay aside every weight, and the sin that doth so easily beset us, and run with patience the race set before us looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith; who for the joy that was set before him, endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right-hand of the throne of God.* Other ways lead to hell, this takes to heaven; for the promise is made to this way, and to the walkers in it; for, *all the promises are in Christ Yea and Amen.* And those that live godly in Christ Jesus, have the promises of this life, and of that which is to come.

3. The *third* property is, it is a *lightsome* way to walk in; for there is much light in this way: hence says the prophet Micah, chap. vii. 8, 9. *When I sit in darkness, the Lord will be a light unto me; he will bring me forth to the light, and I shall behold his righteousness.* Psa. cxix. 130. *The entrance of thy word giveth light; it giveth understanding to the simple.* It discovers sin to be sin, and duty to be duty. *It is a pleasant thing,* says Solomon, *for the eye to behold to sun;* and, Oh! it is a heavy thing for a traveller to be benighted and overtaken with darkness! And hence the summer seasons are the best seasons for travellers in the way, because it is lightsome. Now, Sirs, all other ways but this are darkness: Christ is the light of the world; John viii. 12. *I am the light of the world; he that followeth me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life.* The light of knowledge, in opposition to the darkness of ignorance and error, is in this way; for he that is the way, teacheth all the travellers, according to his promise; *They shall all be taught of God:* never a schoolmaster in the world, can teach the perfect trade of walking uprightly, but Christ, the God-man: they are all but unskilful, that are not taught of him, and by his Spirit as a *Spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of him.* We that are ministers, we leave

you all but unpolished dunces in Christianity, till the Lord himself come in to that ministry; and, by his Spirit, teach your spirits: and then, when he comes, he can make you wiser than your teachers. Again,

4. The *fourth* property is, it is a *firm* and *solid* way to walk in; there is no fear of sinking, while we keep this causeway, this road. Gluts of rain make some mirey boggy ways sinking, to both men and horses. But here is a way that is a firm rock; all the rain that falls upon it runs away; it is a *sure foundation*: it is firm in the foulest as well as in the fairest weather. Christ is a way that will deceive none, that walk in him: some ways will look well enough to the eye, and yet deceive people: some places will look as green and fair, as any other parts of solid ground; and yet they are such quagmires and bogs, that men and horses will sink to the neck therein: even so, there is a way of self-righteousness, and legal obedience, that seems to be a fair green way, that promises firmness; but he that walks there will himself sink; and if Christ come not to pluck him out, he will sink over head and ears. Paul durst not be found in that way of his own righteousness but looked upon it as *dung*, Phil. iii. 8, 9. Now, you know, dung makes both a sinking way, and a sinking way: even so, when men go *about to establish their own righteousness*, for justification, and so the way to the Father, it smells in the divine nostrils, as dung: and not only so, but, as it is unacceptable to God, so it is unprofitable to us, in point of acceptance; for, it is a sinking way: we cannot keep firm footing upon it, but sink in it: but Christ is such a firm way to walk in, that you cannot sink therein: for, he *upholds with the right hand of his righteousness*. The way of sin is a sinking way; the man will sink to hell that walks in it: the way of self-righteousness also is a slippery way; all the righteousness of man is not able to uphold him; for the sin that is in his righteousness, is enough to trip up his heels, and lay him in the mire, and overthrow him. But the man walks firmly that walks and builds upon a rock. Though they that walk in Christ, are not free of the filthiness of sin altogether; but as water falling upon a rocky way, glides as fast

as it falls, the way being as hard as before the rain; so, though *the Lord hath laid on Christ the iniquity of us all*, and the believer's sin falls still upon Christ; yet he passed away all this iniquity from himself, by making full satisfaction: if Christ should have our sin remaining on him, he himself would be a sinking way to us: if Christ was sinful in the eyes of God, we could never be clean in his eye; but when sin was laid upon Christ, how did he sweat it out, when *he trode the wine-press alone!* Again,

5. The *fifth* property is, that it is a *high* and *honourable* way; Isa. xxxv. 8. *An high way shall be there, and it shall be called the way of holiness; the unclean shall not pass over it, but it shall be for those: the way-faring man, though a fool, shall not err therein.* It is an *high* and *honourable* way: if you walk in this way, you may debate with any man, in point of honour; for therein you have *fellowship with the Father, and with the Son.* They that walk in this way, they *dwell on high*; for it is the way of God: it is the king's high-way, the way of the King of kings; *Prepare ye the way of the Lord, make his paths straight*, Matth. iii. 3.—It is the way of *holiness*, that makes it an honourable way also, of which God says, *Without holiness no man shall see God.* Indeed, none can walk in holiness that do not walk in Christ; and none shall ascend to heaven, that are not sanctified in Christ. There is no man or woman, no king or queen, no lord or lady, no rich or poor person in the world; no magistrate or subject, no minister or people, shall get to heaven without holiness, or being *sanctified in Christ Jesus*, 1 Cor. i. 2.—It is *high* and *honourable* as it is the path of *righteousness*; *he leadeth me in the paths of righteousness for his own name's sake*, Psal. xxiii. 3. And so it is the way everlasting; Psalm cxxxix. 25. *See if there be any wicked way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting*; i. e. the way that is everlastingly true, everlastingly good, everlastingly holy, everlastingly pleasing to God, and profitable to man, and ends in everlasting life. It is an *high* way; a way by itself, and distinguished from the ways of the world; for, it is a way of separation from, and non-conformity to this world.

—*The unclean shall not pass over it*; that is, the unregenerate, either to defile the way, or disturb those that walk there; and they that walk in it, shall be *undefiled in the way*; and shall more and more *escape the pollutions that are in the world*: Why? *there is a river* that runs along this way, *the streams whereof* not only make glad, but make clean, *the city of God*; the river of the blood of Christ, the river of the influences of the Spirit: by these they are cleansed from all sin.—Thus it is in every respect an high, holy, and honourable way. Again,

6. The *sixth* property of this way is, it is an *easy* way; *My yoke is easy*, says Christ: and saith the prophet here of this way, *The way-faring man, though a fool, shall not err therein*; though of a weak capacity in other things, he shall have such plain directions from the word and Spirit, that he shall not err therein: not that they shall be infallible, and commit no mistake; but they shall not be guilty of any fatal miscarriage; nor so miss their way, but that they shall recover it again, through grace, and get well to their journey's end. This way is easy to hit; *Knowledge is easy to him that understandeth*, saith Solomon: to nature it is a most difficult way indeed; but, through grace, it is a most easy way, and such a way as wherein a man cannot be lost. In the way of the covenant of works, a man may presently lose himself: there is not one work he doth, but he commits sin in it, and so he presently steps aside; and having thus lost himself, he must begin again, go about, and come where he was at the first: when all is done, it is as good as if it had been undone; for the law is not satisfied with any thing less than perfection: and this perfection of righteousness, we can only have in Christ.—But further, there are these four things, that make this way an easy way to walk in.

(1.) It is an easy way in point of *clearness*; Christ maketh every thing clear, to the man that comes into this way; for, the anointing which they receive, teaches them all things: he maketh himself evident to them, and *giveth understanding to the simple*; in so much, that *the way-faring man, though a fool, shall not err*; the

the Spirit of truth leadeth them into all truth, that is necessary for them: the gospel makes the simple wise.

(2.) It is an easy way in point of *nearness*; they that walk in Christ have a short-cut to the Father; *No man cometh to the Father but by me.* Others ways are like the crooked bow, but Christ is the even string: all other ways are compasses about; yea, they are labyrinths in which men lose themselves. How near a way Christ is you have account, Rom. x. 6, 7, 8. *Say not, Who shall ascend into heaven? Or, who shall descend into the deep? The word is nigh thee, even in thy mouth, and in thy heart.* The way to heaven is nigh; there is but one step to it, as it were, and that is to step in to Christ, and remain there; *He that believeth shall be saved.* The old way of the law of works is a long way; for, *Cursed is every one, that continueth not in all things written in the book of the law to do them.* If a man will run an hundred miles for money, which he may have just at his door, and but one step to it, sure his journey is vain: so it is here, Christ hath grace and salvation, and all in him, and he lays them down at our door; and what need all this travel with respect to legal working? Here is a near way.

But here a question may be propounded, *Will not this discourage men to work, or to do good works?* To which we might reply, Indeed it may discourage selfish men, that work for themselves, and for their own justification and acceptance; which is a work that God rejects: a service of selfishness may be discouraged by this gospel-doctrine; but the service of thankfulness, which is the only true service, and is more cordial and sedulous than all the mercenary work in the world; this service will be furthered and encouraged thereby. True service to God in Christ, is not a serving him slavishly, to purchase salvation from him; but a serving of him thankfully, to glorify him who hath brought salvation to us.—Thus it is an easy way in point of nearness: a great deal of labour and toil is saved.

(3.) It is an *easy* way in point of *readiness* and *dispatch* of business therein: whosoever chooseth Christ for a way to walk in, comes to a very quick dispatch of all
the

the business of holiness, sanctification, and mortification, which they are to do, while they are in the way; for Christ, whom the believer chooseth for his way, anoints the wheels of their soul, and puts them into a nimble motion; 1 Pet. ii. 3. *To whom coming as to a living stone, ye as lively stones are built up.* Christ, being the living stone, makes every one that cometh to him living; yea, and lively too: and we say a man is a lively man, that is quick in business. Why? Christ is their strength: he is the strong arm that draws the bow, and the stronger the arm is that draws the bow; the swifter is the flight of the arrow, and the further it flies. Christ is the living principle within that makes them lively; *I live, yet not I, but Christ liveth in me.* The larger that the root of the tree is, the more sap doth it gather, and the more fruit doth it bring forth: Christ is the large root, where he is once received, and so there are answerable spirits and sap coming from him; there will be a *bringing forth of much fruit*: hence believers are said, to be *strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might*: there is the believer's stock. A poor maid servant, or widow, can do little for themselves in the world; why? because their stock does not reach far: but if married to a rich man, then they could do much, because they are interested in a large stock: so, when a person is married to Christ, that before was poor, he is now interested in a rich stock; for, *in him are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge*: and when there is such a great stock to trade upon, there may be a great deal of work done with much dispatch; *I can do all things through Christ strengthening me; yea, when I am weak, then am I strong.*

(4.) It is an *easy way* in point of largeness; for it is a spacious way, wherein there is abundance of room and liberty: *If the Son make you free, then are ye free indeed.* It is true, it is said, *Strait is the way*: and it is strait, not only because of the strictness and exactness that is required, while the way will allow no toleration for sin; but also that it is a way, that allows no room to any thing else but Christ: there is no room for a man's own righteousness for justification jointly, together with Christ:

Christ: but now Christ, considered in himself, is a large and spacious way, both in respect of the number that are allowed to come into this way, and the liberty and freedom he allows them that walk in him; they walk at liberty. There is a manifold bondage in every other way; bondage to sin, Satan, death, hell, wrath, and to the law as a covenant of works. In a word, other ways are crooked, but this is a streight even way.

7. The *seventh* property is, that it is the *good old way*; Jer. vi. 16. *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.* This way you are to walk in; it is not a new up-start way, but the old beaten way, in which all the patriarchs and prophets have walked: we are to consult the purest antiquity; to ask for the path that Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob have travelled in, and all the saints these five thousand years, and more. *Ask for the old path; where is the good way:* we must not be guided purely by antiquity, as if that plea was sufficient to justify our path; no, by no means: there is an *old way, which wicked men have trodden,* Job xxii. 15. But when we ask for the *old way*, it is to be for the *good old way*. The gospel is no new scheme: Christ is an old way in four respects.

(1.) It is an old way in respect of the *contrivance* of it; it is no new invention, but as old as eternity: Christ is *the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world*; that is, from eternity: he was *set up from everlasting, from the beginning, or ever the earth was.* God's way of saving sinners by Christ, is *according to his eternal purpose, which he purposed in Christ Jesus our Lord, before the foundation of the world was laid,* Eph. iii. 11. 2 Tim. i. 9.

(2.) It is an old way in respect of the *revelation* of it; for it was revealed immediately upon the back of the fall: *The seed of the woman shall bruise the head of the serpent.*—Adam knew this way; and *Abraham saw Christ's day*, and Christ was before him; *Before Abraham was, I am.*

(3.) It is an old way in respect of the *use and improvement* of it: it is not of late use; it is long since the saints

began to walk in it. There was never another way to heaven, since the covenant of works was broken and violate; and all that have walked to heaven since the beginning of the world by faith, they walked in this way, Heb. xi. And so,

(4.) It is an old way in respect that it was the *old-testament* as well as the new-testament way. The old-testament church had the same faith and hope in Christ, that the new-testament church have: only with this difference, their faith was to look forward, and our faith is to look backward: they upon a Messiah to come, and we upon a Messiah that is come. It is the good old way.

8. The *eight* property is, that it is the *new* and *living* way; *Having boldness to enter into the holiest of all by the blood of Jesus, by a new and living way*, Heb. ix. 19. But here two questions may be proposed.

QUEST. 1. *Why called a new way?*

ANSW. (1.) It is called a *new* way, because it is come *after* the old way of the covenant of works. God never designed to bring one man to heaven, by that old-covenant of works: he erected that scaffold for a little while, that the glory of the new-covenant might be displayed. The condition of that covenant was perfect, personal obedience, upon pain of eternal death; and now, by sin, this bridge is quite broken down; yet, such is the folly of a blind world, that they labour to build up that bridge again; but it is rotten, and will never bear us over.

2. A *new* way in respect of the *new, clear, gospel-revelation* thereof now under the New-Testament: for, under the Old, *the way into the holiest was not yet made manifest*, Heb. ix. 8. The brightest revelations of Christ, under the Old Testament, were in these or the like words; that he was to be the *seed of the woman*, the *son of David*, a *prophet like unto Moses*, a *child born*, whose name should be *Wonderful Counsellor*: but what are all these to that one bright word of the Baptist's, *Behold the Lamb of God, that taketh away the sin of the world?* And therefore, John the Baptist is called *greater than all the old-testament prophets*; and yet the *least* in
the

kingdom of heaven, is greater than he, that can say, with the apostle, *We have seen with our eyes, heard with our ears, and handled with our hands the word of life*; and can preach a crucified, dead, buried, risen, exalted, and glorified Christ, that hath brought in everlasting righteousness: hereupon it was said, *Blessed are your eyes for they see*, even what the old-testament saints longed to see, and never saw, except one, who was the happiest of the old-testament saints, *viz.* old Simeon; he was both an old-testament and a new-testament saint: he got it revealed to him, that *he should not see death, till he had seen the Lord's Christ*. Again, they had but types of Christ, and *the shadows of things to come*; but *the body is of Christ*. What a great difference is there between a priest's cutting a lamb's throat, and Christ giving himself a sacrifice! Therefore it is called a new way.

(3.) It is *new*, because it is *always* new. The blood of Christ is but newly shed, as it were; and there is no abatement of the virtue of his death: his blood is as warm, and cries as loud this day, as the day it was shed: yea, it is always new, so as it never gives place to another way; there will never be another way to heaven: and we need to take heed how we improve this; for, if *we sin wilfully, after we have received the knowledge of the truth*, in rejecting this way, *there remains no more sacrifice for sin*, Heb. x. 36.: That is, God will never provide another way, to the end of the world, but this one way.

(4.) It is a *new* way, because it is *well prepared*, as new ways use to be, and we may walk confidently and comfortably in it; for it is such a well-prepared way, that one can hardly set his foot in this way, to walk in it, but he is almost at the end of the way; because, *He that hath the Son hath life*. We receive eternal life, by receiving of Christ: not the full enjoyment of it, but a right to it, and an earnest of it. When a man sees Christ, he sees heaven; *Those eyes shall see the King in his beauty, and the land that is afar off*, Isa. xxxiii. 17. When a man sees him, he sees the land afar off; in regard,

gard, none can take a believing look of Christ, but he must see heaven, and salvation in his face. But,

QUEST. 2. *Why called the LIVING way?*

ANS. (1.) It is called a *living way*, because there was *life in his death*: the life of reconciliation; *We have peace by the blood of his cross*; for here he satisfied justice, fulfilled the law-demands, and expiated sin, which was the ground of the quarrel.

(2.) A *living way*, because he is the *life of the world*; and all that are in this way live; and no man can die in this way: no traveller upon it can die; *He that believeth in me, shall never die*. When bodily death comes, they but *sleep in Jesus*, who is the *resurrection and the life*.

(3.) A *living way*, because he *lives for ever* to be the way. Eternal life is one of Christ's names; *This is the true God, and eternal life*, 1 John v. 20. *He ever liveth to make intercession for us*, Heb. vii. 25.

(4.) A *living way*, because travellers *must live* upon this way: the traveller lives as soon as he is in it, and he lives as long as he is in it, and he lives upon it: all his fare is Christ himself; *whose flesh is meat indeed, and whose blood is drink indeed*. If the traveller be faint and hungry, he hath nothing ado but to fall upon Christ, by faith, and live upon him; *The life that I live, is by faith on the Son of God*. Never desire better entertainment for a child of God, than more of Christ, more of his grace, more of his fulness, more of his Spirit, more of the sap and virtue of a crucified Jesus.

9. The *ninth* property is, that it is a *consecrated way*; Heb. x. 19, 20. *Having therefore, brethren, boldness to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus, by a new and living way which he hath consecrated for us*; that is, dedicated to be the way. Now, Christ is consecrated,

[1.] By the FATHER, to be the way in which we are to walk. (1.) He is consecrated by the *oath* of God; *The Lord hath sworn, and will not repent, Thou art a Priest for ever, after the order of Melchizedeck*, Psal. cx. 4. Heb. vii. 28. *For the law maketh men high-priests which have infirmity, but the word of the oath which was since the law, maketh the Son, who is consecrated for ever-*
more.

more. By the oath of JEHOVAH he is appointed to be the only way to bring sinners to glory. (2.) He is consecrated by the *preparing him a body*; Heb. x. 5. *Sacrifice and offering thou wouldest not, but a body hast thou prepared me.* (3.) By the Father's *commission and charge* that he gave him about the work of redemption, to suffer in that body or human nature; *This commandment have I received of my Father*, John x. 17. (4.) By the *holy anointing*; Psal. xlv. 7. *Thou lovest righteousness, and hatest wickedness; therefore God, even thy God hath anointed thee with the oil of gladness above thy fellows.* (5.) By getting all *power and judgment* committed to him; *For as the Father raiseth up the dead, and quickeneth them: even so the Son quickeneth whom he will*, John v. 21, 22. *As thou hast given him power over all flesh, that he should give eternal life to as many as thou hast given him*, John xvii. 2.

[2.] Christ did consecrate HIMSELF to be the way for sinners to walk in to heaven. (1.) By willingly *complying with the Father's will*; Psal. xl. 8. *I delight to do thy will, O my God.* A great part of his consecration lay in his compliance with the divine will; *By the which will we are sanctified.* (2.) He consecrated himself by his *willing death*; John xvii. 19. *For their sakes I sanctify myself, that they also may be sanctified thro' the truth.* So that *sanctifying himself* is just his *consecrating himself*; devoting himself to be a sacrifice for his sheep. We could never come to that sanctification by gospel-devotedness to God, unless Christ had devoted himself to death. (3.) He consecrated himself by *displaying his authority to save*, and declaring *his ability*. For, as *there is no Saviour beside him*, Hof. xiii. 4.; so, *he came into the world to save sinners*, 1 Tim. i. 18.: and *he shall save his people from their sins*, Matth. i. 21. because *he is able to save to the uttermost*, Heb. vii. 25. (4.) He consecrated himself by the *exercise of his office*, in bringing *many sons to glory*: For *of all that the Father gave him he lost none*, John xvii. 12.—Thus he is a consecrated way, and as such we are to walk in him. And, upon the whole,

10. The *tenth* property is, that this way we are to walk in, is a *pleasant way*, a *comfortable way*: surely
wisdom's

wisdom's ways are pleasantness; for Wisdom itself is the way. What more pleasant than to walk in him, who is light itself, pleasure itself?

OBJECT. *But believers are many times oppressed, with sadness and heaviness of spirit, though they be in this way.*

ANS. It is only when they turn aside out of this way, that they are oppressed: they walk not in Christ as they ought, who rejoice not always in him; for, it is the believer's duty, still to rejoice in Christ Jesus.

OBJECT. *But, should not a believer mourn for sin?*

ANSW. Yea, indeed; surely they ought: but true mourning, gospel-melting, is not without great pleasure: there is more pleasure in gospel-mourning, than in all the merriment of the wicked. There is much secret pleasure in an evangelically melted heart; for, God deals with believers as he desires us to deal with our enemies; Prov. xxi. 22. *If thine enemy hunger, give him bread; if thirsty, give him drink: so shall you heap coals of fire on his head*; q. d. Kindness is the best way in the world to melt the most obdured wretch: thus God deals with his people in Christ. They are by nature enemies as well as others: well, he gives them bread when they are hungry; and drink, when they are thirsty: and thus he heaps coals of fire on their head; *i. e.* he melts them. What is true of drunkards and gluttons, in a sinful sense, that they are never better than when they are in a wine-cellar, and at a banquet, always tippling and drinking, is true of the believer, in a spiritual sense: for, the church speaks in this language; *He brought me into his banquetting-house*: [or, as it may be read, his CELLAR OF WINE;] *Stay me with flaggons, comfort me with apples; for I am sick of love*, Song ii. 4, 5. O the soul is no longer satisfied than it is with Christ! the believer is never better, than when he is in the banquetting-house, in Christ's wine-cellar; and he cannot get enough, as it were, of this spiced wine; *Stay me with flaggons*: it is not with cups, or half cups, but with whole flaggons. There is a holy kind of inebriating, whereby Christ doth, in a spiritual sense, make the believer, that keeps him company, spiritually drunk: he overcomes them with his wine: it is lawful to be drunk in

in this sense; yea, it is commanded that we take our fill: *Eat, O friends; drink, yea, drink abundantly, O beloved.* And again, *Be not drunk with wine, wherein is excess,* saith the apostle; *but be filled with the Spirit.* Christ hath rivers of pleasures, to satisfy his people with, that walk in him.

Here I might tell you of six things, that contribute to make this way a pleasant way; namely, that they that walk in Christ, they have in this way, 1. A pleasant guide. 2. A pleasant guard. 3. A pleasant shade. 4. Pleasant company. 5. Pleasant entertainment. 6. Pleasant rest and quiet in the way. This way, as it is, on these accounts, pleasant to them; so it is a pleasant way to God: this way pleases God; for, he says of Christ, *This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well-pleased.* And walking therein, is what pleases God also; hence Enoch, *who walked with God, had this testimony, that he pleased God.* Well then, this way is, and may be pleasant to the saints, on these accounts which I have only named.

1. A pleasant *guide* they have that walk in this way; *This God is our God for ever and ever; and will be our guide even unto death,* Psal. xlviii. 14. The Spirit of God is the guide, who not only sets them into the way, like a friend that leads one a mile out of town, and then leaves him to go alone, no; but he *leads them into all truth, and guides by his counsel,* till he bring them to glory, saying, *I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee.*

2. A pleasant *guard* they have that walk in this way. They have a guard of *angels* to secure them; *The angel of the Lord encampeth round about them that fear him: They are ministering spirits sent forth to minister to the heirs of salvation.*—Yea, they have a guard of *divine attributes* about them: *As the mountains are round about Jerusalem; so the Lord is round about them that fear him.* The Lord himself holdeth and upholdeth them, with the right-hand of his righteousness. What a pleasant walk is it to walk in Christ's hand, and to be *coming up from the wilderness leaning on the Beloved!*

3. A pleasant *shade* they have who walk in this way; for it is a shadow way: a shadow place in hot weather

is comfortable. How pleasant and comfortable was Jonah's gourd? But what a comfortable shadow hath the believer to walk in, or sit under, when the scorching heat of God's wrath breaks out into the world! *A man shall be as a covert from the tempest, and as the shadow of a great rock in a weary land, Isa. xxxii. 2. I sat down under his shadow with great delight, and his fruit was sweet unto my taste, Song ii. 3.*

4. Pleasant *company* they have who walk in this way; for they that walk in Christ, they walk with God; and surely that is the best of company. It is encouraging to a poor traveller, that hath a long journey to go, to hear tell of good company to go with him to his journey's end: here is the choice of company; *Nevertheless I am continually with thee, Psalm lxxiii. 23.*—They have also all the saints to go along with them, and these are the *excellent ones of the earth*; for there is none excellent without grace, be they never so great: let them be never so great in this world, we must not walk with them, when they stray from the word of God.

5. Pleasant *entertainment* also they have who walk in this way, and the best of refreshment on their journey; they are fed upon the *green pastures*, Psalm xxiii. 3; and they are fed with the *finest of the wheat, and with honey out of the rock*, Psal. lxxx. 16. They have noble dishes to feed upon, which others never tasted of: and a well-furnished table to sit down at, far beyond the table of the great kings and monarchs of the world.—There is the dish of divine *promises*, that is sometimes set before them: *Man feeds not by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God.* How sweet a dish this is the Psalmist declares when he says, *How sweet are thy words to my mouth!*—There is the dish of divine *peace*; a peace that *passeth all understanding*; the peace of God quieting the mind through Christ: *Great peace have they that love thy law, and nothing shall offend them.*—There is the dish of divine *pardon*; *I, even I am he that blotteth out thy transgressions, for mine own name's sake, and will remember thy sins no more. Son, daughter, be of good cheer, thy sins are forgiven thee.*—There is the dish of divine *manifestations*, John xiv. 21. *He that hath my*

commandments and keepeth them, he it is that loveth me; and he that loveth me shall be loved of my Father; and I will love him, and manifest myself unto him.—There is the dish of divine comforts; *In the multitude of my thoughts within me, thy comforts delight my soul.*—There is the dish of a good conscience, which is a continual feast; *This is our rejoicing the testimony of a good conscience, that in simplicity and godly sincerity, not with fleshly wisdom, but by the grace of God, we have had our conversation in the world.* They that walk in Christ, they feed upon the rarities of heaven; he makes to them a *feast of fat things, and of wines on the lees, well refined.* They have the *white stone, and the new name, that no man knoweth but he that receiveth it.* The delights in Christ are such as none can reach unto, but those that receive Christ, and walk in him: therefore Christ thanks the Father, saying, *Matth. xi. 25. I thank thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them unto babes.* He doth not thank him, that he hath revealed them to the mighty, the great, and wise, in the world, but to the babes. A babe is the weakest of all sorts of men; and it says, that the weakest of all believers, that are in Christ, the feeblest babe, shall partake of such delicacies in Christ, as all the world shall never be able to dive into, or comprehend: and Christ himself takes such delight to entertain them, that he blesses his Father that he, for his sake, doth so much for them, over and above what he confers upon others.

6. Pleasant *rest* and *quiet* also have they who walk in this way: they have not only such dainty fare, and delicious entertainment to feed upon, but they have excellent chambers and ornamented appartments to lodge in. A king, and prince, that wants grace, hath not such costly hung rooms to quarter in, as they have; nor such well-furnished chambers: *The King hath brought me into his chambers; we will be glad and rejoice in thee,* Song i. 4. O the chambers of divine presence! the secret of God's presence, is agreeable quarters to lodge in! and Christ's warm bosom, is a sweet bed to lie down in! *Our bed is green,* Song i. 16. Christ and believers

have but one bed between them; and he covers them with his garment, which is so perfumed that it *smells of aloes, myrrh, and cassia, out of the ivory palaces*. And here they are sure to get rest in their quarters; Psal. iv. 8. *I will both lay me down in peace and sleep; for thou Lord only makest me to dwell in safety*. Nay, Isa. xxxii. 18. *My people shall dwell in a peaceable habitation, and in sure dwellings, and in quiet resting-places*. Prov. i. 33. *Who-so hearkeneth to me, shall dwell safely, and shall be quiet from fear of evil*. And Song i. 7. *He maketh his flocks to rest at noon*. Thus while they walk in the good old way, they find rest to their souls, Jer. vi. 16. He warms them with the fire of his grace, and covers them with the rob of his righteousness, and causeth them to rest: he makes their hearts to burn within them, and giveth his Beloved sleep; filling them with holy security in himself. And, O what more desirable to a poor weary traveller, than to be brought to an excellent inn or lodging; than betide a well-covered table; to get a good fire to sit at, and a good bed to ly down in!

Now, is Christ such a way as I have been describing you are to walk in, and particularly a *living way*? Then, O what a sweet life is the believer's life, that is a walking in such a way! To be for ever with Christ is heaven; our way, is walking in him; our *heaven*, is walking with him in white. Oh! what a sad case are they in that walk in the way of death, and despise this way of life! And, how sad and dismal is it, that men *love death rather than life*! It is a mercy that few people do prize, that they have sinners to preach Christ to them: if we had not experience of that rebellion of the natural heart, in ourselves, we would be mightily impatient in dealing with ungodly persons. What infatuates men, that they refuse Christ, and will not walk in this way, but in the way of death! What madness possesses the hearts of men, that they will rather go to hell with the devil, than to heaven with Christ! Surely they deserve hell for ever that make such an abominable choice; and yet every natural man doth so, every graceless man does so.

And now, what do ye think of this *pleasant way*? and how

how sweetly it is represented to us in the word of God? What have you to say against this way, and the walking in it? Is the way of sin and the way of self-righteousness, the way of death, comparable to this way? Are your old sinful courses better than this way? If you imagine so, your own heart, your own tongues will fall upon you, and condemn you at the great day. Is this the best way? O then, why will you not take it? And have you taken it, believer, why then will you not walk in it?—May the Lord himself commend his Christ to you, that you may *receive him*, and *walk in him*; and commend his way to you, that you may walk in it, till you come to glory at the end of it.



S E R M O N XLVI.

COLOS. ii. 6.

As ye have received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk ye in him.

[The thirteenth Sermon on this text.]

THERE is a twofold garment wherewith Christ adorns his people. 1. The garment of imputed righteousness, for their justification. 2. The garment of imparted holiness, for their sanctification. Without the former, we can have no title to heaven; without the latter, we can have no meetness for heaven. Both these garments they alone are clothed with, and possessed of, who, having *received Christ Jesus the Lord, do walk in him*.—The work of sanctification and holiness is the work of God; *I am the Lord that sanctifieth you*, Lev. xxi. 8. Grace is his own creature; man's will contributes nothing to the work, but by resistance and rebellion against it: therefore, God makes the soul willing in the day of his power. Outward means work not, unless the mighty power of the Spirit work with them;

otherwise, why should the same word, preached by the same minister, mollify some, and harden others? Nothing but the blood of Christ can purge the conscience from dead works. Christ must come from heaven and open a fountain, in his own side, for our purification and cleansing. Sanctification is not only expressed by a *creation*, Eph. ii. 10. *We are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works*; but by a *victory*, a powerful overcoming of opposition, Luke xi. 21, 22. 1 John iv. 4. In creation, as there was nothing to help, so there was nothing to hinder: but when God comes to convert a soul, and make him holy, and bring him to a Christian walk, besides a death in sin, there is a resistance against grace; and, therefore, the grace that is in Christ conquers the soul, enabling it to receive him: and the same grace strengthens to a suitable walk in him; out of him it cannot be: for, *without him*, and out of him, *we can do nothing*. And hence we are called to be *strong in him*; and so here, to *walk in him*: *As ye have received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk ye in him*. I now proceed,

3dly, To lay down some *motives* and *persuasives* to engage to this walk in Christ. Now, the *scriptural motives*, to engage us to this Christian walk are innumerable: I reduce them to these two heads. 1. The consideration of the *concomitants* of this walk in Christ, wherein we may see the *excellency* of it. 2. The consideration of the *effects* of this walk, wherein we may see the *necessity* of it.

[1.] The consideration of the *concomitants* of this walk in Christ, and so therein view the *excellency* of it. There are some excellent concomitants and attendants of this walk in Christ; especially, what comprehends manifold blessed attendants, the Spirit of Christ; for there is no walking in Christ, but by walking in the Spirit of Christ, and so it is called, Gal. v. 16. *Walk in the Spirit, and ye shall not fulfil the lusts of the flesh*. And ver. 25. *If we live in the Spirit, let us also walk in the Spirit*. And Rom. viii. 9. *If any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his*. This walk in Christ then, is attended with the Spirit, in his various graces and operations;

rations; and this should recommend this walk to us. More particularly,

1. This holy walk in Christ is attended with the Spirit of *humiliation*, Eph. i. 17. If the Spirit of sanctification and holiness dwelleth in us; the same Spirit, as a Spirit of humiliation dwelleth in us. They that walk in Christ, they receive the *unction from the holy One, to know all things*, 1 John ii. 20. Every man is brutish in his knowledge before conversion; *the god of this world hath blinded him*: but when he is brought to Christ, to believe in him, and walk in him, then he is made light in him, *light in the Lord*, Eph. v. 8.; being *turned from darkness to light*. Sanctification and illumination are as inseparable, as light and heat in the sun-beams.

2. This holy walk in Christ is attended with the Spirit of *supplication*; for when he is the *Spirit of grace*, he will be the *Spirit of supplication*, Zech. xii. 10. Where he is the Spirit of holiness, he will be the Spirit of prayer. Every new-born babe comes, for the most part, into the world crying; surely every spiritual new-born babe crys, *ABBA, Father*, Gal. iv. 6. The word, *ABBA*, signifies *FATHER*, in the Syriac tongue, which the apostle here retains; and which also young children retain, almost in all languages and countries. If you never find the melting, moving, quickening, warming breathings of the Spirit, you do not look like one that walks in Christ: but to *pray in the Spirit* is a sign of translation from death to life; from nature to grace. And herein also appeareth the excellency of this walk, it is attended with the Spirit of supplication.

3. This holy walk in Christ is attended with the Spirit of *faith*; 2 Cor. iv. 13. *We having the same Spirit of faith*; by which the man doth more and more believe that *Jesus is the Christ*, and believe on this Jesus. By which, on the one hand, he believeth that *Jesus is the Christ*: this was the grand test of a believer in the primitive times; because then it was little less than death, among the Jews, thus to own and confess Christ: “Shut your eyes and our ears, [says Luther on Psal. cxxx.] and say, You know no God, out of Christ; none but he that was in the lap of Mary, and sucked
“ her

“her breasts.”—By this faith, on the other hand also, we believe on the *name of the Son of God*, and rely upon him for *wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, and redemption*; cleaving to him, drawing daily virtue from him, and laying all our wants and burdens upon him.

4. This holy walk is attended with the Spirit of *repentance and humiliation*: this follows the look of faith; *They shall look upon him, whom they have pierced, and mourn, Zech. xii. 10.* The man that is walking in this way, and under the conduct of the Spirit, he is always weeping, as he is walking; *Going and weeping, they shall ask the way to Zion, with their faces thitherward, Jer. l. 45.* The man goes forth weeping bearing precious seed, *Psal. cxxvi. 6.* Being humbled to the dust, before God, for his sin and iniquity, he *baths himself, and repents in dust and ashes.*

5. This holy walk in Christ is attended with the Spirit of *joy and consolation.* As Christ is anointed with the *oil of gladness above his fellows*; so his children have fellowship with him, in this oil of joy. The godly sorrow and weeping, mentioned just now, is not inconsistent with this joy and gladness: the Spirit of humiliation is not inconsistent with the Spirit of consolation; for, while he mourns before the Lord, he melts; and there is more joy in the believer's melting before the Sun of righteousness, than in all the mirth of the wicked. We may appeal to all believers, who have had their hearts melted before the fire of divine love, whether they have not found a secret contentment and satisfaction, such as hath made them rather fear the change of that mourning, than to be troubled at it: yea, the man many times weeps for joy, while he sees the fulness and freeness of the grace of God toward the like of him.

6. This holy walk in Christ is attended with the Spirit of *power*; 2 Tim. i. 7. *For God hath not given us the Spirit of fear, but of power.* There is the Spirit of power and victory that attends it: 1 John v. 4. *He that is born of God overcometh the world*; namely, the wicked of the world, the lusts of this world, the god of this world, the devil: the faints have a war with these enemies; but are enabled and prepared according to their measure,

to subdue their corruptions within, and vanquish temptations without. The believer gets, in some measure, above the fears, and frowns, and flatteries of the world; so as he cannot be turned from the faith of Christ thereby. When some persuaded Erasmus to write to Luther, or against him, at the Reformation, to bring him back to Popery: Erasmus answered, "That Luther was too great for him to write to, or against." So a man that walks in Christ, is too great a spirit to be turned by the powers of the world; when he is himself, he cannot be drawn by force or fraud into a base compliance with them against the honour of his God, and the conscience of his duty.

7. This holy Christian walk is attended with the Spirit of love; 2 Tim. i. 7. *God hath not given us the Spirit of fear, but of love: love to God and to the brethren.* This love is made a special effect and evidence of spiritual circumcision, or sanctification, Deut. xxx. 6. there the Lord promises to *circumcise the heart to love him.* The man loves himself, and his relations, and outward enjoyments, with a common love; but he loves God and Christ, with a special love. He loves God with a love of desire; panting after God with a love of union; *with purpose of heart, cleaving to the Lord:* with a love of benevolence, desiring all praise and glory to be ascribed to him: and with a love of delight and complacency, resting in the Lord as his only God and portion.—This Spirit works by love to the brethren also: there are brethren by name, by nation, by office; but especially by grace, that the man loves: *He that loveth him that begat, loveth him also that is begotten.* A spirit of hatred and enmity between man and man, is inconsistent with this walk; and especially where there is no love to the *excellent ones of the earth.* It is true, a child of God may love some of the children of God irregularly, when it is not merely because they have more of the image of God, than others; but because they are more their favourites, followers, and admirers: if they be not such, then they will, perhaps, give them little of their company; but, says David, *I am a companion to all them that fear thee.* The apostle gives us a test of true love to the brethren,

brethren, 1 John iii. 10. *Christ laid down his life for us, and we ought to lay down our lives for the brethren.* A true believer is not only to lay down his life for Christ, and for his cause and the gospel, when called thereto; but, in some respect, for the brotherhood: and though this seems to be an high pitch, yet, I think, there is something of it in every true lover of Christ: they so love the brotherhood as with John, they *desire to decrease*, if so be that Christ mystical may *increase*; that the kingdom of Christ be enlarged, and the generation of the righteous multiplied, amplified, and preserved; though he himself, his name, his honour, his life, should ly in the dust.

8. This holy Christian walk, or walk in Christ, is attended with the Spirit of a *sound mind*; 2 Tim. i. 7. *God hath not given us the Spirit of fear, but of a sound mind.* Sanctification is a soul restoration; *He restoreth my soul*, Psalm xxiii. 3. not only to joy and comfort, but to singing, health, and vigour. What sickness is to the body, sin is to the soul: a sick man cannot walk, nor work; so here, an ungodly person cannot *walk in Christ, run the way of his commandments*, nor *work out his salvation with fear and trembling*. A sick man cannot take delight in meat and drink, or the enjoyments of life; so, the unholy man cannot take pleasure in spiritual things: but when a man is sanctified in Christ, then he experiences unspeakable satisfaction in spiritual exercises; he is sound in the faith, and his heart right with God. It is true, as a man that is healthy may catch cold, and labour under some infirmity; so, a holy spiritually healthy person may, through human frailty, and strong temptation, decay in grace for a time; he may get cold, his love and zeal may grow cold, his faith weaken; he may have an inordinate affection to the creature, and immoderate cares; fall into sin, great sin: yet the immortal seed of God in him will, by the supplies of the Spirit of life, revive and corroborate the man again. Grace, like leaven, will ferment the whole lump, and work out the disease of sin: the withered principle of grace within, like a tree planted by the river of life, will spring, flourish, and bud again.

9. This holy walk in Christ is attended with the Spirit of *adoption* and *liberty*, which are put together, Rom. viii. 15, 21. When a sinner becomes a saint, that very moment a child of wrath becomes a child of God. They that are the children of God by regeneration, are the children of God by adoption; and they that are born of God, are free-born, they are born to a glorious liberty; *If the Son make you free, you are free indeed.* The spirit of adoption is a free spirit; and *where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty*: the man walks at liberty, and is at freedom for prayer and service; *Truly I am thy servant, thou hast loosed by bonds*: here is *the honour of all the saints*. According to the measure of sanctity that is conferred on them, such is the measure of liberty and freedom they have in the performance of religious duties.

10. This holy walk in Christ is attended with the Spirit of *perseverance*; for the Spirit of God rests on them, and never altogether leaves nor forsakes them. True holiness is an abiding principle; for, *the foundation of God standeth sure*; and, *the gifts and calling of God are without repentance*. He that is the *author*, will be *the finisher of faith*: he that hath begun the good work, will perfect it. See Jer. xxxii. 40. Here God both undertakes for himself, that *he will not turn away from them to do them good*; and then for his people, that *he will put his fear in their hearts, that they shall not depart from him*. Hence, *though they fall, they shall rise*; though they step aside into the ways of death, God will bring them back, and give them repentance unto life. Where-ever the image of God is, it is progressive: the picture of a man in a frame doth not grow, it is always at a stand; but the picture, or image, of a man in his child, is far different; it is lively, vigorous, and progressive: so the painted holiness of hypocrites is vastly different from the image of God in a saint; *The path of the just is as the shining light, that shineth more and more unto the perfect day. I give to them eternal life, saith Christ, and they shall never perish*. See Song iv. 16. *Awake, O north-wind, and come thou south: blow upon my garden, that the spices thereof may flow out.* Not on-

ly the wind of influences; the north-wind of nipping and convincing influences of the Spirit; and the south-wind of warming and comforting influences of the Spirit: but all the winds of providence; the north-wind of adversity, the south-wind of prosperity; the north-wind of frowning providence, the south-wind of smiling providence; the warm summer of joy, or the cold winter of sorrow; all the gales and blasts of divine providence, shall sweetly conspire to open the spices of God's garden, to ripen and diffuse the favour of the graces of the Spirit, in the hearts of his people.— Thus you see some of the *concomitants* of this walk; it is attended with the Spirit of illumination, supplication, faith, humiliation, consolation, power, love, a sound mind, adoption, perseverance, &c.

[2.] We now come to the consideration of the *effects* of this walk, wherein we may see the *necessity* of it. When I spoke to this part preceding, I brought in what is above as another property of the way, namely, that it is a *spiritual* way; because therein we find the Spirit in all these respects, as above: and so what now follows may be brought in, as the persuasive part of this exhortation; the two former parts being instructive, and the last being directive. What doth immediately follow then, is the persuasives and arguments, for further engaging us to walk in this way. There are these three motives and persuasives to a Christian walk, which comprehend multitudes of other arguments, namely, 1. The glory of God. 2. The advantage of man. 3. The credit of the gospel.

1st, The *glory of God* is the grand motive that should persuade us to this Christian walk: though a Christian walk cannot justify us before God, that was never appointed as the design of it; for our justification is founded only upon the perfect righteousness of God's beloved Son; and to put our imperfect holiness, wrought in us or by us, in the room thereof, is to rob Christ of his title, as the *Lord our righteousness*: but though, I say, a Christian walk cannot justify us before God, yet it glorifies God before the world. And here is the glory of all the three persons of the glorious Trinity; the glory

of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, require this Christian walk.

(1.) The glory of God the *Father* calls for it, particularly from the hand of believers. Why? because they are *chosen* for this purpose; he *choosed you that you should be holy*, Eph. i. 4.; and, *he choose you to salvation, through sanctification of the Spirit*, 2 Theff. ii. 13. Believers are ordained for this end; *We are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works*, Eph. ii. 10. — They are called for this end by the Father; 1 Pet. i. 15. *As he that hath called you is holy, so be ye holy in all manner of conversation.* They are corrected by him for this end, that they may be brought to a Christian walk, a holy walk; *This is all the fruit to take away their sin, and to make them partakers of his holiness*, Isa. xxvii. 9. Heb. xii. 10. This is sweet fruit, that grows upon the four tree of affliction: we are threshed, that our husks may fly off; tried in the furnace, that the dross of our lusts may be consumed. Many times the faints get such deep spots in their consciences, and stains in their garments, that so nothing but the water of the blood of Christ will wash away; as nothing but the salt and vinegar of affliction will rub out. God would rather see his people in a suffering state, than in a sinful state: he had rather hear them cry, than see them filthy; and better, a thousand times better to be preserved in brine, than to rot in honey.—Thus I say, God chooses them, calls them, corrects them for this end, that he may sanctify them, and bring them to this Christian walk, that by it they may glorify their Father that is in heaven: *Herein is my Father glorified*, says Christ, *that ye bear much fruit.*—We glorify his *holiness*, when we are *holy*, as he is *holy*.—We glorify his *mercy*, when we are *merciful as our heavenly Father is merciful*.—We glorify his *righteousness*, when we are *righteous as he is righteous*.—We glorify his *perfection*, by studying to be *perfect*, as our heavenly Father is *perfect*, Matth. v. 48.—By this walk we glorify his sovereign *will and authority*: for, *this is the will of God, even our sanctification*, 1 Theff. iv. 3. and put honour upon his law, by yielding obedience to, and walking in his commandments.—By this

walk we glorify his *love* and *good-will* to us in Christ, while we *walk in love*; and are *followers of God, as dear children*, Eph. v. 12. and serve him from a sense of his love.—By this walk we glorify his *faithfulness* and *power*; in that this walking in Christ imports, as a special ingredient of it, the faith of his promise, and dependence on him for all necessary supplies of grace; and hence this walk is called a *living by faith*, Rom. i. 17. By faith, believing that God is faithful, and will accomplish; powerful, and can accomplish all his promises: *Faithful is he that hath promised, who also will do it.*

Now, an unchristian walk dishonours God in all these respects: and shall not the people of God have a regard to the glory of God? should not all the children of God particularly have a regard to their Father's honour? All grace begins with God the Father; he is the first, in order of being; and the first, in order of working: and it is the Father that flows out to us, in Christ, by the Spirit. Whatsoever good Christ hath done for us, or in us; it is done with respect to the Father's love and grant: and Christ, as Mediator, is the Father's servant, his elect, and chosen, Isa. xlii. 2. And it is the Father that hath *given him power over all flesh, that he might give eternal life, to as many as the Father hath given him*, John xvii. 2. In the Father's acts of kindness, we have the freest and purest apprehensions of love: it was the Father that began the business, and sent his Son into the world, to accomplish the work of redemption: the Son, as Mediator, can have an higher motive, than his own love, to wit, his Father's will; but the Father can have no higher motive than his own love. The love of the Father is antecedent to the merit of Christ, and to the operation of the Spirit. O then, what ground to glorify the Father as the original author of all holiness and happiness, and that by our walking in Christ! Again,

(2.) The glory of God the *Son* calls for this Christian walk: as thereby we are to honour the Father, that his chosen be not disparaged; so to honour the Son, that his members be not deformed: head and members should

should be proportionate to one another. It were monstrous that Christ should have such a strange body, as Nebuchadnezzar's image, which he saw in his dream; the *head of gold*, the *breast and arms of silver*, the *thighs of brass*, and the *feet of iron and clay*, Dan. ii. 32.: even so, it is not for Christ's honour, to be head of a monstrous body. So much as we retain of sin, so much do we dishonour Christ. Christ came for this very end, to make his people holy. He came to repair the ruins of the fall: now, by the fall, we lost not only God's favour, but God's image also: therefore, that the plaister might be as broad as the sore; he died, not only to reconcile us, but to sanctify us; *That he might sanctify us by his own blood, he suffered without the gate*, Heb. xiii. 12. His blood is not only a price to redeem us, but a laver to cleanse us. Now, by this Christian walk, Christ gets the glory of his mediatorial offices.—We glorify his prophetic office, by hearing his voice, receiving his instruction, and learning the law from his mouth.—We glorify his priestly office, by coming to God through him, seeking acceptance only in him.—We glorify his kingly office, by giving up our lusts into his hand, to be slain by him; and by an intire and voluntary subjection of our souls to his government; so as not to be *without law to God, but under the law to Christ*.—By this Christian walk he gets the glory of his *death* and passive obedience; while we live to him that died for us: the glory of his *doing*, or active obedience; while we make honourable mention thereof, in all our course of holiness, saying, *I will go in the strength of the Lord, making mention of his righteousness, even of his only*, Psalm lxxi. 16.—By this he gets the glory of his *work in us*, as well as *for us*; while we *work out our salvation*, in the faith of his working in us, *both to will and to do of his good pleasure*.—By this walk Christ gets the glory of his *purchase*; having *purchased a peculiar people, zealous of good works*: and having purchased grace and glory to that people, surely he is glorified then, when these graces shine in the practice of holiness.—By this walk he gets the glory of his *covenant and example*; seeing it is by the grace treasured up in these promises, that this walk

is begun, carried on, and perfected: therefore, *Having these promises, dearly beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God, 2 Cor. vii. 1.*; and seeing from these promises believers bring all their comfort under difficulties; *Though my house be not so with God, yet he hath made with me an everlasting covenant, ordered in all things and sure: for this is all my salvation, and all my desire, although he make it not to grow, 2 Sam. xxiii. 5.*—By this walk Christ gets the glory of his *way of walking in the world*; in that it is a walk after Christ, as the most perfect example of holiness, in doing and suffering, according to the will of God: hence they that walk in Christ, are said to walk as *he himself walked*, and to be *followers of the Lamb whithersoever he goes.*—In a word, by this walk Christ gets the glory of his *grace and free favour*: for, as this walk is a fruit and effect of his grace; so it hath a natural, as well as instituted tendency, to advance the praise of his glorious grace; and all the believer's walk should be directed to this end. Here is a strong motive, it is a walk necessary to the glory of Christ.

(3.) The glory of God the *Holy Ghost* calls for this walk; for the Father and the Son have committed the faints, to the Spirit's charge, to this very end and purpose, that they might be sanctified and made holy. Sanctification of heart and life, is made the Spirit's personal operation; *Because God hath from the beginning chosen you to salvation, through sanctification of the Spirit, and belief of the truth, 2 Thess. ii. 13.* This holy walk doth belong, according to the œconomy of grace, to the Father, to purpose it; to the Son, to purchase it; to the Spirit, to work it: and it is not to the Spirit's honour that God's nursery and plantation, committed to his charge, should not thrive and prosper: it is not for the Spirit's honour, to dwell in defiled temples: it is not to the Spirit's honour, that any, committed by the Father and the Son to his charge, should miscarry or fall away, either totally, from all grace; or finally, for all time: nay, this, or any thing that looks like it, is so far from being to his honour, that it is to his great-
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est dishonour: yea, it is a great grief to the Spirit, when the work of grace doth not go on and prosper in the soul; for, it is he that worketh us to this very thing; and therefore is called the *Spirit of holiness*.—The Father hath left the Son in charge to be the Captain of our salvation, to *bring many children to glory*: the Son hath left the Spirit in charge, with all his Father's children, to *guide them by his counsel, and bring them to his glory*: Father, Son, and Spirit are one, and agree in one, for our sanctification. Christ *sends the Comforter* for this end, to *lead his people in all truth*, John xiv. 16. And how is the Spirit glorified in his graces, glorified in his comforts, glorified in his influences, glorified in his operations, while we give evidence, by our walk, that he is perfecting his own work, and ripening our souls for heaven! Whereupon this walk in Christ, is also called a *walking in the Spirit*.—Now, believer, what think ye, or what shall you and I think of this great motive to this Christian walk, the glory of God, Father, Son, and Holy Ghost? Surely when we speak to believers, we cannot be supposed to speak to such, as have no regard to the glory of God, the praise of Christ, or the honour of the Holy Ghost: why then, I think it may melt your hearts, for our unchristian walk hitherto, and move our souls to a more Christian walk hereafter; that by the glory of God, Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, we stand obliged to this Christian walk: *As ye have received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk ye in him.*

2dly, The *advantage of man* is another motive, that may be branched out into many particulars; whether we consider the necessity of this Christian walk, with respect to our *own advantage*, or the *advantage of others*.

(1.) It is necessary in respect of *ourselves*; and the advantage that accrues to the children of God, by this Christian walk, lies in these particulars.

1. The first advantage of this Christian walk is, that it is the *porch of communion with God*: none but those that walk in Christ, *have fellowship with the Father, and with the Son*. While a man is prophane and un sanctified, *what communion can there be between light and darkness?*

ness? God is light in the abstract, and an impure sinner is darkness in the abstract. As a man cannot have communion with beasts, because they live not the same life: so, a natural man cannot have communion with God, because he lives not the same life; nay, he is alienated from the life of God: but when a man walks in Christ, then he walks with God; and when you walk in Christ, God walks in you. *Ye are the temple of the living God; as God hath said, I will dwell in them, and walk in them; I will be their God, and they shall be my people,* 2 Cor. vi. 16.

2. The next advantage of this Christian walk is, that it *exalts a man above his neighbours*: lifts him up above the sphere of other men: *The righteous is more excellent than his neighbour.* A gracious poor man is far more excellent than a graceless rich nobleman, notwithstanding all his titles of honour. The saints are God's jewels; the rest of the world are but lumber, with all their land and lordships.

3. The third advantage of this Christian walk is, that it *turns moral virtues into graces.* Some persons are naturally more meek, and sober, and patient than others: and some natural men are morally just and righteous, in their dealing and conversation in the world; honest dealers, good pay-masters, make their word their deed: all this, a man may be, and do, and yet perish for ever. But whenever grace, and a Christian walk enters, and sanctification in the power of it, then the principle of grace turns these moral virtues into graces: his natural and moral actions are now performed from inward and renewed principles; he now acts FROM God, and FOR God in all that he doth; whether he eats or drinks, or buys or sells. As carnal hearts are always carnal, even in spiritual performances; for the streams never run higher than the head: so, on the contrary, gracious hearts are spiritual, even in natural and moral actions; for, *they that are in Christ are new creatures*; acting from new principles.

4. The next advantage of this Christian walk is, that it is the *matter of our joy.* There is the joy and peace of our justification, that is founded upon the righteousness

of Christ's merit for us: this is the greatest ground of the believer's joy. But next in virtue to that, there is the joy and peace of sanctification, flowing from the righteousness of Christ's Spirit in us; of which the apostle speaks, when he says, *This is our rejoicing, the testimony of our conscience, that in simplicity and godly sincerity, not with fleshly wisdom, but by the grace of God, we have had our conversation in the world:* and the psalmist, when he says, *Great peace have they that love thy law,* Psal. cxix. 165. Whereas, *there is no peace to the wicked:* and therefore Christ's coming, at death and judgment, will be terrible to them, both because they are destitute of the righteousness of justification and sanctification; for it is only *the pure in heart that shall see God.* At death and judgment, a dram of saving grace will be more valuable, more comfortable, than mountains of gold, and millions of worlds. Oh! the midnight cry at death and judgment, saying, *Behold the Bridegroom cometh, go ye out to meet him!* How terrible will it be to the foolish virgins, that have no oil in their lamps, nor grace in their hearts! Alas! how dolefully will you cry in that day, man! How dreadfully will you shriek! But Christ will not hear you; yea, he will *shut the door against you,* Matth. 25. 10. Then, knock never so hard, cry never so loud, the *door is shut;* there is no hope of entrance.

5. The fifth advantage of this Christian walk is, that it is *an evidence of a gracious state,* for the confirmation of our faith: hence Abraham shewed his faith by his works; whereby it was justified from the calumny of a false faith, James ii. 21,—23. And this, indeed, contributes to make this holy walk a comfortable thing; because it is the fruit, effect, and evidence of justification: though it be no ground or foundation thereof, yet it is an evidence of it, and of a gracious state. How shall a man evidence that he hath *received Christ Jesus the Lord,* but by *walking in him?*

6. The next advantage of this Christian walk is, that it is a *walking toward heaven;* heaven is at the end of the walk: hence it is said, *Without holiness no man shall see the Lord,* Heb. xii. 14. And *no unclean thing shall*

enter into heaven, Rev. xxi. 27. Without are dogs and swine, but within are the pure and holy. Believe it, man, without holiness on earth, there is no happiness in heaven. This Christian walk is the very beginning of heaven, where the saints *walk with him in white*: this holy walk is a great part of heaven and salvation itself; hence in that golden chain, Rom. viii. 30. *Whom he called, them he justified; whom he justified, them he glorified*;—no mention is made of sanctification, to shew that sanctity and holiness is heaven and glory begun: it is not only the way to heaven, but it is heaven itself. The more we walk in Christ, the more do we live the life of God, and anticipate the life of heaven; that glorious life, which the angels of God, and the blessed spirits of just men made perfect, live there. This Christian walk makes a man *meet for the inheritance of the saints in light*. What would a carnal heart do with heaven, that knows no other heaven but to eat, drink, and wallow in sensual delights? So the glutton at a feast cried, *There is no heaven like this*. We must not look for a Turkish paradise in heaven; but for a pure sinless state: perfection of grace, and fulness of joy, in the presence of God's glory, is the saints heaven. An un sanctified man cannot truly desire heaven; he may desire it as a privation of suffering and misery, but not as it is a perfection of grace, a privation of all sin, and perfection of holiness: when a man begins to be holy, then he begins to enter into the white cloud of glory.—O then, seeing every one would be happy, and would be with Christ for ever, who would not desire to be holy and to walk in him? A graceless man is very miserable in both worlds; he misses heaven in this world, and loses heaven in the world to come; nay, he was a hell of sin here, and a hell of suffering hereafter: fire and brimstone is his portion. But the gracious man is the happy man: indeed he hath heaven begun here, and heaven perfected hereafter. Here then are some of the advantages of this Christian walk to the children of God.

In a word, this Christian walk is the way, to bring down the blessing of God, on every work of your hand;
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Pfal. i. 4. *Whatsoever he doth shall prosper.* Whereas, to walk in the way of swearing, drunkenness, whoredom, Sabbath-breaking, cursing, lying, cheating, is the direct way to bring down the curse of God upon all the works of your hand.

Now, I think the consideration of these advantages, should move us to this walk; while the disadvantages of the contrary walk must be as grievous, as the advantages of this are precious. And though, when we speak to them that are in Christ, we cannot denounce against them the curse of the covenant of works, which they are altogether freed from; yet, if they be untender in their walk, there are many other things, besides the curse, which belong only to, and lie heavy upon Christless sinners, that may be the believer's motive.—Is it nothing to you, believer, that your heavenly Father should chastise you, hide his face from you, deny an answer to your prayers, conceal your evidences of heaven from you, give you up to the tyranny of your lusts, and then take vengeance on your inventions? Yea, he will thus *visit your iniquities with rods*, if you walk not in Christ, and in his way, *though his loving-kindness he will not take away, nor suffer his covenant to fail.*—Thus much for the advantages of it with respect to *ourselves*.

(2.) This Christian walk is necessary with respect to *others*: and the advantage of this walk with respect to our neighbour, both godly and wicked, and all in general will appear by considering the following particulars.

1. Our Christian walk would be for advantage to the *wicked*; for it may tend for their conviction and conversation.—On the one hand, this walk may tend to their *conviction*, and to stop their mouths; 1 Pet. ii. 15. *This is the will of God, that by well-doing, ye may put to silence the ignorance of foolish men.* See also, chap. 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.*—On the other hand, your walk may tend to their *conversation*; 1 Pet. ii. 12. *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. The holiness of professors hath sometimes tended to the conversion of the profane, who, in the day of their gracious visitation, have glorified God on that account. See also, 1 Pet. iii. 1, 2. How advantageous and profitable such a walk may be, the apostle tells us, Tit. iii. 8. *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.*

2. Our Christian walk may be for advantage to the godly, who are thereby excited and encouraged to be the more holy, by the strict conversation, which they behold in others; and to say with those, Zech. viii. 23. *We will go with you, for we have heard that God is with you.* Whereas an untender walk doth grieve and stumble them; but a Christian walk will rejoice the hearts and strengthen the hands, both of godly people, and godly ministers; *I have no greater joy, says the beloved disciple, than to hear that my children walk in truth,* 3 John ver. 4.

3. Our Christian walk may be of advantage to *all in general*, that are round about us; yea, to the whole generation we live among: for, in this way we would become a public good, a common good; not only in communicating good to them, but in diverting judgments from them, among whom we converse; so ten righteous persons would have preserved Sodom: and surely, *if the Lord had not left us a remnant, in this generation, we had been like Sodom and Gomorrah,* in respect of judgments, as we are in respect of sins; for, the most part of the generation are declaring their sin as Sodom.—Thus the advantage of man is a great motive to this Christian walk.

4. *godly.* The *credit of the gospel* is another great motive, to this Christian walk: by this we are called to *adorn the doctrine of God our Saviour, in all things,* Tit. ii. 10. By this walk we adorn the gospel of Christ. As the glory of God, the advantage of man, so the credit of the

the gospel obliges unto this walk. The gospel is honoured thereby in many respects.

1. Gospel *doctrine* is honoured by this walk, while thereby we are taught, in an efficacious manner; *The grace of God, that bringeth salvation, which teaches us to deny ungodliness and worldly lusts, and to live soberly, righteously, and godly, in a present world,* Tit. ii. 11, 12. Every doctrine of the gospel teaches this holy walk.—The doctrine of *election*, 2 Thess. ii. 13.—The doctrine of *redemption*, Eph. v. 25, 26, 27.—The doctrine of *vocation*, 1 Thess. iv. 7.—The doctrine of *justification*, which is to take away the *guilt* of sin, Rom. iii. 25.—The doctrine of *sanctification*, which is to take away the *power* and *filth* of sin, 1 Cor. vi. 11.—The doctrine of *glorification*, which takes away the very *being* of sin, and admits of no sin at all.—Every doctrine of the gospel tends to the advancement of this holy, Christian walk. And,

2. Gospel *promises* are honoured thereby, inasmuch that this walk is excited powerfully thereby; 2 Cor. vii. 1. *Having these promises, dearly beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God.* The promises are the cords of love, whereby we are sweetly bound to the service of God, and the acceptable performance of religious duties.

3. Gospel *rules* are honoured by this walk, which is the law of God, as a rule of holiness and righteousness, and as disburdened of the covenant of works, in his fœderal requisition of the condition of life from us; for, we are no more commanded to do that we may live, while we walk in Christ: we *live*, that we may walk in Christ; and *do not walk*, that we may live. The law here is also disburdened of its terrible curse, and of its irritating power; and therefore may well be called a *law of liberty*, to the man in Christ; an *easy yoke*; and *commandments that are not grievous*, James i. 25. Mat. xi. 30. 1 John v. 3.

4. Gospel *examples* and *patterns* are honoured by this walk, it being a walk according to these examples; it being a walking after the example of Christ. A gospel walk

walk is a walking after God Jehovah, as our Father; and after Christ, as our leader; and after the Spirit, as our guide; and after the example of the saints, as they were followers of Christ: we are to *follow them who, through faith and patience, do inherit the promises; and to follow the footsteps of the flock.*

5. Gospel *ordinances* are honoured by this walk, while we are careful and conscientious, in our attendance upon these, with an eye to the God of ordinances, for his blessing upon them, whether public or private; particularly upon the hearing of the joyful sound, the gospel message; and regular participation of the gospel sacraments.

6. Gospel *privileges* are honoured by this walk; and particularly, all the privileges that go along with the gospel state, while we walk worthy of, and suitable to these privileges, and that state.—Are you believers in a gospel-state, being effectually called? Why then, you are to *walk worthy of the vocation wherewith you are called.*—Are you in a justified state? then you are to evidence your justification, by your sanctification.—Are you in a sanctified state? wherefore got you a new nature, but to *walk before God in newness of life?*—Are you in an adopted state? then it is suitable to that state, that you be *followers of God as dear children.*—O Sirs, if we be believers, is it not a shame for us, to live so unsuitable to our state? Is this all the thanks we give to God, for these privileges, that we trample his statutes under our feet, dishonour his name, break his law, and grieve his Spirit? Oh! shall we render acts of enmity for all his acts of love towards us! Fly for shame! *Tell it not in Gath.*—Have we the hope of glory, and shall we not, having *this hope, purify ourselves, even as he is pure?*—Are we *separate* from the world? and shall we walk in the broad way with the rest?—Hath God *pitied* us? and shall we not study to please him?—Hath he *washed* us in the blood of his Son? and shall we wallow in the mire of our lusts? or rather, shall we not study to let it be known to the world, that his blood hath a virtue to sanctify us?—Well, brethren, if we do not walk in Christ, we do discredit to the gospel doctrine,

trine, gospel promises, gospel rules, gospel examples, gospel ordinances, and gospel privileges, and counteract the design of a gospel state.—These are the motives to this gospel walk.

The *fourth* and *last* thing upon this second branch of the exhortation was, the *directive* part of it, namely, to give some *directions*, in order to our walking with Christ. In general, I hope I need not tell you, that you must be in a *gospel state*, otherwise you cannot have a *gospel walk*: we must first be *married* to Christ, before we can *bring forth fruit unto God*, Rom. vii. 4. We must first be in Christ, the true vine, before we can *bear good fruit*, John xv. 5. And therefore, let this be your principal study, to be sure that the state be changed, and that you *receive Christ Jesus the Lord*, otherwise you cannot walk in him. All other directions will be in vain without this. And now, as we go along, lift up a prayer with your heart, that the Lord may bless the following advices and directions, where-with I design to put a period to this subject.

[1.] Our first direction, in order to your walking in Christ, is to *beware of all impediments that hinder this walk*. And I will mention you a few of these hinderances of the Christian walk; both that you may beware of them, and also seek to be rid of them.

1. *Darkness* hinders walking. A man that wants light, and is in the dark, cannot walk comfortably: even so, the darkness of ignorance hinders this Christian walk; *They that walk in the night stumble*. O pray, that God may take away your gross darkness. It is midnight with many, in respect of black and dark ignorance: and therefore, no wonder that they stumble and fall; some into one open wickedness, and some into another.

2. *Heedlessness* hinders walking. When a man doth not take heed to the way, but is gazing about him, he is ready either to dash his foot against a stone, and so fall and break his bones; or else he is ready to wander out of the way, while he doth not notice the road: even so, spiritual heedlessness and unwatchfulness, is the cause of many wandering steps out of God's way;

Watch

Watch therefore and pray, saith Christ, that ye enter not into temptation.

3. *Weakness* hinders walking. If a man be sick and weakly, he is hardly able to walk abroad: even so, as there is a bodily weakness, so there is soul weakness. As all by nature are *without strength*; even so, those that are sometime strengthened by grace, may turn weak and powerless: while corruption is strong, grace is weak, faith is weak. Seek to have this impediment removed, by being *strong in the Lord*, saying, *I will go in the strength of the Lord, making mention of his righteousness, even of his only*

4. *Fetters* hinder walking. If you bind a man, he will walk at leisure. Many are bound with the strongest fetters; even believers may be under the conduct and influence of some secret lusts, and these are so binding, that they are like fetters: they have the binding power of a law; and hence are called, *the law of the members, warring against the law of the mind*, Rom. vii. 23. And again, *I find a law, that when I would do good, evil is present with me*. Seek therefore, that *the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus, may make you free from the law of sin and death*. Seek to be free of your fetters, to be loosed of your bands: *Surely, I am thy servant, thou hast loosed my bonds.*

5. *Weights* hinder walking. If a man hath a clog at his heels, a heavy weight on his back, he will not walk hard. There is a two-fold weight that hinders the Christian walk much: the weight of *worldly incumbrances*; the *cares of the world* are a dead weight, that keep many from walking. O Sirs, cast off that weight. There is also the weight of *predominant sin*: whatever be the weight, we are to lay it aside, that we may be in case to walk, yea, and to run in God's way; *Let us lay aside every weight, and the sin that doth so easily beset us; and run with patience the race set before us, looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of faith*, Heb. xii. 1.

6. *Diversions* hinder walking. There is some company, if a man meet with, in his way wherein he walketh, they will mightily hinder and retard him in his journey; so it is with the carnal company of the men

of this world. They will not walk fast in God's way, but make many a stop, who haunt the company of graceless and profane persons, that mock at religion, idle away their time, and neglect their souls.

7. *Discord* hinders walking. If men fall out by the way; if, instead of walking together with concord, they fall by the ears, this will hinder and marr their walking; yea, perhaps, they may disable one another, that they can walk no more, but must ly by the way: so here, discord and contention hindereth the spiritual walking. They that live in the fire of strife, have little of the life of religion: they that are fighting in the way, are not walking in it: they that are occupied in slandering, backbiting, reproaching their neighbours; and especially that fall out with the godly, and cannot live at peace with them, or in love to them, their walking is marred: therefore, beware of discord; where there is much division, there is little devotion.

8. *Doubting* and *discouragement* hinder walking. If a man doubt about the road wherein he walketh; if he doubt that it is not the way, that will carry him to his desired journey's end, or to the place he hath in view, then he is discouraged, and hath little heart to walk therein: even so, doubting instead of believing, marrs our spiritual walk, and fills the soul with discouragement. David reasons himself out of his discouragement, saying, *Why art thou cast down, O my soul? and why art thou disquieted within me? hope thou in God, for I shall yet praise him, who is the health of my countenance, and my God,* Psalm xlii. 11. Many reason themselves out of their faith, instead of reasoning themselves into faith. Doubting is no duty; nay, it is a sin that hinders our walk: discouragement is no duty; no, no: *the joy of the Lord should be our strength.*

9. *Intemperance* hinders walking. If a man intoxicate himself with drink, and overcharge his belly with meat, he is more fit for loitering and snorting in a bed, than walking on the road; it impedes his walking: hence we will see some beastly drunken persons attempt to walk in the street; but instead of walking, we will see them staggering from side to side, or tumbling down, and ex-

posing themselves to open infamy. Well, this intemperance is such a hinderance to all spiritual walking, that if a man be stuffed with meat and drink, and immoderate cares, he is altogether unfit for spiritual work and worship: therefore Christ warns his disciples, even them, to beware of it; *Take heed to yourselves, lest at any time your hearts be overcharged with surfeiting, and drunkenness, and the cares of this life, and that day come upon you unawares.—Watch therefore, and pray always,* Luke xxi. 34, 35. Let habitual drunkards and tipplers consider whether they are walking; for surely they are not walking in Christ, but in the broad way that leadeth to destruction. Let those that cannot make a bargain, without drinking to excess, as many use to do at your public markets, consider this.

10. *Slothfulness* and *laziness* hinder walking. When people shut themselves up in a close chamber, as it were, to sleep and slumber, surely their walking is marred: even so, nothing hinders this Christian walk more, than spiritual sloth and security.—I will tell you two chambers wherein especially the slothful, lazy, and secure sinner shuts up himself to sleep into. There is the chamber of *lies*, and the chamber of *ease*.

(1.) The chamber of *lies*; or, as the prophet Isaiah calls it, the *refuge of lies*, chap. xxviii. 15. *They have made lies their refuge, and under falsehood have they hid themselves.* Whether it be the lying refuge of their legal righteousness, their pharisaic profession, their credle faith, their false hope, partial repentance, legal convictions, their carnal dreams and delusions; if they sleep on there, God's curse will hale them out of that chamber; for, *The hail shall sweep away the refuge of lies.* Some are brought out in mercy, but the most part are dragged out in wrath.

(2.) The chamber of *ease*: *Morab hath been at ease from his youth*, Jer. xlviii. 11.: never truly awakened, never duly concerned about their soul and their eternal state, nor concerned about the affairs of Christ's house; notwithstanding of all the trouble of Zion, or dangerous circumstances that the church of Christ is into: there is a wo upon the bed, and a wo upon the covering

ing of those that are lying at ease; *Wo to them that are at ease in Zion*, Amos vi. 1. Now, that partial security may overtake believers themselves, is too evident, not only from common experience, but also from the parable of the virgins; where it is said, both of the wise and foolish, that, *while the Bridegroom tarried, they all slumbered and slept*: but slothfulness and walking are inconsistent. Seek therefore, that God would deliver from sloth and security: *The slothful man saith, there is a lion in the way*; he will not walk forward.—These are some hinderances of walking; seek to be free of these, and beware of them, if you would walk in Christ.

[2.] The next direction, in order to this walk, is this, *O endeavour, through grace, that every action may be a stepping in this way*; then would we walk in Christ to purpose, if we could learn to make every action of our life, a step of our walk in this way. It is possible to a child of God, through grace, that any action of his life may be a part of his Christian walk: *e. g.* even in his *natural* actions, of eating and drinking; when, *whether he eats or drinks, or whatsoever he doth, he doth all to the glory of God in Christ*; then he is walking in Christ, even when he is eating and drinking. But I instance especially in our religious, and in our civil actions.

1. Let all your *religious* actions be a part of your walking in Christ; for this walk extends to all religious duties. When a man is reading the word, with the Spirit and understanding, then he is walking in Christ. When he is hearing the word, with faith, he is walking in Christ. When he is praying in the Holy Ghost, in the Spirit of Christ, then he is walking in Christ. When he is singing and praising, with grace in his heart, he is walking in Christ. When he is communicating worthily, then he is walking in Christ; for then he is *eating the flesh, and drinking the blood of the Son of God*.—And since I have mentioned this, I shall take liberty to say, that I understand there are several obliged to be hearers in this place to-day, who may see it incumbent upon them, to be communicants elsewhere the next Lord's day; and therefore, though I drop a word suitable to them, I think it cannot be reckoned amiss; and

though there is no direction I am offering, but they may find abundantly suitable to their case, yet I would here say, that this Christian walk is so extensive, that it comprehends all the duties, both before, in, and after communicating; and right partaking of the Lord's Supper, is a special part of this walking in Christ. As a man may be standing in the church, and yet walking in Christ, if spiritually exercised; and as a man may be lying in a prison, and yet walking in Christ, as Paul and Silas were, in the stocks: so, much more, may a man be sitting at a communion-table, and yet walking in Christ; for walking in Christ doth not ly in bodily exercise, but in soul exercise; as in the exercise of faith, the exercise of love, the exercise of repentance, and godly sorrow for sin, the exercise of joy in the Lord: when a man is in that exercise, under the conduct of the Spirit of Christ, then he is walking in Christ.

What is the duty then before communication? It is to walk in Christ. What is the duty in communicating? It is to walk in Christ. What is the duty after communicating? It is to walk in Christ.

There are two words I have to tell those, and take the liberty to offer them. The first is, that none can communicate worthily, that are not in Christ, by having *received Christ Jesus the Lord*, that are not believers. The second is, that people may be believers, that have *received Christ*, and yet communicate unworthily, if they be not *walking in him*.

(1.) I say, that none can *communicate worthily*, that are not in Christ, by *receiving of him*. It is the childrens bread, and is not designed for the conversion of sinners, but for the confirmation of saints. Why? may not, and have not some been converted at sacraments? It may be so; but yet this sacrament is not in itself designedly institute, for the conversion of sinners: some have, indeed, been converted at communion sermons; but I have not heard of any Christless sinner converted at a communion-table, where he himself was partaking. It may be, there have been instances of this, that I have not heard; but yet that doth not falsify what I assert, that it is not a converting ordinance: must we run a
man

man through with a sword to save his life; because one did so once, and let out a secret imposthume? Because some minister hath been converted at his ordination, is therefore the laying on of hands institute as a converting ordinance? No; by no means. Because a man hath been converted at his marriage, when the sermon and blessing hath wrought upon him, is therefore marriage a converting ordinance? No; not at all. Let this then be remembered, that none can communicate worthily, that are not in Christ, by receiving him.

(2.) That people may be believers, that have received Christ, and yet *communicate unworthily*, if they be not *walking in Christ*. Let communicants then endeavour, through grace, to prepare and examine themselves; *Let a man examine himself, and so let him eat*. Why, a man may examine himself and find himself both out of Christ, and out of a course of walking in him: shall he eat in any case upon examination? No, no; the meaning is, let him examine whether he be *in Christ*, yea, or not; and see if he can prove his being *in Christ*, by his *walking in him*. As a man that tries gold with a touchstone, will not take it because he tried it, but because he found it true gold: and as a man will not go abroad, because he hath beheld himself in a looking-glass, for he may find deformity and filthiness; but because he hath corrected what was amiss, and composed his dress by looking at himself: and so unless we will prevaricate with the scripture, the Holy Ghost means, by that word, a fitness and preparation found; and yet those that prepare for that ordinance, must never expect such a preparation, as will not stand in need of Christ: nay, Christ himself must be the great preparation; for this ordinance hath a special relation to Christ: and it is by walking in him, that we have communion with him in that ordinance.

QUEST. *How shall I attain this privilege to walk in Christ?*

ANSW. How doth a man come to walk in his cloaths? Is it not even by putting them on? So, if you would *walk in Christ*, you must *put on Christ*; Rom. xiii. 14. *Put on Christ Jesus the Lord, and make no provision for the*

the flesh to fulfil the lusts thereof Put off your filthy garments, Eph. iv. 22. put on Christ. It is true, many put on Christ, as a man puts on his shoe, to trample upon him. Some put on Christ as a man doth his hat, which he lifts to every passenger; they will compliment every company with their religion, and put on or put off their profession of Christ, according as the company goes. Some put him on, as people will put on a fine glaring embroidery upon their cloaths, for ornament, and not for use. But they that truly put on Christ, as they put him on, never to put him off again; so they put on Christ as a robe; particularly the robe of his righteousness, for their justification; and the robe of his grace, for their sanctification: that is, they take him in his merit, to justify them; and in his Spirit, to sanctify them: and as a man walks in his robes that he hath put on, so they that go to a communion-table in this robe, they go walking in Christ; and so they have the wedding-garment, and shall have the Bridegroom's favour. Here is the robe we ought all to walk in: it is heaven's parliament-robe; and to walk in it, is to wear it; and to wear it, is to walk in it. To have Christ, and to use him, is the sum of all true religion.

But to return, I was saying, first let all your religious actions be a part of your walking in Christ, whether it be your reading, hearing, praying, praising, communicating, or the like,

2. Let all your *civil* actions also, be a part of your walking in Christ. A man may be walking in Christ, when he is buying and selling, if he be acting spiritually, conscientiously, and in the name of Christ; and acknowledging the Lord in all his ways.—And because of the market you have now in view, I shall tell you what are the sinful ways that people take, in buying and selling, which declare that they are not walking in Christ, when about these actions.—There is the disparaging and under-rating of what you are to buy; and the raising and over-valuing of what you are to sell; and both without just cause: see Prov. xx. 14. *It is naught, it is naught, saith the buyer; but when he is gone his way, then he boasteth.*—There is the sin of abusing men's simplicity

plicity and unskilfulness, and using false weights, balances, and measures to deceive; Prov. xi. 1. *A false balance is an abomination to the Lord.*—Again, some will, I understand, set off the goodliest face of their wares outmost to the market; the buyer takes all to be of the same sort, at the word of the feller. Thus they are guilty of a double cheat; they cheat their neighbour's eye with their wares, and cheat their mind with their words; and thus both their hands and lips are full of cheating and deceit: but they should know that they cannot cheat God, who surely will not let them thrive that way; or, if they seem to thrive, it is with his curse upon their gain. God hath said, *None that worketh abomination, or maketh a lie, shall enter into heaven; but only they that are written in the Lamb's book of life,* Rev. xxi. 27.: Intimating, that those, among others, who are cheaters and liars, they may well read their names written in the black book of death and damnation; but they cannot read such foul names as theirs, in the fair little white book of life, the Lamb's book of life.—

O Sirs, there is a way of walking in Christ, even in all your natural, religious, and civil actions. The direction then that I was giving is; O endeavour, through grace, that every action of your life, may be a step forward in this way, by doing all in his fear, and through his grace.

[3.] The third direction, with which I close, is to endeavour, through grace, to *improve all these means*, and to make conscience of the diligent use of all the means, that tend to advance this Christian walk: and here I mention these four means.

1. A punctual and serious attendance upon gospel-ordinances; Prov. viii. 34. *Blessed is the man that heareth me, watching daily at my gates, and waiting at the posts of my doors.*

2. Frequent conversation with gospel-professors, whose walk adorns the same: *He that walketh with the wise, shall be wise.* See Heb. vi. 12. *Be not slothful, but followers of them who through faith and patience inherit the promises.*

3. Prayer; *Continue in prayer, and watch in the same,*
with

with thanksgiving, Col. iv. 2. Seek the assistance of the *gospel-spirit*, who only can enable you to this walk, Luke xi. 13. Seek him as a Spirit of *power* to strengthen you; for, *it is he that worketh in you, both to will and to do*, Phil. ii. 13. Seek him as a Spirit of *faith*, that by faith in exercise you may abide in Christ: for, *except ye abide in him, ye cannot bring forth fruit*, John xv. 4. That by drawing virtue and water out of these wells of salvation, and fountain of life, and receiving out of his fulness grace for grace, ye may live on him, and walk in him. And that, by faith, ye may make use of the gospel-promise, and thereby be *partakers of the divine nature*, 2 Pet. i. 4. And that by this faith ye may fix all your resolves for duty, in the strength of the Lord God, with a design to make honourable mention of the Mediator's righteousness, in every performance, as that alone whereby ye are justified in your persons, and accepted in your performances, Psalm lxxi. 16, 19, 24.

4. Spiritual meditation; *I thought upon my ways, and turned my feet to thy testimonies*. Meditate on your ways, how sinful and ungrateful they have been; how unlike unto the ways of the children of God, and those who have received so many favours. Again, meditate on the Lord's way, how sweet, pleasant, profitable, and honourable it is.—And though, through much tribulation you may enter into the kingdom of heaven, and must resolve upon the cross; yet amidst all the crosses of the way, meditate upon these two things in this way you are called to walk in.

(1.) The *red carpet* that is laid over all the way; that is, the red carpet of the blood of Christ: and as the saints have always overcome by the blood of the Lamb; so by this blood of Christ you shall overcome all the difficulties in the way, and walk upon the red carpet.

(2.) The *white pavement* that is below the carpet, all along the way you walk in; and that is the white pavement of love, the love of God in Christ. Song iii. 10.; there Solomon's chariot, representing the gospel-covenant, is said to have a *covering of purple*; there is the red carpet of the blood of Christ: and it is said to be

paved with love, for the daughters of Jerusalem; there is the white pavement of divine love. Now, the holy meditation and persuasion of God's special love in Christ, to you in particular: his love already manifested, in what he hath done for you, and in you: his love to be manifested, in what he is to do for you, in conducting you to the actual and full possession of the glorious inheritance reserved in heaven for you; nothing will more engage to a gospel-walk, than this; *The love of Christ will constrain you*, 2 Cor. v. 14, 15. Gal. ii. 20. 1 Pet. i. 3, 4. Psalm lxxiii. 24.

Neglect not these means; and if Satan tempt you, saying, What need of the use of means, since God hath promised, to *cause you to walk in his statutes*? Answer him as Christ did, when Satan tempted him, to cast himself down from the pinnacle of the temple, by adducing the promise that God had given his angels charge over him, to keep him in all his ways; his answer to Satan was; *It is written, Thou shalt not tempt the Lord thy God*. So, when Satan tempts you, to cast yourself from the pinnacle of the temple, from temple means and ordinances, let your answer then be, *Thou shalt not tempt the Lord thy God*. To neglect the means, is to tempt the Lord. Let means be used in dependance on the Lord, who only can put a blessing in the means: they are like pipes and conduits, which convey nothing, unless the fountain let forth of its water; so they convey nothing, unless the Lord send forth a stream thereby. Therefore, in the use of means, be still looking to the Lord, both for grace to use the means, and grace to bless the means.

Now, all the sermons I have preached upon this text, will be so many standing witnesses, against all the unbelievers of this congregation, who do not *receive Christ Jesus the Lord*; and all believers that, having received him, do not *walk in him*. Be restless then, till he be received into your hearts and souls; and, having *received him, so walk in him*.

May the Lord himself put a blessing, in all that hath been said from this text, and to his name be praise.

S E R M O N XLVII,---L.

The MAIN QUESTION of the GOSPEL
CATECHISM, *What think ye of
Christ? **

MATTH. xxii. 42. *What think ye of Christ?*

MY friends, if you have any regard to the voice of the Son of God, speaking to you in this text, then, to be sure, the application of it is begun, before ever we come to the explication of it. And, indeed, if the Lord himself would open and apply it to you, you would see more in it than we can tell you. Perhaps many here, when the minister reads his text, turn up their Bibles, and put a mark upon the place of scripture: very well; but then they think there is the minister's text, and so no more of it; as if it were only the minister's concern, or at most, that it is only the minister's business to speak to his text, and their business to hear what he says. But, my friends, you would know, that you have here more than a text, and it is my business, at the time, not only to read you a text, but to ask you a question; and I cannot refuse my text without proposing it, *What think ye of Christ?* And it is your business, not only to hear seriously what is said, but to answer solemnly before God what is asked, namely, *What think ye of Christ?* If you take it up simply as my text, you will think yourselves little concerned with it; but if you apprehend it as Christ's

* This subject was the substance of four sermons, preached at Portsmouth, &c. on sacramental occasions, August 22d, 1725. and hath undergone nine impressions.

question to you, then your concern is great. It is not my question only; but, as Christ proposed it to the Pharisees here; so, your hearing it repeated to you in Christ's name, and from his word, makes it his question to you, *What think ye of Christ?*

At such solemnities as this, you have occasion to hear much of Christ; but now the question is, What think ye of Christ, of whom you hear so much? Many, the more they hear of Christ, the less they think of him; like Israel, when they had the manna so plentifully rained down about their tent doors, they thought very little of it. But, wo will be to you, who hear much of Christ, and yet think little or nothing of him: *If any man love not our Lord Jesus Christ*, says the apostle, *if he hath no esteem of him, let him be ANATHEMA MARRAN-ATHA: [i. e. accursed until our Lord come.]* If you have the sacramental supper in view, you know Christ hath ordered you to search and try before-hand, saying, *Let a man examine himself, and so let him eat*: and now, if you would examine to purpose, I cannot see a more short and substantial question in all the Bible, to try yourselves by, than this is, *What think ye of Christ?* Solomon says, Prov. xxiii. 7. *As a man thinketh in his heart, so is he*; where he declares the man's state to be according as the thoughts of his heart go. Now, so it is here; truly, according as you think in your heart, especially concerning Christ, so are you, and so is your state in God's sight: according as you think highly and duly of Christ or not, so are you either a gracious or a graceless man; either a believer or unbeliever; either a man fit to go to a communion-table or not; and therefore enquire into it, *What think ye of Christ?* The trial here comes to a narrow point, wherein God only can be the witness, who will be the Judge. You may deceive men with your words and works, which is all we have to know you by: but here you are called to try yourselves by your thoughts, before that God that searches the heart, and sees the thought; *What think ye of Christ?*

The occasion of Christ's propounding this question, was this. The Pharisees had proposed several questions

to him concerning the law, by which they thought to have exposed him, while they did but expose themselves; particularly from verse 15. and downward, thinking to intangle him, *They sent forth their disciples with the Herodians, saying, Master, what thinkest thou? Is it lawful to give tribute to Caesar, or not? What is lawful? or, what says the law concerning this?* Christ answers the question to their astonishment and confusion.—Again, from verse 23. and downward, the Sadducees, who denied the resurrection, came to him with a question on that head; and they start a difficulty out of the law of Moses, which they thought was irreconcilable with the doctrine of the resurrection: but Christ answers that also, and puts them to silence.—Again, afterwards, from ver. 34. and downward, the Pharisees finding that the Sadducees were silenced by him, they gather together their forces to puzzle and tempt him; and one of them, that was a lawyer, comes with another question to him, saying, *Master, what is the great commandment in the law?* Now, they having asked so many questions at him, and he having answered them all, it was time for him to ask them a question; and he does it while they are gathered together in confederacy against him; though their forces were unite, and every one present to help another, yet he puzzles them; for God delights to baffle his adversaries, and conquer his enemies, when they think themselves strongest, and have all the advantages they can desire. Now, Christ asked them a question, which they could easily answer: it was a question in their own catechism; *What think ye of Christ? And, Whose Son is he?* They answer truly according to the scripture, that *he was the Son of David*. This they were taught, from Psalm lxxxix. 35. and several other places, shewing, that the Messiah was to be the *seed of David, the rod out of the stem of Jesse*. But now Christ starts a difficulty upon their answer, which they could not easily solve; nay, which silenced them, and all that sought occasion against him, ver. 43, 44, 45. *If Christ be David's Son, how then is he David's Lord?* Christ did not hereby intend to ensnare them as they did him, but to instruct them in a necessary truth which

which they were to believe, namely, that the expected Messiah is God as well as man; David's Lord as well as David's Son; and so *both the root and offspring of David*, Rev. xxii. 15. Now, herein they were puzzled, and put to silence.

Many are proud of their knowledge, because they can answer some questions of their catechisms, as the Pharisees here did in general; but yet they have reason to be ashamed of their ignorance: for when the question is opened up, they cannot confirm the truth which they affirm, nor reconcile one truth with another, no more than the Pharisees here could; by which it was evident, that though they answered, yet they did not understand this question, which he proposed, 1. More generally, *What think ye of Christ the Messias?* 2. More particularly, *Whose Son is he?* It is the question, as proposed in general, that I confine myself unto, yet not excluding the other branch of it, as the subject may bring it in. When Christ propose this question to the Pharisees, *What think ye of Christ?* no doubt they reckoned their thoughts of the Messias were very sound and right every way, while they thought he was the Son of David; but, like the damnable deluded Arian doctors of our day, they did not think so highly of him, as to apprehend him to be the Son of God; they did not think so honourably of him, as to own his being the supreme God, equal with the Father; for all their acquired and imagined knowledge, there was more in that question than they understood, *What think ye of Christ?*

The Pharisees had asked Christ several questions concerning the law, and the greater precept of the law; and now it was fit that Christ should ask them a question concerning the great promise of the gospel: they were so taken up with the law, they had no thought of the gospel; they thought so much of Moses, that they had no thought of Christ; therefore says he, *What think ye of Christ?* Many are so full of the law, that they forget him, who is *the end of the law for righteousness, to every one that believeth*. Here is a question to check the pride of the legalists, *What think ye of Christ?* There is a depth in every place of scriptures, which, though it seems

seems to be very plain to the carnal eye, yet the spiritual depth thereof cannot be sounded without the help of the Spirit of God: there is also a great depth in this question; angels cannot sound the depth thereof, they pry into it, and cannot think enough of Christ; they can never think too much of him: and what shall men say in answer to it, *What think ye of Christ?*

To divide this text too critically, would, I suppose, be the way to confuse it; but I think every word hath an emphasis therein.

1. There is an emphasis in the interrogative particle *What*: *What think ye of Christ?* what place do you give him? what value do you put upon him? what grandeur and glory do you ascribe unto him? what esteem have you of him? And so,

2. There is an emphasis in the verb *think*: some think not of him at all, God and Christ is not in all their thoughts; some think meanly, some think basely, some think dishonourably, some think hardly of him: but what think ye? what is your judgment of Christ? what is your opinion of him? what is your sentiment of him? what is your apprehension of him? how stand you affected towards him? and what consideration have you of him?

3. There is an emphasis in the pronoun *ye*; *What think ye of Christ?* ye Pharisees and Sadducees; *What think ye of Christ?* Ye that are so busy in starting questions about the law, *What think ye of Christ, the end of the law?* Ye legalists and self-righteous persons, *What think ye of Christ?* Yea, though it was put to the Pharisees in particular, yet it concerns all in general. The trying question that is proposed for the conviction of hypocrites, and to find them out, is useful for the consolation and confirmation of believers, and for discovering their uprightness. While the daughters of Jerusalem think no more of Christ than of another beloved, saying, *What is thy beloved more than another?* the spouse of Christ thinks him to be the *Chief among ten thousands*. Therefore, it comes to you all, *What think ye of Christ?* believers and unbelievers? Surely to them that believe he is precious.

4. There

4. There is an emphasis in the *object* or *matter* of the question, *Christ*; *What think ye of CHRIST*; what think ye of the *Messias*? what think ye of the *Anointed of God*, the *Christ of God*? It is remarkable, *Christ* says not here, *What think ye of ME*? but, *What think ye of CHRIST*? that is *God's Anointed*, and the *Messias promised to the fathers*: and hereby it is intimate to us, that as *Christ* loves to magnify his office, as the *Sent*, and *Sealed*, and *Anointed of God*; so we cannot have right and becoming thoughts of him, unless we apprehend him in his *saving offices*, to which he is authorized of the *Father*: and so, when he says not, *What think ye of ME*? but, *What think ye of CHRIST*? He does not simply commend himself, but his *Father* also, who anointed him to that office; and himself, bearing his *Father's* commission, and invested with his authority to save sinners, *What think ye of Christ*? Here is the proper object of the esteem of rational creatures, and especially mankind sinners, on whom their thoughts ought to be terminate. It is not, what think ye of *God* absolutely considered? for, *God out of Christ is a consuming fire*. It is not, what think ye of *Moses*? You magnify *Moses* and the law; but, *A greater than Moses is here*, even he by whom the law is magnified and made honourable. It is not, what think ye of the ministers and their sermons? Oh! they are nothing but the image of death without him! but the question is, *What think ye of Christ*? The word itself is but a dead letter without *Christ*. It is a remarkable saying that *Christ* hath to the same purpose, *John* v. 39, 40. *Search the scriptures, for in them ye think ye have eternal life, and they are they that testify of me: and ye will not come to me that ye might have life.* You think you have *eternal life* in the scripture, but the scripture testifies of me; yet ye will not come to me, though the scripture testifies that *eternal life* is only to be had in me. *Christ is the true God and eternal life*, *1 John* v. 20. *And this is the record, that God hath given us eternal life, and this life is in his Son* ver. 11. Seeing, then, that the scripture testifies of *Christ*, that *eternal life* is in him; in vain do men think to have *eternal life*, even in the scripture, while they will not come to *Christ*,
that

that they may have life. People may think respectfully of the scripture, and yet perish in their ignorance, and die in a delusion, while they do not think respectfully of Christ, in a suitability to the testimony that the scripture gives of him; therefore, the great question is still, *What think ye of Christ?*

OBSERV. *That the great question of the Christian catechism, by which people are to try themselves, is this,*
WHAT THINK YE OF CHRIST?

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

The method which I would here essay to prosecute, as the Lord may assist, shall be the following, *viz.*

- I. To premise some *general remarks* for clearing of this doctrine.
- II. To shew what is the *import* of this question in the several parts thereof.
- III. Offer some *reasons* of the doctrine, shewing why this is the leading and trying question in the Christian catechism.
- IV. Deduce some *inferences*, and so make application of the point, for informing of our minds, trying

of our state, and directing of our thoughts and affections concerning Christ.

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

1. *Remark*, “That man is a thoughtful, or a thinking creature.” God created him with a thinking faculty, capable of discursive thought and ratiocination; capable of rational cogitation concerning God, and spiritual objects, and celestial things; which beasts, that have some sort of thoughts, yet are not capable of. I need not insist upon this; for some of you know, that even Pagan philosophers are acquaint with this, and that heathen poets have inferred it from the very frame and structure of the human body; as Ovid.

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

META. lib. i. fab. 2.

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

2. *Remark*, “That man’s thoughts, together with all the faculties and powers of his soul, have got such a dash by the fall of Adam, that they were set a wavering after other objects, besides God the chief good: yea, the fall in a manner dashed out his brains; and his head being broken, God went out of his head, and the creature came in.” Since that time, he could never have a right thought of God in his head: yea, *God is not in all his thoughts*; innumerable other things fill up the room which God should have. *He created man upright, but he hath found out many inventions*, insomuch that now *every imagination of the thoughts of his heart is only evil continually*, Gen. vi. 5. The world, and the lusts

i. e. “While other animals look downwards upon the earth, the Creator gave man a lofty face; and ordered him to look to heaven, and lift his countenance upright towards the stars.”

thereof, do monopolize and ingross all the thoughts of the children of men, and God is thrust out of them; there is no room for God, or the Son of God. This wrong set of thoughts is also here supposed in the question, *What think ye of Christ?*

3. Remark, "That whatever confused thoughts, and dark apprehensions men may naturally have, now in their fallen state, concerning God and his law, like the confused chaos, Gen. i. 2. *Without form and void, and darkness upon the face of the deep*; yet thoughts of Christ, or of God in Christ, are what no man could ever have had in the least glimmering idea by nature, without divine gospel-revelation." Adam fallen retained some awful and terrible thoughts of God; but no thought could he ever have had of Christ, unless God had revealed him as *the seed of the woman that was to bruise the head of the serpent*. This is *the mystery that was hid from ages and generations*; the *great mystery of godliness, God manifested in the flesh*; *God in Christ reconciling the world to himself*, could not enter into our thoughts. Some natural impressions men have of God as a law-giver, standing upon terms of obedience with them, according to the first covenant, [namely, of works,] made with the first Adam; but God in Christ, as *the end of the law for righteousness, and fulfilling the righteousness of the law* in the sinner's room, is such a hidden mystery, so far above the natural thoughts of man, that even where the objective revelation of this mystery is made, without the subjective, internal, saving illumination in the knowledge thereof, men cannot have or entertain any due apprehensions of it, but remain doting upon their legal dreams and imaginations concerning God, as in the old covenant-relation to them. This was evident in the Pharisees here, notwithstanding of the gospel-light they had both from the Old-Testament prophecies and promises of Christ, and from the rays of the Sun of righteousness himself, now arisen among them; still they were doting upon the law, and had some dark thoughts of God with relation thereto; therefore Christ, to direct their thoughts in the only way to God, he leads them to himself. And as the disciples themselves, being

being but partly enlightened herein, need to be directed in their faith and spiritual thoughts of God, that they be not legal, terminating upon God absolutely, but evangelical upon Christ, or God in him, John xiv. 1. *Ye believe in God, believe also in me*; so much more do blind Pharisees need to be directed to the right road, as here our Lord does. Ye think of God, but, *What think ye of Christ?*

4. *Remark.* “When Christ is revealed, people may think of him, and yet think amiss, unless their thoughts be spiritualized by a supernatural change of the mind, and saving illumination of their understanding in the knowledge of Christ.” Thoughts may be considered as either rational and speculative, which is just the work of the brain, and lies only in a bare theory of divine things; or, as practical and spiritually operative, which does not rest in the head, but affects the heart, and sets the affections in motion towards divine things, and raises the spiritual estimation thereof. Now, whatever thoughts of Christ the natural man may have in the former sense, yet no suitable thoughts of Christ can he have in the latter sense, till a supernatural change be wrought by saving illumination. It is as impossible in the black state of nature to think upon Christ, or spiritual things, in a spiritual manner, as it is for a man that was born blind to judge of colours, or to be taken up with their beauty and lustre; *The natural man receives not the things of God, they are foolishness unto him, neither can he know them, for they are spiritually discerned, 1 Cor. ii. 14.* This discerning he cannot have, till he be translated out of darkness to God’s marvellous light, and till the God, who commanded light to shine out of darkness, shine into his heart, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ, 2 Cor. iv. 6. People then may think of Christ, and yet think amiss, without this saving illumination. This is also supposed here in the question; for the Pharisees did not want some thoughts of Christ the Messias, and partly right thoughts too upon the matter, while they thought he was *the Son of David*; yet they were so far from being right thoughts of Christ, as God-man, and as to the

manner of thinking of him, that they had no due esteem of the true Christ; nay, *He was despised and rejected of as a root out of a dry ground, and as having no form or comeliness*, Isa. ii. 3. And thus he is still undervalued by multitudes, who yet judge they have right enough thoughts of Christ; they think of him, but think amiss: and therefore the question is not merely concerning the act of thinking, but the quality thereof; it is not, have you *any* thoughts of Christ; do you ever think of him? but it is, What think ye of him?

5. *Remark*, "That man's thoughts are within God's jurisdiction, and under his authority." The commands of God extend not only to the outward, but the inward man of the heart, and consequently further than ever any earthly command could go; where was there ever a monarch that could give out such laws, as would bind the heart and thoughts of men? If any mortal should make a law, that his subjects should not dare, upon their peril, to welcome a traiterous thought against his royal person, otherwise he would be evanged upon them; really such an one would deserve to be laughed at for his pride and folly, more than Caligula, who threatened the air, if it durst rain when he was at his pastime, who yet durst not look upon the air when it thundered. It were the height of madness, for any crowned head in the world, or potentate on earth, so far to forfeit their reason, as to think, that the thoughts of men's hearts were within their territories or jurisdiction: but behold, they are all under the authority of God; for his name is *καρδιωρύχτος*, the *Searcher of the heart*, Acts i. 24. and the *Trier of the reins of the children of men*. Think not that thoughts are free, any more than your words or actions before God. It is his prerogative to lay hands upon the inner man, and to *judge the secrets of men by Jesus Christ*, Rom. ii. 16. who is here the catechist, putting the question to you; and he is the fittest hand, for he knows what way your thoughts are running: he is the witness, and will be the judge of your thoughts, which are all under his jurisdiction. Therefore it is his unquestionable right, to call you to an account of your thoughts; thoughts are as visible and evident

dent as actions to him; Heb. iv. 12, 13. *The Word of God, [the essential Word, the Word that was made flesh,] is quick and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart; neither is there any creature that is not manifest in his sight: but all things are naked, and opened unto the eyes of him with whom we have to do.* He knows our thoughts afar off, even before we conceive them; and thoughts are actions before him: heart-thoughts are heart-acts, and real deeds in his sight; the adulterous thought, is adultery before him, and will be judged as such; the covetous thought, is idolatry before him; the malicious thought, is murder; and the unbelieving thought, is unbelief; the contemning thought of Christ, is contempt itself: he is an infinite Spirit, that sees your thoughts better than men see your actions; and therefore answer for your thoughts to him. *What think ye of Christ?*

6. *Remark,* "That as men may expect to be catechised and examined of God, with respect to their thoughts, as well as their actions, so especially concerning their thoughts of Christ." And as God will judge us by the thoughts we have of Christ, so we ought to try and judge ourselves by this rule; for as our thoughts are, so are we; yea, God's thoughts of us are according to our thoughts of Christ. If we think nothing of Christ, God thinks nothing of us; if we think highly of Christ, God thinks highly of us in him: for, as God's thoughts of Christ are very high and honourable, he being the Father's darling and delight, Isa. xlii. 5.; so, when our thoughts of Christ, in some measure, agree with God's thoughts of him, and we think highly and honourably of him, as God does; surely it is evident, that we have the Spirit of God; and that as God is well-pleas'd with Christ, so he is well-pleas'd with us in him. Now, if *our thoughts and hearts condemn us* in this matter, *God is greater than our hearts, and knows all things; but if our hearts and thoughts condemn us not, then we have confidence towards God,* 1 John iii. 20, 21. It is true, the natural conscience of

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

II. The *second* head proposed, was, To shew the *import* of this question, *What think ye of Christ?* That people may not deceive themselves with passing thoughts they may have of Christ, I would more closely open up the meaning and import of the question; and this being the main head upon the doctrinal part, we must explain the several branches of the question, and so shew the import of it. 1. *Objectively*, with respect to the *object*, CHRIST. 2. *Actively*, with respect to the *act* of thinking. 3. *Formally*, with respect to the *quality* of the act, what sort of a thought it is; *What think ye of him?* 4. *Subjectively*, with respect to the persons that are the subjects, *ye*; *What think YE of Christ?*

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

[1.] What think ye of his *righteousness*? This I place first, because I judge, from what goes before, as the occasion of this question, that the great design of Christ therein was to lead off these self-righteous Pharisees from the righteousness of works and of the law, concerning which all their questions were put to him, and to lead them to another righteousness, even to himself as the Lord their righteousness, the end of the law. As if he

had said, You think to be justified by the deeds of the law; but, how is that possible, seeing *by the law is the knowledge of sin?* Rom. iii. 20. If ye will stand close to these old-covenant terms with God, then let the law itself catechise you. Where is your righteousness of nature and practice, that the law requires? Where is your righteousness of thought, word, and deed, that it requires? Where is your righteousness of affection and action that it requires? Where is your perfect, personal, and perpetual obedience; your righteousness internal in heart, external in life, and eternal in duration which the law requires? for, *Curst is every one that continues not in all things written in the book of the law to do them,* Gal. iii. 10. The law will tell you, that though you keep it wholly, and yet *offend in one point,* you are *guilty of all,* James ii. 20. Now, is there no point wrong in your state, nature, heart, or thought all your days, not to speak of your words and actions? If there be, then you are guilty of all; and seeing by the law is the knowledge thus of your sin and guilt, how can you be justified by the law? Can that holy righteous law pronounce you just and righteous? No, no: in vain do you think of righteousness by the law: therefore, what think ye of Christ the Messias, who is called **JEHOVAH-TSIDKENU**; *the Lord our righteousness,* Jer. xxiii. 6. It is he that came to fulfil the righteousness of the law in his own person, really and actively, that *the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us,* imputatively and passively, Rom. viii. 4. Is not this the only righteousness that *magnifies the law and makes it honourable?* You magnify your own righteousness, which does but disgrace and dishonour the law; but, *what think ye of Christ?* Do you magnify and honour him, as *the Lord your righteousness?* Ought not you to magnify that righteousness that magnifies the law, seeing it is more than an angelical righteousness? It is not the righteousness of a man only, or of *David's son*; but the *righteousness of God,* and of *David's Lord.* If you think no more of Christ but that he is *David's son,* no wonder than you be relying upon and following after the law, and a poor pitiful righteousness of your own; you have never seen the glory of Christ's righteousness:

but

but if you think duly of Christ, you will see him to be the LORD JEHOVAH, and his righteousness to be a glorious divine righteousness, so as you will *count all things but loss and dung for the excellency of the knowledge of him, and to be found in him, not having your own righteousness that is after the law, but the righteousness which is of God, in Christ by faith*, Phil. ii. 8, 9. Let all your questions about the law then, might Christ say, give way to this great question, *what think ye of Christ*, and his law-bidding righteousness? Your righteousness will not abide the first fire of the law when it comes to be discharged against you, and to exact obedience and satisfaction; but Christ's obedience and death answers the whole charge of its precept and sanction both to the full: therefore, *What think ye of Christ?* and what think ye of his righteousness? This is the first thing imported in this question, as it stands here.

[2.] What think ye of his *pedigree*? That this is imported in the question, appears from the connexion also, *Whose son is he?* What think ye of his pedigree? They thought it was easy to answer that question, by saying only, *He is David's son*. They might have known it was not so easy to answer that question, if they had considered the question of the prophet Isaiah, chap. liii. 8. *Who shall declare his generation?* And the description which that prophet gives of him, Isa. ix. 6. that the name of the Messiah, the child born, and son given to us, should be, *Wonderful, Counsellor, and the mighty God, the everlasting Father, the Prince of peace*.—What think ye of his pedigree as he is *man*? No doubt this was partly implied in the question; for Christ did not disprove their answer, though it was but to the least part of the question: *He is David's son*, say they; and it is right to think of him as the son of David, clothed with our nature: here was the *great mystery of godliness, God manifested in the flesh*. It was no mystery for the Pharisees to think only that he was the son of David; David had other sons, and a numerous seed: and if that be all, that he was the son of David, they might thus think of Christ, and yet think nothing of him. But it is another thing to think of him as God in our nature. If

we think duly of Christ as the son of David, or in human nature, then, must we not think that God is come very near to us, so as there is a natural fibeness betwixt him and us, he being *bone of our bone, and flesh of our flesh*? Must we not think, that he wonderfully emptied himself of his divine glory, and humbled himself unto death? Though *he thought it no robbery to be equal with God*, yet he suffered himself to be denuded of his glory, clothed with rags of our flesh: God calls him *the man that is his Fellow*; yet he was made a fellow to thieves and malefactors, and a murderer preferred before him. Though he was *the Prince of life*, yet, as the word may be rendered, he *EVACUATED OR EMPTIED himself unto death*; and yet, to them that know him, he is most lovely, even in his greatest abasement. What think ye of Christ as man, as the son of David, the son of man, a man of the same infirmities with us, except sinful infirmities? *He was made in all things like unto us, sin only excepted*: He became a poor man, in all outward respects; a distressed man, *a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief*; a tempted man, toiled and tempted of the devil sometimes, he going through all the ages of a man, first conceived, then born, then a babe, then a youth, and at last the perfect stature of man: He became a mortal man, and accordingly was put to a painful and shameful death; yet a holy man, a wonderful man, a God-man: What think ye of the man Christ Jesus?—But the main thing imported in the question here with relation to his pedigree, is, What think ye of his pedigree, as he is *God*? What think ye of Christ, in this respect? For to separate Christ from God, is to make him no Christ; therefore, the question is, *What think ye of Christ*, whose son is he, with respect to his divine nature, as well as his human nature? That this was the import of the question, appears from his reply to their answer, *How then does David call him Lord*? He is *LORD JEHOVAH, the only begotten Son of God*, John i. 18.; *the brightness of the Father's glory, and the express image of his person*, Heb. i. 2.; *by whom all things were made*, John i. 3. It is the Arian blasphemy, to affirm him to be no more but *Omoiusius patri*, but not *Omoiusius*; that

is, *like unto the Father*, but not the same essence and substance with him. He is, according to his Godhead, arrayed with all glory. All the creatures are to him as the *drop of a bucket*: yea, as *nothing*, and *less than nothing and vanity*; he hath a *name above every name*; and all the creatures are but shadows to him, who is the substantial image of God. He is the eternal Son of God, by an ineffable generation; whatever Arians and Atheists think of Christ; yet Christ himself *thought it no robbery to be equal with God*, Phil. ii. 6. Therefore, *What think ye of Christ?* is he no more but the son of David? The Jews looked upon Christ, as an ignorant clown, or silly person, will look upon the sun; and, it may be, will think it no bigger than his bonnet; or at most, no larger than a millstone: so did the Jews. The Pharisees looked upon the Son of God, saying, *Is not this the carpenter's son?* but their utmost was, that he was *the son of David*; they did not see him to be the Son of God. *What think ye of Christ?* Do ye see all the attributes of God to be in him? and all his actions, as Mediator, to be dignified with infinite virtue and value? that he was able to satisfy infinite justice? that *he is able to save to the uttermost?* that he is the adequate object of divine worship, and a full suitable portion for an immortal soul, because he is the Son of God, as well as the son of David? All this is imported in the question, *What think ye of Christ?*

[3.] What think ye of his *person*? This question is also plainly imported in that, *What think ye of Christ*, namely, as he is God-man in one person, and the second person of the glorious Trinity? It is plain, that Christ speaks of himself here as personally considered, and as having two distinct natures in one person. Now, the human nature of Christ is not a person distinct from the divine; though the natures are distinct, the person is one. But the answer of the Pharisees to this question, shewed they had no distinct knowledge of this mystery; for they answer, *He is the son of David*; without knowing that he was the Son of God, as well as the son of David, in one person; which made Christ here to declare his sovereign Lordship and Godhead, as well as

his manhood. The mystery of the question then, which they did not understand, was, What think ye of that wonderful person God-man, in whom the human nature is advanced to such an unspeakable dignity, as to be united to, and of the same personality with the Son of God? Here is matter of thought to an intelligent mind; What think ye of the wonderful manner, in which sinful men may come to be *partakers of the divine nature*, even by the holy Son of God his being a partaker of the human nature? Here is a glorious subject for thought and contemplation. What think ye of the wonderful way, that God, in his infinite wisdom, hath taken, to bring God and men together, even in and through him, who is both God and man, and partaking of both natures in one person, is fit for bringing both God and man into one, and to lay his hand upon both parties? What think ye of such a glorious person as finite and infinite, time and eternity, Creator and creature joined together? *The word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only Begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth,* John i. 14.

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

of any of his saving offices, unless we, at the same time, apprehend his divine unction thereunto. — Again, it comes to this, What think ye of his *Spirit*, the ointment, wherewith he is anointed? Isa. lxi. 1. *The Spirit of the Lord God is upon me, for he hath anointed me.* Isa. xlii. 1. *I have put my Spirit upon him, and he shall bring forth judgment to the Gentiles.* — There is the meaning of the question in general, with respect to this Christ, who is the subject-matter of the question: but there is much in this name CHRIST, and more than we can tell; I only name some particulars further here imported.

1. What think ye of his *prophecy* and *teaching*? For, as Christ, he is anointed to be a Prophet: *Who teaches like him?* says Elihu, Job xxxvi. 22. Other prophets and teachers have no wisdom but what he gives them; but, *in him are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge.* Other prophets may err, but he teaches infallibly: for he is the truth itself; *full of grace and truth.* Other teachers may be dashed, but he teaches authoritatively; *he speaks as one having authority, and not as the Scribes.* Other teachers may fail in their design, and prove unsuccessful in their work; but he teaches efficaciously: men work upon a capacity, but he can give a capacity; *The entrance of his words giveth light; he gives understanding to the simple.* The excellency of his teaching is singular, if we consider his ability and fidelity; the *matter* of his teaching is singular, if we consider it is the whole will of God for our salvation; the *manner* of his teaching is singular, if we consider it by his word and Spirit? and even by a human voice he can convey his divine power; the *extent* of his teaching is singular, if we consider it extends to all sorts of persons, Jews and Gentiles, and to all sorts of things necessary to eternal life: this anointing teaches *all things*, 1 John ii. 27. In a word, none have authority to teach, but by commission from him; neither can any other teacher preach himself; *We preach not ourselves, but Christ Jesus the Lord;* and, *To him gave all the prophets witness:* but it is his prerogative alone, to preach himself, saying, *Come to me, all ye that labour, and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Look to me and be saved: I am the*
rose

rose of Sharon; I am the light of the world; I am the way, the truth, and the life. O then, was there ever any prophet or teacher that could compete with him? *The Spirit of the Lord God is upon me, says Christ, for he hath anointed me to preach glad tidings to the meek.* He is the Christ, the anointed prophet; and, *What think ye of Christ?*

2. What think ye of his *priesthood?* for, as Christ, he is anointed to be a *Priest for ever, after the order of Melchisedeck.* All the Levitical priests were but shadows and types of him who was the true Priest, the true Temple, the true Altar, the true Sacrifice, all in one. What high thoughts may we have of his oblation, or *obedience unto death, even the death of the cross?* For here was the grand condition of the covenant of redemption, or grace, fulfilled. The covenant of grace was all grace with respect to God, who, of his grace, found out the ransom; and with respect to us, who are *saved by grace:* but, with respect to Christ, it is a covenant made upon terms and conditions, namely, his obedience, righteousness, passion, and oblation; *Whom God hath set forth to be the propitiation, through faith in his blood, to declare his righteousness for the remission of sins that are past,* Rom. iii. 25. O what a free, full, perfect holy, sweet, and satisfying sacrifice did he offer up of himself, even a *sacrifice of a sweet-smelling savour unto God,* whereby justice was satisfied, wrath appeased, sin expiated, God atoned, death vanquished, hell quenched, heaven purchased, and the devil's kingdom destroyed; for, *by death he destroyed him that had the power of death, that is, the devil!* What may we think of his intercession, grounded upon this oblation? *For he is able to save to the uttermost all that come to God by him, because he ever lives to make intercession.* Here is the antidote against all charges and accusations, Rom. viii. 33, 34.; the antidote against all temptations, Heb. ii. 17, 18. iv. 14, 15.; an antidote against all the snares of the world, John xvii. 15.; against all sins, failings, and infirmities, 1 John ii. 1, 2.; against all fears, through sense of unworthiness, to draw near to God's throne of grace, Heb. iv. 15, 16. x. 19, — 22.; and against all fears of apostacy and falling away,

John

John xvii. 11. O Sirs, his promise, his power, his prayer, give great security, and greater cannot be given: he hath prayed for the Spirit, and the constant abiding thereof, John xiv. 16, 17. see also John iv. 14. Christ's intercession is founded on his oblation; and the Father is so well-pleas'd with the oblation, that he cannot refuse his intercession; nay, *he hears him always*. Therefore, *What think ye of Christ?*

3. What think ye of his *kingdom* and *royalty*? The question, *What think ye of Christ?* imports this also; for, as Christ, he is anointed to be a King; *I have set my King*, [or, as it is in the Hebrew, ANOINTED *my King*,] *upon my holy hill of Zion*, Psa. ii. 6. Is not *all power in heaven and earth committed unto him*, having on his vesture and thigh this name written, KING OF KINGS, and LORD OF LORDS? He is *the King eternal and immortal*; the *government is upon his shoulders*; and *of the increase of his kingdom and government there shall be no end*. His *delivering up the kingdom to the Father at last*, is but a changing the *manner* of his administration, and delivering up all his members, of whom his kingdom consists, unto his Father, to be eternally crowned and glorified: he will reign through eternity, and the *children of Zion will be joyful in their King*, and sing thro' eternity. I might here shew what a powerful and peaceable, mild and merciful, wise and holy, just and righteous King our Lord Jesus is; and then ask you, *What think ye of Christ?* But it is not possible to give so much as a hint at the thousandth part of his glory and royalty. His kingdom is spiritual and internal: if you be his spiritual subjects, his *kingdom is within you*; yea, though you be yet subjects to the devil, he hath power over all hearts, and can soften the hardest, and bind the stoutest, and make the people fall down under him: yea, as he is able, so he is willing; for, he is not only the God of power, but *the prince of peace*, Isa. ix. 6.; and therefore, as a *Prophet*, he preaches peace; as a *Priest*, he purchases peace; and, as a *King*, he proclaims peace; yea, *Creates the fruit of the lips peace*; *peace to him that is afar off, and to him that is nigh*. As a powerful Potentate, he is able; and, as a Prince of peace, he is
ready,

ready, to save to the uttermost. As he is full of power, so he is full of pity; and his power and peace both are joined together, for the encouragement of sinners to come to him; *Let him take hold of my strength, that he may make peace with me, and he shall make peace with me*, Isa. xxvii. 5.—Perhaps, by the bye, some poor soul is thinking, Oh! but I have no strength to take hold of his strength. Well, it is right to think so of yourself, and of your own weakness and wickedness: but no strength comes in by that thought, while poring on yourself only; that is but the half of what you are to think, when you think right of yourselves, as weak and wicked. But, what think ye of Christ our glorious King? If you can think honourably of him, as able and willing to help you, O then you would find strength coming in with such a thought: and high thoughts of a powerful and merciful King Jesus, is one of the ways of taking hold of his strength. If you suppose that you think he is able and ready, and yet you find no strength coming in, O Sirs, suspect your own thought of him, that it is but a misbelieving and dishonourable thought: for, I assure you, right thoughts of Christ will set the heart all in motion towards him. But now, O! there would be no end in speaking of the royalties of King Jesus; his royal throne, his royal crown, his royal victories, his royal triumphs, and the royal entertainment that he gives to his subjects at his table above, and even below, when he brings them to his banquetting-house. I shall only add, that it is said of Solomon, *there was no king like him*; so, behold a *greater than Solomon is here*: there is no king like him who is the *King of Zion*; he hath all other kings under his check and controul; and, what think ye of Christ then? Other kings have their dominions, for the most part, by usurpation, by encroachment: but Christ is King constitute of his Father; *I will make him my first-born, higher than the kings of the earth*, Psa. lxxxix. 27.; and all this for the good of the people: *He hath put all things under his feet, and given him to be head over all things unto his church*, Eph. ii. 22. This leads to another import of the question; that is,

4. What think ye of his *authority* and *ability*, *commission*, *fulness*, *furniture*, and *fitness* for executing these saving offices? For all this is implied in the designation CHRIST, *the anointed*; that is, one commissioned and qualified of God, by a supereminent unction, John iii. 34. Behold his excellency here, above all that ever had the like offices. Behold he is anointed, for the concurrence of all these offices, whether general, as Saviour, Surety, and Redeemer; or particular, as Prophet, Priest, and King. Some have been prophets, some priests, some kings anointed; but never any was anointed to all these but Christ: *What think ye of Christ?*—Behold the *matter* of his anointing; others have been anointed with material oil, but he is anointed with holy oil, the holy Spirit.—And whereas others have had the Spirit in some respects, therefore behold the *measure* of his anointing; others were anointed in measure, but he *without measure*; they may have a fulness of sufficiency, but he hath a fulness of redundancy; they a fulness like the fulness of a vessel, but his the fulness of an ocean; they a plenitude, but he a fountain.—Behold and view the *duration* of his anointing; his saints and servants may have the Spirit sometimes working, sometimes ceasing, sometimes flowing, and sometimes ebbing; but Christ is anointed with an enduring unction, John i. 33. The Spirit that descended on him, did remain and rest upon him; see Isa. lix. 22.—Hence behold also the *equality* of his anointing with himself: the Spirit given to others, that were invested with an office in God's house, did work with them as mere men; there was no equality betwixt them and the Spirit given to them: but as Christ is anointed with the Spirit, as he is Mediator, God-man; so, as to God, he is co-equal with the Spirit, wherewith he is anointed; yea, the same in substance, equal in power and in glory with the Father and with the Holy Ghost. And, *What think ye of Christ?* his authority, ability, and furniture for his work?—In a word, behold the *efficacy* of his anointing; and the communicable nature thereof: *He is anointed above his fellows*; yet so, as he hath fellows to whom he allows fellowship in the same anointing: he hath not only re-

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

5. What think ye of his *aromatical savour*? for this is his name, *Christ, the Anointed*; his ointment casts a perfume through heaven and earth. How savoury is he to God? Why, his *sacrifice was a sweet-smelling savour unto his Father*, Eph. v. 2. The stinking smell of sin is extinguished thereby; and the persons and performances of believers perfumed: and hence, how savoury also to believers? Song i. 3, 5. *Because of the savour of thy good ointments, thy name is as ointment poured forth; therefore do the virgins love thee*. Were it no more but the name JESUS a SAVIOUR, may it not be so delightful to sinners, as to cause their hearts to leap within them when they hear it; as John leapt in his mother's womb for joy, at the voice of the blessed virgin's salutation? Luke i. 44. O! what think ye of the sweet name JESUS! It should
even

even pluck your heart out of your bosom, and transplant it into the bosom of Christ. How delightful is the very naming of a temporal Saviour to them that are in misery, when they hear of his ability and readiness to deliver them? And, may not your heart even exult within you for joy, when you hear us speak to you of such a Saviour, that saves from sin and wrath? O sweet-smelling name! O have you no sense of smelling! *What think ye of Christ?*

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

7. What think ye of his *worth* and *preciousness*? This is also imported in the name CHRIST, and so in the question, *What think ye of Christ, the Anointed?* for it is *precious ointment*, Psal. cxxxiii. 2. Ointment was reckoned of great worth and esteem among the Jews; it was among the precious presents that were sent unto kings, Isa. lvii. 9. Hof. xii. 1. O how great is the preciousness and worth of Christ! It is the delight and recreation, the study and occupation of elect angels, to pry into the preciousness of Christ, to look upon the frame and fabric of salvation to mankind—sinners by Christ, that they may therein observe the glorious attributes of God: his wisdom, power, holiness, justice, truth, mercy, all shining and glittering in it, like bright

stars in the firmament. Let a profane world think what they will of Christ; let them slight him and his gospel; let them scorn him, and cast him at their heels; let them trample on his blood and passion, as their manner is, making it a common and worthless thing; let them despise his high and celestial mysteries: we need not care for their thoughts; it is enough that God the Father hath honoured and exalted him; that the holy angels do reverence and worship him; and that all the saints do magnify him: *To them that believe he is precious.* O! his blood is precious blood, his promises are precious promises, his love is precious love; and every thing about him is precious: *What think ye of Christ?*

8. Again, to add no more here, what think ye of his *virtue* and *usefulness*? This, I suppose, is also imported in the name CHRIST, and in the question objectively considered, *What think ye of Christ, the Anointed?* For, as ointment was, and is of manifold usefulness, so is Christ: especially oil hath a twofold virtue, (1.) A *molifying* virtue, and a softening quality; such is the virtue of Christ. Were the heart never so hard, he can soften and molify it; a drop of that oil with which he is anointed, I mean, the smallest saving motion of his Spirit, can melt and dissolve the heart, tho' it were harder than a stone or adamant, Ezek. xxxvi. 26. (2.) It hath a *medicinal* virtue; hence it is said of the Samaritan, Luke x. 34. that he *poured in oil into the wounds* of the distressed man. Christ is the tender-hearted Samaritan; his blood and Spirit is the ointment for curing all the wounds that we have got by the old serpent. What wounds, what plagues, what deadly diseases and desperate maladies are among you! Behold, there is no disease out of hell that surmounts the medicinal virtue that is in Christ! O then, *What think ye of Christ?* Is there none here to think highly of him? — Now, these particulars that I have mentioned are imported in the very name CHRIST, and so implied in the question objectively considered, or with respect to the object thereof, *What think ye of Christ?*

2^{dly}, The *second* thing here proposed, was, to shew the import of this question *actively* considered, or with respect

respect to the *act* of thinking; *What THINK ye of Christ?* Now, the full import of this question, thus viewed, may comprehend more than people are ready to imagine. It is not a passing thought, or fleeting imagination; we ought not to explain the words of Christ by the motions and notions of our own spirits: we need the Spirit of Christ to explain the words of Christ according to the mind of Christ, 1 Cor. ii. 17. We may be sure, as the apostle says, 2 Cor. ii. 5. that *we are not sufficient of ourselves to think any thing as of ourselves, our sufficiency must be of God.* And if we can think of nothing aright of ourselves, far less can we think of Christ: and as none can speak duly of Christ, nor call Jesus LORD, without the Spirit; so neither can we think duly of Christ, without the Spirit of Christ. What then is the meaning of this question relating to its *act* of thinking, *What THINK ye of Christ?* There are these following particulars, which, I suppose, are implied therein; and which I also propose by way of *Query*, that you may still search yourselves, and apply as we go along.

1. *What think ye of Christ?* That is, What *know* ye of Christ? what *understand* ye of Christ? Surely ye cannot have a right thought of that which ye do not know or understand. Have you got the *Spirit of wisdom and revelation, in the knowledge of Christ?* Eph. i. 17. *Hath the God, who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, shined into your hearts, to give you the light of the knowledge of his glory in the face of Jesus Christ?* Hath God revealed his Son in you? Gal. i. 16. Have you *seen the Son?* He that sees the natural sun in the firmament, hath a thought of it suitable to the sight he hath thereof: but a man that hath been born blind, and never saw the light, he cannot have a right notion or thought of the sun, though you should speak never so much of the glory of it to him. I have heard of a man born blind, on whom a great deal of pains was taken to let him understand what a glorious creature the sun was, and what bright beams and rays it sends forth through all the world; but he was so far from having any right thoughts about it, that, after all the pains taken on him that was possible, he crys out, "O now, says he, I know what

" it

“ it is like, it is just like the sound of a trumpet.” Poor man! that was the best notion he could frame about it, for he never had eyes. So it is here, Sirs; we are all born blind, having no spiritual eyes till God open the eyes of the understanding, and enlighten the mind in the knowledge of Christ: we may speak of his glory and excellency; but the best you make of him is, O he is like a very stately and majestic person as ever ye saw or heard tell of! and so you frame the image of a very great man, sitting on a lofty throne, compassed about with so many sparkling attendants in fine robes: and what you have heard with your natural ears of any person, or seen with your natural eyes, or can conceive with your natural understanding and reason, helps you to, or furnishes you with materials for framing such a notion of him. But what is all this? It is nothing but an image of your own brain, a carnal fantastical thought; the true Christ is the *image of the invisible God, the wisdom of God, and the power of God, God-man in one person.* Now, have you got a spiritual discerning; for, *The natural man receives not the things of the Spirit of God; they are foolishness to him, neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned.* The world cannot think of Christ, far less think much of him, because they do not know him: like Æsop’s cock, contenting himself with, and thinking more of a barley-corn than of a pearl, because he knew not the worth of it; so the world think more of a barley-corn of temporal good things, than they think of the *Pearl of great price*, because they know it not. Therefore the question imports, what *know* ye of Christ?

2. *What think ye of Christ?* That is, What *believe* ye of Christ? Knowledge and faith are like the two eyes of the soul: knowledge is the discerning and apprehending eye; faith is the applying and appropriating eye. And as saving knowledge is objective faith, and saving faith fiducial knowledge; so without knowledge we cannot think duly of Christ, with respect to what he is in himself; and without faith we cannot think duly of Christ, with respect to what he is to us, so as to receive the record of God, namely, *That God hath given*

us eternal life, and this life is in his Son, 1 John v. 11. Which record, *Whosoever believeth not, hath made God a liar, ver. 10.* That the question concerns this believing thought of Christ, is plain from the context, wherein Christ shows they had but unworthy thoughts of him, if they did not see him to be *David's Lord*, that is, the *true God, and eternal life*; in and through whom, as the God-man, this life was to be conveyed from God to man. This question then is a trial of our faith, which *faith is the evidence of things not seen.* And, I suppose, one of the reasons why Christ here says, *What think ye of CHRIST?* and not, *What think ye of ME?* is, because, though now they were speaking to him, and seeing him with their bodily eyes; yet their faith was not to terminate on what was the object of their sense. We have no more faith than an ox or a horse, if we believe no more than we see or feel: the brute beasts think they have what they find they have by seeing and feeling; but what do you, that are rational creatures, think of things that cannot be seen or felt? *Faith is the evidence of things not seen.* The Pharisees here, they saw Christ, they saw his miracles; but yet, for all that, they saw not the true Christ by faith, while they saw not his invisible glory, his invisible Godhead, nor the invisible seal appended to his commission for saving sinners. Therefore it is not, *What think ye of ME?* Your eyes see me, as if I were no more but a man like yourself: but, *What think ye of CHRIST?* Do you believe no more of Christ than you see? If so, then you have no right thoughts of Christ at all, because you have no faith. My friends, the question concerns you also: it is not, what see or feel you of Christ? but, *What believe ye of Christ?* There is a threefold seeing or feeling, that is to be separate from believing.

(1.) The *first* is a *corporeal* seeing or feeling. Thomas thought it a better way to believe Christ to be risen by seeing and feeling him, than by running to the promises without sight of him; and we all naturally follow him: but Christ tells him, that the best and most blessed way was quite contrary to that; *Blessed are they*
that

that have not seen, and yet have believed, John xx. 29.

Again,

(2.) There is a *rational* seeing, that is to be separate from believing. Though none can believe, without the exercise of their rational faculties spiritualized; and though it be the highest reason to believe what God speaks; yet to make natural reason the rule or ground of faith, is not to believe at all, but the way to doubt of all that ever God said. Thomas consulted with reason, and reason consulted with death and the grave, whether they could send their guests away back and live again into the world; and so he believed not. If Abraham had not separated the sight of reason from his faith in the promised seed, where would his faith have been? Natural reason might say, "Hark you, Abraham; is it possible that you and Sarah can now have a son betwixt you, when you are both come to such an age, that you are but dead stocks?" But, when reason began to speak, Abraham stopt his ears; *He considered not the deadness of his own body, nor of Sarah's womb: He staggered not at the promise of God through unbelief, but was strong in the faith, giving glory to God; being fully persuaded that he that had promised was able to perform,* Rom. iv. 19, 20, 21. Perhaps, reason is whispering into the ears of some here, saying, O man, woman, you are but a dead stock, a dead stone; do you ever think to be a child of Abraham, or that you will bring forth fruit unto God? But, if you, believe with Abraham, you will say, Hold your peace, carnal reason, you are but a blind fool in the matters of God: cannot *God out of stones raise up children unto Abraham?* And as he is able, so he hath given me many promises in his word, which he allows me to build upon, and commands me to believe. Unbelief builds always upon sense and reason; but faith builds upon the power and promise of God. What *believe* you of Christ?

(3.) There is a *spiritual* seeing that is to be separated from faith. It is true, there is a spiritual seeing of sanctified knowledge and understanding, which I spoke of already, that is essential to faith; there can be no believing without this seeing: *He that sees the Son, and believes*

believes in him, hath everlasting life. But there is a spiritual seeing of experience, or experimental sense and feeling, which is to be separate from believing; such as spiritual mourning, spiritual joy, spiritual enlargement, or such like workings of the Spirit. Where these are, they should indeed be cherished with thankfulness, as being a taste of heaven, and a comfortable means of glorifying God on earth: but it is dangerous to make them the ground of faith; for they are ebbing and flowing, up and down, it may be twenty times in the space of one sermon; and your faith that is built thereupon will be up and down therewith. If you believe no longer than you see and feel, no wonder that you be always doubting when you are not feeling. And so you are never living by faith; for you are not properly believing, when you are feeling; faith is one thing and feeling another: or, if you build partly on the feeling of God's work within you, and partly on the truth of God's word without you, then you are like one that would build a house partly upon thawing ice, and partly on a firm rock; surely that part of the house, that was built on the ice, will tumble down whenever the ice melts: but, were the building of faith wholly upon the firm rock, that changes not with the changes of your sense and feeling, you will find no more cause of doubting when you have, than when you want these changeable things: you would be thankful when you have them, and yet not doubtful when you want them. Unbelief, which builds upon things seen and felt, says and thinks, in the want of these, O! all is good, and so razeth the foundation; but faith, which *is the evidence of things not seen*, says, even in the want of these, all is yet well and secure, Christ is what he was, the promise is what it was, the truth of God is what it was, however I be changed. These are the different thoughts of faith and unbelief; and what think ye? I suppose, when the meaning of the question is, what believe ye of Christ? the most part will find, that either they have no faith, or very little.

Thus Paul believed contrary to sense and feeling, when he got the promise of his own life, and the life

of all that were in the ship with him; *I believe God*, says he, *that it shall even be as it was told me*, Acts xxvii. 25. See in what circumstances he was, when he thus believed, verses 15, 18, 20.; their light was gone, the tempest was on them, and all hope from outward appearance was gone; yet Paul was assured and persuaded that God would do as he had said: why, might unbelief say, if the sun were shining, and a fair wind blowing; if the Sun of righteousness were shining on me, and the wind of heavenly influence blowing, and I were fair before the wind, then I would believe: but now, when there is nothing but darkness and tempests, how can I believe? No, indeed, you cannot, while you make sense and feeling the ground of your faith, and not the truth and veracity of God in his word of grace and promise. Thus it is in the matter of justification before God. The believer is to look upon himself as righteous, through the righteousness of Christ; to believe himself perfect in Christ, and fiducially to think himself righteous in Christ: no, says unbelief, I cannot think that, because I feel the contrary; I feel my own unrighteousness, sin, and corruption: why, if there were no sense or feeling of sin, there would be no room for faith: if you had a righteousness of your own, and a feeling thereof, then you would have no need of Christ's righteousness; but now, that you have a feeling of your unrighteousness and sin, there is room for faith, according to such a word as that, 2 Cor. v. 21. *He hath made him to be sin for us, that we might be made the righteousness of God in him.* The very essence of faith here is to believe the quite contrary to what we see and feel in ourselves, saying, *In myself I have no righteousness, no strength; but, Surely in the Lord have I righteousness and strength.*—Now, though I should shew no more of the import of this question, *What think ye of Christ?* but these two, namely, *What know ye of Christ?* and *what believe ye of Christ?* Surely it is a matter of eternal consequence to answer this question, thus explained; for if you miss the answer to these two branches of this question, your doom at the great day will be dreadful; 2 Thess. i. 7, 8. *He will be revealed from heaven in flaming*

ing fire, taking vengeance on them that know him not, and obey not the gospel; that is, who never had such thoughts of Christ, as to know him, and believe in him as the Christ of God. Again,

3. *What think ye of Christ?* That is, What love ye of Christ, and what favour have ye for him? As they that know him will believe, and put their trust in him; so, they that believe in him, will love him; for, *faith works by love*. It must be a loving thought, that Christ here intended by this question, while in the context he sets forth himself, not only as David's son, but David's Lord; a God-man, and so a glorious object of love, *altogether lovely*. Were our affections enlarged wider than the highest heaven, there is loveliness enough in God-man to fill it; and could our hearts hold an ocean of love, there is infinite loveliness in Christ to bestow it all upon: every thing in Christ is lovely; and therefore the question, *What think ye of Christ?* must be, What love ye of Christ? *If any man love not our Lord Jesus Christ, let him be ANATHEMA MARAN-ATHA*, says the apostle; surely they are not believers, that are not lovers of Christ. It is true, Christ hath many pretended lovers, that love him only for his bounty, but not for his beauty, and that say they love him; but it is not so, if you consider the qualities of their love.

(1.) It is an *easy* love, they came easily by it, without ever getting their natural enmity discovered or broken: they were never humbled for their want of love; such a love is of little value; yea, no worth a farthing. Or,

(2.) It is an *idle* love; it does not lead them to his service, no draw them to their prayers; his commands are still grievous to them, and they have no pleasure and delight in them. Or,

(3.) If it be not an idle, it is a *legal* love: it may be the law comes to them, and says, as Pharaoh said to the Israelites, *Ye are idle, ye are idle*, Exod. v. 17.; and so they fall a-doing for their life, according to the DO and LIVE of the first covenant. But it is not doing from love to Christ: it is not a gospel-love to him, as a *Law-filler*; but a legal love to him, as only a *Law-giver*,

and as if he was still standing upon the old-covenant terms with them. Or,

(4.) If it be not a legal love, it is a *loose* and *licentious* love they have to him: it is love with a latitude, allowing as much room for the devil, as for Christ; as much room for the world, as for Christ; and as much room for lusts, as for Christ: surely, they that have no other love to Christ, but such an easy, idle, legal, loose, or licentious love, they are not true lovers; nay, they are true haters of him, and enemies to him. Let them say as they will, that they love Christ, yet in reality they think nothing of him.

But, believer, *What think you of Christ?* When the meaning of the question to you is, *Simon, son of Jonas, lovest thou me more than these?* O! can you answer it with an appeal, *Thou that knowest all things, knowest that I love thee?* or, at least, can you answer it with a sigh, *Wo's me that I cannot love him as I ought!* Surely, if you have not a love of delight, rejoicing in him; ye have a love of desire, lamenting after him. Sometimes the loving soul goes to a communion, and the secret groan is, *Oh! let me find Christ at this occasion!* *Oh! I must have him, I must have him!* *Why must you have him?* Even because he must have you; *Other sheep I have, which are not of this fold; these also I MUST bring, and they shall hear my voice,* John x. 16. He hath said first, *I must have you;* and that hath brought you to say, *I must have him.* Here are two necessities meeting; his necessity, and your necessity: his necessity, indeed, is a pure necessity of *love*; but your first necessity was the necessity of *want*: but, since he from *love* hath a need of you, as well as you from *want* have a need of him, you must of necessity meet together in love. *You love him, because he first loved you;* you seek him, because he first sought you. Therefore henceforth, as he seeks you from love, so do you not only seek him from want, that is too selfish; but also let your way of seeking him grow up to more conformity to his way of seeking you, namely, from love, saying, *Saw ye him whom my soul loveth? tell him that I am sick of love.* O! what think ye, what love ye of Christ? Again,

4. *What think ye of Christ?* That is, What *esteem* ye of Christ, or what estimate and valuation have you for him? This is plainly imported in the question here. Why might Christ say, ye Pharisees are shewing your ignorant esteem of the law, by all the questions you are proposing about it; but, *What think ye of Christ*, who is the Lord of the law, as well as David's son and Lord? You have an ignorantly high opinion of Moses; but, *What think ye of Christ?* what honour and respect do you put up him? Surely, *to them that believe he is precious*; or, as the word imports, he is HONOURABLE. Where there is true knowledge of Christ, there is faith; where there is faith, there is love; and where there is love, there is a high esteem. Some things, the more they known, the less they are esteemed: but it is not so with Christ; they that know him most, do esteem him most; God the Father knows him best, and he esteems him most highly, Isa. xlii. 1. Saints and angels in heaven know him next best, and how they esteem him, you may see, Rev. v. 8, 10, 11, 12. The more that any on earth knows him, the more do they esteem him; and only these that do not know him, do not esteem him, 1 Cor. i. 21,—24. They that are best judges, think highly of Christ. What judge ye, what esteem have ye of him? There is a fourfold lodging or room that the esteem of Christ hath in the souls of them that duly esteem him.

(1.) In their *intellective* faculty; that is, in their understanding this esteem lodges, saying, O! *I determine to know nothing but Christ!* O Sirs, if a man had the knowledge of all the universities of the world concentrated in him, and yet know not Christ, he is but a poor silly sot. Paul, brought up at the feet of Gamaliel, had a great deal of knowledge, and human literature; but whenever he came to know Christ, O, says he, *I count all but dung for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord.*

(2.) In their *elective* faculty; that is, in their choice does this esteem lodge. O they that esteem Christ, they select and single him out for a Head and Husband, with whom they resolve to live and die, saying, *Whom have I in heaven but thee? and there is none upon the earth that I desire besides thee.*

(3.) In their *profecutive* faculty; that is, in their affections does this esteem lodge; these do ardently and vehemently pursue after him. As nothing can satisfy a hungry man but food, so nothing satisfies such a soul but Christ; hence proceeds their industry in the use of means and ordinances.

(4.) In their *retentive* faculty; that is, in their memory will this esteem also lodge; while their esteem of him makes them remember him, and their meditation of him to be sweet: *When I remember thee upon my bed, and meditate on thee in the night-watches, my soul shall be satisfied as with marrow and fatness, and my mouth shall praise thee with joyful lips, Psalm lxxiii. 5, 6.* What we love and esteem, will have a lodging in our minds and thoughts. And where does the strain of our thoughts and meditations run? is, no doubt, implied in this question, *What think ye of Christ?* What room do you give him in your heart and thoughts? Now, these four particulars, namely, 1. What *know* ye; 2. What *believe* ye; 3. What *love* ye; 4. What *esteem* ye of Christ? are here implied.

3dly, The *third* think here proposed was, to shew the import of this question *formally* considered, with respect to the *quality* of the act. I have shewed what may be implied in this question, with relation to the object, and also the act of thinking: now, the interrogative particle *what*, pointing at the *quality* of this act, may furnish us with some further thoughts concerning the import of the question *formally* considered. It is the *what* in the text that now I am specially upon; and besides the general, *What* is your opinion of Christ? *What* is your judgment about Christ? There is a four-fold *what* here implied.

1. What *good* do you think of him? you Pharisees think much good of yourselves: who but you, and your righteousness, your alms, your sacrifices, your temple, your zeal for Moses, and the law? but, *what think ye of Christ?* Is he no more in your view than a mortal son of a mortal man? no wonder then, in this case, you think little good of him. Can you ascend no
higher

higher in your contemplation to apprehend him as the immortal Son of the immortal God; the eternal Son of the eternal Father: the righteousness of God, the gift of God, the true sacrifice, the true temple, the antitype of all the types, the substance of all the shadows, the fulness of all the prophecies and promises? What! do you think him good for nothing, but to be despised, debased, and trampled upon! What good do you think of him?

2. What *glory* do you think to be in him? Do you not darken his glory, when you look upon him only to be the *son of David*, and not also to be the *Lord of David*, and the *Lord of glory*, the *root and offspring of David*; not only the *offspring of David*, as man; but the *root of David*, as God? What think ye of him as the glory of God, and the God of glory, bringing in a dispensation much more glorious than that of Moses, *which glory was to be done away?* 2 Cor. iii. 7, 8, 9. Christ, as the *Sent of God*, being anointed with the Spirit for that end. *If the ministration of death, written and engraven on stones, was glorious,—how shall not the ministration of the Spirit be rather glorious? If the ministration of condemnation be glorious, much more does the ministration of righteousness exceed in glory.* And, what glory do you think to be in Christ, who is the glory of all this glory? Do you see Christ to be thus glorious, and me to be the Christ? Though now, might he say, this glory is under a vail of flesh, a vail of exinanition and humiliation; yet this mean appearance that I am making now, as if I were no more but a frail mortal man, was clearly foretold to you by the prophets concerning Christ, even that he should be a *man*, and a *man of sorrows*: can you see nothing of my glory and excellency under this vail? Is there no glory in the sun, because there is a cloud betwixt you and it?

3. What *use* do you think he is of? for, if he were only the son of David, he could be of no great usefulness to a perishing world of sinners: but, do you think and consider, that herein is the mystery of divine grace? *God so loved the world, that he sent his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth on him might not perish, but have everlasting*

everlasting life. If the brazen serpent, which was but a type of Christ, was of use to the stung Israelites, what think you of Christ? can any thing in the world be so useful to sinners as Christ? Of what use is the law, whereof you are boasting? it is but a *dead letter*, a killing word, a sentence of condemnation, a death summons, a dead warrant against them, without Christ, who is the *end of the law for righteousness.* Who, but Christ, can reconcile God to man, and ingratiate man with God? Who but he, can fulfil the law, and satisfy justice for them, pay their debts, heal their diseases, justify, sanctify, and save them, vanquish sin, death, and hell for them, and at last raise the mouldered carcase from corruption to incorruption, and invest it with a state of everlasting glory in the highest heaven, with *fulness of joy, and pleasures for evermore at his right-hand?* Is he an useless Christ to you, though he fills *all in all*, and alone can give abundant satisfaction to the immortal soul, whereas all things else are but dry and empty without him, and leave men destitute? Oh! dry means, dry ministers, dry ordinances, dry sacraments, dry sermons, and dry prayers, if Christ be away! Oh! dry breasts, if he be not the milk; dry branches, if he be not the sap; dry clouds, dry wells, if he be not the water! O what use think ye he is for? what work and service have ye for him?

4. What *worth* do you think he is of? Your thoughts are employed, might Christ say, how to tempt me with questions about the law, undervaluing that Lord God that gave the law, and that now is come in the person of the Messiah to fulfil the law; and is he unworthy to have a room in your thoughts? or what worth do you think him of? If you judge rightly and think duly of him, you will find he hath more real worth than all the world beside: for, put all the creatures in heaven and earth in one scale, and Christ in another, you will find them all to be lighter than vanity. This is plain, if you consider, that when all the world of men, and angels, and creatures were weighed in the balance with divine justice, they were found too light to counterpoise it, or give satisfaction to it; all they together could not make up the
full

full sum or value that should satisfy that justice: it cost more to redeem a soul, than all that they were worth; *The redemption of the soul is precious, and ceases for ever,* says the Psalmist. But Christ, having *unsearchable riches*, is a mass of treasure big enough for the purpose; and therefore, when he was laid in the balance with infinite justice, he was found of sufficient weight to poise it, without any creature's help to hold down the scale: nay, *He looked, and there was none to help, none to uphold; therefore his own arm brought salvation. And he trode the wine-press alone, and of the people there were none with him,* Isa. lxiii. 3, 5. Who, among the creatures, could go thorow conquering and to conquer, as Christ did, when he had heaven, earth, and hell to grapple with? What think ye of Christ then? what worth do you think he is of?

Upon the whole, before I leave this point, let me ask these two questions, to bring home this one, concerning what worth do you think Christ is of.

The first question is, *What PRICE would you buy him at, if you were to buy him?* Surely, if you had a due thought of Christ, and a discovery of the Pearl, you would, for joy, sell your *all* to buy it, Matth. xiii. 44, 45, 46. And when all is done, you would see, your *all* to be nothing at all, and the Pearl to be *all in all*. Indeed this treasure is so great, this Pearl is so precious, that it cannot be bought at any price; and therefore the price of it is, *no money, no price*; altogether free, Isa. lv. 1. *Ho every one that thirsteth, come ye to the waters; and he that hath no money, come ye, buy and eat; yea, come, buy wine and milk without money and without price.* To buy here, is to beg, and take freely; yet, if the question be, *What would you give for him, if he were to be bought?* Surely, if you knew your own need, and his infinite fulness and suitableness for you, the question will suggest some great thought of Christ. O a thousand worlds, if I had them, would I give for him! Yea, but there are some that hold him at a very low price, they would not give a groat or sixpence for Christ or his interest; they would not part with a shilling, or a crown, for Christ or his cause, Christ or his gospel;

nay, they will not part with a beastly lust for him, their idols and the world are of greater price to them. But there are others that know his worth better, and are willing to forsake all for him; *We have forsaken all, and followed thee*, Matth. xix. 27. The holy martyrs thought not their lives and their hearts-blood too dear for Christ; Rev. xii. 11. *They loved not their lives unto the death*; that is, they despised their lives in comparison of Christ; they exposed their bodies to horrible and painful deaths, their temporal estates to the spoil, *taking joyfully the spoiling of their goods*, and exposing their persons to all manner of shame and contempt for the cause of Christ. O but a soul that by faith apprehends the worth of Christ, will cheerfully and willingly give all for him; and having got Christ, will go away rejoicing, and think his bargain to be very good, very great!

The second question is, *What RATE would ye SELL him at, if ye were to sell him?* Judas sold him, and the high priests bought him for thirty pieces of silver, *A goodly price that I was prized at of them*, Zech. xi. 13. It is ironically spoken, *A boney price for a God-man; Cast it to the potters*, says the Lord. Men of darkened understandings, corrupt minds, and depraved affections, will sell Christ and his cause, Christ and a good conscience, for a trifle: yea, many betray his cause for some poor worldly consideration. O for such a spirit as I read of in the forty martyrs, that suffered under Lucinius, anno 300, that when Agricolaus his deputy, one of the devil's agents, set upon them several ways to draw them to deny Christ, and at last tempted them with an offer of money and preferment, they all cried out with one consent, Ὁ Αἰδίτης. ὦ Αἰδίτης, ἑπίματα δίδες τὰ ἀτμώματα: "O Eternity, Eternity! give us money that will last to eternity, and gold that will abide for ever, such as Christ can give us." They slighted that pitiful wealth which was current only in this beggarly world, when coming in competition with Christ and his durable riches; they would not sell Christ for a world, nay, not for a world of worlds. Oh! at what rate would you sell Christ! Surely, if you think duly and highly of him, you will buy him at any rate, but sell him

him at no rate. It is easy indeed to frame a passing thought, Oh! who would put Christ in the balance with any thing! But stay till a day of trial come, and the question be brought close home, *Now, will you quit Christ and his cause, or will you quit with father and mother, and wife and children, and estate and fortune, houses and yards, and life and all?* I imagine that would be a hard question; *Skin for skin, all that a man hath will he give for his life*; he will quit all before he quit with his life. Surely, if Christ be your life, you would quit all other lives for him; a natural life, a temporal life, a life of pleasure, a life of honour, a life of ease and worldly accommodations; and if you think much of him, there is some life you have quit for him already, at least in part, and in desire and endeavour, namely, a life of sin, a life of self, a life of legal righteousness, that *the life you live may be a life of faith on the Son of God*. Now, I suppose, all these *whats* are imported in the question, 1. What *good* do you think of him? 2. What *glory* do you think to be in him? 3. What *use* do you think he is for? 4. What *worth* do you think he is of, when he is to be bought or sold? This question bears all these in its bosom, *What think ye of Christ?*

4thly, The *fourth* and *last* thing proposed upon the explication of the import of the question, was, to shew the import of it *subjectively* considered; or with respect to the persons that are the subjects thereof; or to whom the question is put, in the pronoun *YE*, *What think YE of Christ?* And under this consideration we may take a fourfold view of the question.

1. View it as it was put to the *Jews* in general, for so were these to whom Christ is here speaking: ye that are Jews, *What think ye of Christ?* Ye that are the people of whom concerning the flesh, Christ came, for (as ye own concerning Christ) he is the son of David; and ye are the people to whom he and his gospel behoved first to come; for, *salvation is of the Jews*, John iv. 22. Ye are his own people; and, *What think ye of Christ?* Alas! *He came to his own, and his own received him not*; they thought nothing of him when he came: and therefore, as Paul says, Acts xxviii. 28. *The salvation of God is sent*

to the Gentiles ; and he adds, *they will hear it*. Now, of consequence, Christ and the gospel, and this question with it, comes to you, Gentiles, saying, *What think ye of Christ?* Oh! will ye think nothing of him? or, will ye make Paul a liar, who said, ye should hear it? or rather, will ye give the lie to the Spirit of God? Nay, whatever the most part do, yet *as many as were ordained to eternal life* will be brought to think highly of Christ, by getting the saving knowledge, faith, love, and esteem of him.

2. View the question as it was put to the *Pharisees*, a set of hypocrites and self-righteous persons: ye that are Pharisees, *What think ye of Christ?* Ye are strict observers of the letter of the law, and think much of your long prayers, your giving alms of all that you possess, your fasting twice a-week, your being no open drunkards, whoremongers, extortioners, nor like this or that publican; but while you think so much of yourselves and your own righteousness, and think nothing of Christ, *publicans and harlots go into the kingdom before you*; therefore, what think ye of Christ the son of David, the Lord of David, the Lord of the law, by whom alone *everlasting righteousness is brought in*, answering the spirit, and not the letter of the law only? The question then comes to be proposed to all of the same kidney with these Pharisees: Ye that are *hypocrites*, and *self-justifying* persons, *What think ye of Christ?* Ye that are thinking, O you are an honest man, you have always been a good neighbour, just in your dealing, civil in your carriage, and so you fancy yourself to be *touching the law blameless*; what, man! are you content to be judged by the law? then to Cæsar let us go; to the law let us go: but only look the law broad in the face; look not only to the out-side of the law, like a man looking only to the back and out-side of a looking-glass, or to the frame and edge of it, where he does not see himself; but look to the in-side of the looking-glass of the law, to the spirituality of it; set your face to the face of the glass, and you will see what a deformed filthy creature you are, so you will find it cursing you to your face, and cursing you to hell for every wicked thought, as well as action,

saying,

saying, *Cursed is every one that continues not in all things written in the book of the law to do them.* Therefore, you have need to think again, and think better than ever you did, about a law-justifying righteousness; and to think there is need of this question, *What think ye of Christ?*

3. View the question as it was put to the *Sadducees*; for it seems they were combined with the Pharisees here against Christ, if you compare ver. 23. and 34. Now, these Sadducees were a set of people that denied the immortality of the soul, the resurrection of the body, the existence of spirits and angels, Acts xxiii. 8.: In a word, they were half atheists, if not wholly so; like the graceless wits of our day, that call themselves *Free-thinkers*: Well, says Christ, *What think ye of Christ? whose son is he?* If you could view him as not only David's son, but David's Lord and God; and as the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, *not the God of the dead, but of the living*; would you persist in these atheistical tenets, concerning the resurrection of the body, the being of souls? No, no. The question then is applicable to all that sort of people: ye that are Atheists, Deists, and damnable erroneous Free-thinkers, Oh! *what think ye of Christ?* No doubt, with Herod and his men of war, you set him at nought! But, Oh! will you think again, and recal your thoughts? let them fix upon Christ a while, and you shall find all the truths of the Bible cleared and vindicated, by him who is the truth itself; and that this eternal Son of God is sent from the Father, of purpose to confirm them by his doctrine, life, death, and resurrection. Again,

4. View the question, with respect to its general design, which is (together with all other scriptures) the *profit* of all to whom it comes; for their *reproof, correction, or instruction in righteousness*, 2 Tim. iii. 16.; and for convincing of sinners, or confirming of saints: and so it comes to all and every one of us, ministers or people, high and low, rich and poor; *What think ye of Christ?* And here I have occasion to look round about me, and ask the question at all and every one that hears me; and indeed we may begin first at ourselves.

O we that are MINISTERS, *What think we of Christ?* Is he the Son and Lord of David, the eternal Son of God? Surely we cannot think, or speak, or preach too much of Christ. It is our honour, if we can say, *We preach not ourselves, but Christ Jesus the Lord;* and that to us, *who are the least of all saints* (may some of us say) *should this grace be given, to preach among the Gentiles the unfearchable riches of Christ.* But, while we speak of Christ to others, what do we think of Christ ourselves? To be sure, if we do not think of Christ as we ought, we will not speak of Christ as we should. Christ in the heart, and Christ in the mouth, make right preaching. If any *preach Christ out of envy*, as the apostle says, *it is well that Christ is preached:* but as it must be but bungling work to such; so they would do well to consider, that the question is not, *What PREACH ye of Christ?* but, *What think ye of Christ?*—Again, O ye that are the PEOPLE, *What think ye of Christ?* Whatever be your state or condition, sex or quality, the question comes to you; and let none of you dare to neglect the pondering on it, when Christ himself is posing you with it, *What think ye of Christ?*—Ye that are MAGISTRATES, or in places of power, trust, and authority, *What think ye of Christ?* Are you employing your power for Christ, and his cause and interest?—Ye that are MASTERS, or MISTRESSES of families, *What think ye of Christ?* Is it the language of your soul, *As for me and my house, we will serve the Lord?* Are you desiring, with Abraham, to command your children, and your household after you, to *keep the ways of the Lord*, and praying for them, and instructing them in the knowledge of Christ?—Again, Ye that are CHILDREN under your parents, O! *What think ye of Christ? whose son is he?* Do you know him to be the son of David, and the Son of God too? And would it not be your great happiness, to be the sons and children of God in him? Your father and mother may die, and leave you, therefore it is your best to seek an interest in him to be your everlasting Father.—Ye that are SERVANTS, *What think ye of Christ?* Would you have him for your Master and Lord? Is it not your greatest honour to be his servants,

who

who is David's Lord? He that was David's son, was David's Master: and as David in Spirit called him LORD; so, should not all that is within you call him Lord? Serve your masters honestly; but let him who is the *Lord of lords* be a master above all masters to you.

—Ye that are **TRADESMEN**, *What think ye of Christ?* Have you no trading with heaven? Does your civil trade in a world take up all your thoughts? Surely, it is either an unlawful trade, or unlawfully used, that cannot consist with this Christian trade of giving the chief of your thoughts to him, that is the *Chief among ten thousand*, Song v. 10.—Ye that are **HUSBANDMEN**, *What think ye of Christ?* Do you think more of your ploughs and oxen, or corn and cattle, and barns and goods, than of glorious Christ? Do you not know, whether you be tenants, feuars, or freeholders, that you are tenants to him, and hold your all of him? Are you more taken up in thinking of a great crop, or a good harvest, than of him who is the *Lord of the harvest*, both in a natural and spiritual sense, and Lord of all that you have?—Ye that are mean **COTTERS**, *What think ye of Christ?* Wo's me, does your cote-house, and your cow, and your small yard, ly nearer your heart than precious Christ? Oh! if you were acquainted with communion with him, you would find a mean cottage with Christ better than a princely palace without him.—Ye that are poor **BEGGARS**, *What think ye of Christ?* To the *poor the gospel is preached*; to you is Christ and his unfearchable riches offered: but I fear there are some of you who think more of a half-penny, than you think of Christ: everlasting poverty and misery will be your portion, if your thoughts be not changed and renewed. You come to communion-occasions only to beg alms, not knowing that then you are at the *beautiful gate* of the temple, where you might get an alms that might enrich you for ever. You have the art of begging from men, and from door to door, but perhaps you never think of begging at Christ's door: Oh! will you begin to think, and to think of Christ, before the door of mercy be shut!—Again, ye that are **RICH** and **WEALTHY** in the world, *What think ye of Christ?*

Hath he given you riches, think you, to steal away your hearts from him, or rather to improve them for, and consecrate them to his honour, and for the good of others, especially of the household of faith? Men may court your favour, but you are to be pitied, as poor miserable wretches, if you have your portion only in this life: though you had all the gold of Ophir, without Christ you have nothing but a shadow; you are destitute of the true substance.—You that are WISE, MIGHTY, or NOBLE, *What think ye of Christ?* May it not startle you a little, that he hath said, *Not many wise after the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble are called; but God hath chosen the foolish, weak, base, and despicable things of the world:* you have no reason to despair, for he hath not said *not any* of them; but yet you have reason to think where you are, for he hath said *not many* of them: and indeed, as an evidence of this, look to the great men of our day, you will see, that the generality of the nobility and gentry of Scotland and England, they think very little of Christ.—You that are SCHOLARS and STUDENTS, *What think ye of Christ?* What will all the wisdom and literature, liberal arts and sciences, and best accomplishments in the world avail you, without Christ? They will qualify you to be more eminent servants to the devil, and his interest, if you learn not Christ together with them. You may be students of Latin, Greek, and Hebrew: students of philosophy, astronomy, astrology, geography, and mathematics; yea, and students of divinity too: and yet lose all your pains, if you do not study Christ.—Ye that are IGNORANT and ILLITERATE persons, *What think ye of Christ?* It may be you cannot read the Bible; you was never at a school; your parents died when you were young, or else were poor, and could not, or graceless and would not set you to the school; or if you can read, that is all: you know not so much as the first principles of the doctrine of Christ, and can hardly tell whose son he is. If you could be brought this day to think highly of Christ, then *should you know, and follow on to know the Lord.* Oh! neglect not henceforth the means of the knowledge of Christ! if you learn of him, he will make

you wiser than the rest of the world, for as far behind as you are; even wise unto salvation.—Ye that are OLD men and woman, *What think ye of Christ?* How many thousands and millions of thoughts have you bestowed upon the devil, the world, your lusts, and idols in your time, which would have been better bestowed upon Christ, and the concerns of your eternal salvation? And now, that death, judgment, and eternity, are hard at hand; Ah! how can you think of going down to the grave, and in to an everlasting state, without being in case to answer this question to purpose, *What think ye of Christ?*—Ye that are YOUNG men and women, *What think ye of Christ?* Ye are now in the flower of your age; Oh! shall not Christ have the flower of your thoughts, that according to the Father's promise to him, he may have the *dew of his youth*, by your dedicating to him the dew of your youth, and fleeing all youthful lusts?—Ye that are CHILDREN and little-ones, lads and lasses, boys and girls, capable to think, O! *What think ye of Christ?* Alas! my dear children, (to say a word to you) you may see what ill hearts you have, that make you think more of little plays and trifles, nignays and butterflies, than you think of Christ: you mind any thing sooner than your *Creator or Redeemer*, whom God calls you to *remember in the days of your youth*. Therefore, after this, when you are playing, will you think more of praying? for God says, *I love them that love me, and them that seek me early shall find me*: and think more of reading the Bible, like young Timothy, who *from a child knew the holy scriptures*.

In a word, if there be any persons here who think I have not touched at their case, let them know, that the question is to all and every one of you, *What think ye of Christ?* Oh graceless world! How unworthily do you think of Christ? The covetous man thinks more of a small piece of money than of Christ, like Demas. Ambitious men think more of a hat than of Christ; like Haman, or as Saul, who said to Samuel, *Honour me before the people*. The voluptuous man thinks more of a base lust, than of Christ. The drunkard thinks more of a hearty cup, than of Christ. The glutton thinks

more of a hearty meal, than of Christ. The proud man thinks more of himself, than of Christ. Pride of righteousness thinks more of prayers, and attendance on ordinances, than of Christ. Pride of grace thinks more of a good frame, than of Christ. Pride of wisdom thinks more of a witticism, or of a fine discourse, than of Christ. Pride of beauty thinks more of a skin-deep complexion, than of Christ. Pride of bravery thinks more of a fine suit of clothes, than of Christ, though the sly sheep wore it on its back before them. Behold how Christ is vilified and undervalued in the world!

But, O BELIEVER! *What think ye of Christ?* Surely, if you be a gracious person, Christ will be to you a precious person; and you will wonder at the folly and madness of the world, that sets every thing above Christ, in their thoughts and esteem. Why, they are ignorant of Christ, and ignorant of themselves: if they were convinced of their sin and misery, they would think much of a Saviour and Redeemer; if they knew their disease, they would think much of such a physician to heal them; if they knew their nakedness, they would think much of such a garment to clothe them; if they knew their pollution, they would think much of such a fountain to wash them; if they knew their deep arrears to divine justice, and bankrupt state, they would think much of such a Surety to pay their debt. Surely, if they knew, they would not thus despise the Lord of glory. However, be it known to all and every one of you, that this question is put to you; and you ought to put it to yourselves, before God, by discovering what you are, and where you stand.—And now, having opened the import of the question, in the several branches of it, I proceed next to,

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

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

because without *right thoughts of Christ*, there is no *right thoughts of God*; and without the knowledge of Christ, there is no true knowledge of God. God is an invisible God, and Christ only *is the image of the invisible God*, Col. i. 15. There are three ways to know, see, and comprehend God: one is, by the creatures he hath made; *The invisible things of God are clearly seen from the creation of the world, even his eternal power and Godhead*, Rom. i. 20. Another is by the scriptures, for they make God known: but the third and only saving way of knowing and apprehending God, is by Christ. Now, the knowledge of God, that we have by the creatures, is like the knowledge we have of a man by his workmanship, which he hath wrought: if the workmanship be rare and excellent, such as hath required great art and strength, then we conceive the man that hath done it, hath been a wise man, a strong man, and the like, according to the nature of the workmanship: so, when we know God by the creatures, we conceive that the God that hath made them, must be a great God, a wise God, a powerful God. But next, the knowledge that we have of God by the scriptures; I mean, the literal knowledge, is like that knowledge that one gets of a famous learned man, by reading what he writes; if in his writing he hath discovered much learning, vast sense, and solid judgment, accordingly we conceive him to be a sensible judicious man: so, by reading the word, we conceive of God's excellency, as we do of a man by his writing; but the knowledge of God, that we get by Christ, is like that knowledge which one gets of a king, by having seen his image, or rather his son, who is as like him as he can look. Now, Christ is like the Father, and so truly and really his image, that though blind Arians cannot see the essential glory of the Father in him, yet he says to Philip, John xiv. 6. *He that hath seen me, hath seen the Father*. Now, in the book of the creature, we may see the being of God; in the book of the scripture, the will of God: but above all these, we have another book written, as it were, with the rays of the sun, even, CHRIST, whom we may call a book, for he is still ἡ ἀβύσσος τῆς θεότητος.

the Word of God, Rev. xix. 13.; but he is not made with ink and paper, he is a living book, a living picture and representative of the Father; the *brightness of his glory, and the express image of his person*, Heb. i. 3. The saving knowledge of God is by Christ, John i. 18. and in Christ, 2 Cor. iv. 6. And again, hence,

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

3. This question, *What think ye of Christ?* is put, because it is the *best rule of self-examination*, seeing, as mens thoughts of Christ are, so is their state; as *men think in their heart, so are they* Prov. xxii. 9. If a man be *risen with Christ*, then his thoughts and *affections are set on things above, where Christ sits on the right-hand of God*, Col. iii. 1, 2. If you be Christians indeed, then
you

you have *Christ in you, the hope of glory*, Col. i. 27.; and if Christ be in you, he will have a high room in your thought and esteem: and therefore it is laid down as the best rule of examination, 2 Cor. xiii. 5. *Examine yourselves, whether you be in the faith; prove yourselves; know ye not your own selves, how that Christ Jesus is in you, except you be reprobates, ἀδίκημοί, UNAPPROVED, OR REJECTED? If any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his*, Rom. viii. 9. *Now, they that have the Spirit, do mind the things of the Spirit, the things of God, and particularly the CHRIST of God.*

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

have ye of his grace? and what hope of his glory? All such questions may be answered with the answer of this, *What think ye of Christ?*

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

6. This question, *What think ye of Christ?* is put, because our thoughts are but lost, if they be not bestowed upon him. Till we be brought to think of Christ duly, all our thoughts are but lost thoughts, and vain thoughts; O Jerusalem, wash thine heart from wickedness, how long shall vain thoughts lodge within thee? The Lord sees the thoughts of men to be but vanity: our thoughts are like birds flying from mountain to mountain, and skipping from place to place; and like the children running after butterflies, or such like trifles, their pains are lost, and so are our thoughts lost, while they are not terminate upon Christ.

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

8. This question is put to us, *What think ye of Christ?* because

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

9. This question, *What think ye of Christ?* is put, because thus you may come to understand what are *his thoughts of you*. It is true, *His thoughts are not our thoughts, nor his ways our ways; for, as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are his thoughts higher than our thoughts*: and hence he may have thoughts of mercy towards a poor soul, that thinks there is nothing but wrath in his heart against it. But this I say, that as to your knowing and understanding of his thoughts towards you; as, on the one hand, a man, in a natural state, cannot have high, believing, and becoming thoughts of Christ, and so cannot conclude that Christ hath any favourable thoughts of him, while he remains thus in unbelief and despising of Christ; nay, he may
know

know and understand, if he remain in that state, thoughtless of Christ, and disregarding him, that *Christ will come in flaming fire, and take vengeance on him*, 2 Thes. i. 7, 8. : So, on the other hand, the man that hath got such discoveries of Christ, as to create high, spiritual, and elevated thoughts of Christ, he may, from thence understand, that Christ thinks well of him, and that his thoughts towards him are *thoughts of peace, and not of evil, to give him an expected end*. It is true, Christ's thoughts of the believer, are not of a fleeting nature, up and down, high and low, as the believer's thoughts of him are ; nay, Christ's thoughts are unchangeably the same : but, when the believer's thoughts of Christ are raised, then he is in the best case to know and understand Christ's loving thoughts towards him. Why, even as a fountain may be known by the streams, so it is here ; our knowledge, faith, love, and esteem of Christ, are but streams that flow from Christ's kind heart towards us ; *We love him, because he first loved us* ; we think of him, because he first thinks of us. And, therefore, by what we think of Christ, we may know what he thinks of us : if you think honourably of him, you may thence know he thinks favourably of you ; if you think much of him, you may know he thinks much of you. O ! may a believer say, I have reason to think much good of him ; for, he is *fairer than the sons of men*, the spotless Lamb of God : but he hath reason to think much ill of me ; for, I am all black and deformed, like hell and the devil. But, I will tell you, believer, that all his thoughts of you make you to be in him, what he thinks you to be in him, however deformed you are in yourselves, and see yourselves to be ; yet, I say, as his thoughts make things to be, (for he but thought there should be a world, and there was a world ; whenever it was his mind that it should be, then it was ; and whatever he thought it to be, that it was, according to his thought ;) and as his thoughts of you make you to be in him, what you are in him : so, if you think him *fair*, and *altogether lovely*, he is not behind with you, for he thinks you *fair* too ; hence he says to the spouse, who was admiring his beauty, *Thou art*

art all fair, my love, there is no spot in thee, Song iv. 7. And he doth not say any thing, but what he thinks, his words express his thoughts; for, *he cannot lye, who is the strength of Israel*. Now, believer, if you cannot think, or believe, that you are altogether fair in him, because you see yourself altogether filthy in yourself; know, that if you saw yourself to be altogether fair in yourself, there would be no need of, or room for believing that you are all fair in him. Hence he hath left deformities about you, that there may be room for faith: therefore, let the feeling of your deformity make you humble; but let it not hinder your faith, which must not stand upon feeling, but must act contrary to it upon Christ's word: for, if you ground your faith upon what you feel in yourself, you will never believe what Christ says concerning your being *all fair*, and your being *made the righteousness of God in him*, 2 Cor. v. 21. If your faith then can act so as to raise your thoughts of Christ as altogether lovely, fair, and spotless, you have ground to conclude, by the same act of faith, that he hath high thoughts of you, as being all fair and spotless in him, whatever deformity you feel in yourself. Christ is infinitely more to you, believer, than you believe him to be: but, whatever you believe him to be, you may be sure he is that to you; for, faith's seeing, and having, is all one, even as believing is explained by receiving, and receiving by believing; *As many as received him, to them gave he power [OR PRIVILEGE] to become the sons of God, even to them who believe on his name*, John i. 12. What you believe then, you receive; and what you receive, you have; and what you have in him, you are in him: having beauty, and riches, and righteousness in him; you are beautiful, rich, and righteous: and consequently, when you believingly think he is all fair and glorious, you may know he thinks you are all fair and glorious in him: and he thinks no more of you than what you really are in him.—The question then is put, because you may know, by what you think of Christ, what Christ thinks of you.

10. This question, *What think ye of Christ?* is put, because we can never think *too much of him*, who is the

God-man, David's Son, and David's Lord; being God as well as man. O what a glorious object of our contemplation is here! You may think too much of yourselves, and your own righteousness; but you cannot think too much of Christ, and his righteousness: yea, when you think any thing of yourself, and your righteousness, you think too much of it; but when you think as much as you can of Christ, and his righteousness, you think too little of him.—You may think too much of creatures, but you cannot think too much of Christ. Yea, you may think too much of angels, as the apostle John did, when he *fell down to worship towards the feet of the angel*, Rev. xxii. 8. To think of the nature of angels, with that inward reverence and adoration which we are to have when we think of Christ, would be idolatry; and to think of Christ, with the same frame of heart as we do of angels, would be profaneness. Thus we may think too highly and reverently of angels; but we cannot think of Christ too highly, too reverently; nor can we think too much of him, who is *the Lord of angels*, and whom we are to *honour even as we honour the Father*.—These are the reasons of the question.

IV. The *fourth* general head proposed, was, To make *Application* of the whole. And it may be applied for the following uses. 1. For *Information*. 2. For *Conviction*. 3. For *Trial*. 4. For *Lamentation*. 5. For *Exhortation*. And, 6. For *Direction*.

First, It may be applied for *Information*, in these and the like lessons following.

1. Hence we may learn, seeing the great question in the Christian Catechism is, *What think ye of Christ?* then the sum of Christian knowledge lies in this one word, *viz.* CHRIST. It is not in Christ absolutely considered, by what he is in himself; but in God relatively considered, by what he is to us, namely, in Christ: therefore, I observe, the question is not, *What think ye of God?* but, *What think ye of CHRIST?* For, as God out of Christ stands in no relation to us sinners, but that of an *enemy*, and a *consuming fire*; so the nature, essence, and immensity of God, and what he is in himself, is not
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the great Christian question; but rather, what he is to us, and so what he is in Christ. All the saving manifestations of God to his people in scripture were still, not of God, absolutely and essentially, in what he was in himself, and in his nature; but relatively, in what he was to them: and so it was always in Christ. Thus, when he came to Abraham, he said, *I am thy shield, and thy exceeding great reward*, Gen. xv. 1. *I am thy God, and the God of thy seed; which seed was Christ*, Gal. iii. 16. in whom that covenant and promise was established to Abraham and his offspring. And when God manifested himself to the patriarchs that came of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, his ordinary way was to make himself known upon that ground of the new covenant established in Christ, *Abraham's seed*: hence when he came to them, he used to say to them, *I am the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob*; that is, he manifested himself to them, not absolutely, by what he was in his nature; but relatively, by what he was to them in Christ the promised seed.

If we begin to dive into that question, *What think ye of God?* we may soon lose ourselves, and come to the philosopher's demand of a day to answer that question, and then a week, and then a month, and then tell it is impossible to answer it: nay, we ought not to be curious in searching into the nature of God, lest we get a dash; for, human philosophy cannot reach it; yea, I doubt if angelical wisdom can. It is the only pleasant, saving, and profitable enquiry, to study this question, *What think ye of Christ?* Here we find what God is to us. To enquire what God is in himself, absolutely and essentially, is no saving or profitable enquiry. What profit is it for a man, who lives under the north-pole, and sees not the sun for one half of the year, though he should count the course of the sun all that time that he sees it not? Or, what profit were it for a man to go and count what rent the king of Morroco or emperor of China draws every year, and he gets none of it? As foolish is it for us to begin and study what God is absolutely in himself, and not what he is relatively to us; therefore the question is not, *What think ye of God?* but

What think ye of CHRIST? And this, by the bye, shews the difference that there is between learned fools and wise Christians; why, the learned fools seek to know and comprehend what God is; what is this mystery of the Trinity, and the like; and there he loses himself: he seeks to know what God is himself, and not what he is to him. But the poor Christian is herein wiser than that learned clerk, for all his wit; for the Christian studies Christ, and so knows what God is to him, better than all the learned Rabbies with their curious speculations: though yet the poor soul may otherwise be very ignorant and illiterate, yet it is *wise unto salvation*, because he knows Christ, and *Christ is made of God to him wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, and redemption*: and when he knows Christ, he is upon the surest and safest way to know God; for he sees God in Christ, and God related to him in Christ; for Christ is our relation as God-man, Mediator. And indeed, Sirs, to believe in Christ, is to believe God's relation to us, and God reconciled to us: for, when we look to Christ, we see God in him; and when we see God in him, we see that he is reconciled in him to us, and well-pleased in him with us; 2 Cor. v. 19. *God is in Christ reconciling the world to himself.* Matth. iii. 17. *This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well-pleas'd.* I own, indeed, a man may be a believer, and yet apprehend God to be his enemy; but then he is not believing, he is not thinking of Christ by faith: it is an unbelieving thought he hath then of God; for a believing thought of Christ would give him another thought of God, even as a Friend and Father in him. This then, I hope, is an useful inference, That the sum of Christian knowledge is Christ.

2. Hence see what is the *best matter for meditation*, and the *best rule for self-examination*. Here is the most noble subject of meditation, namely, to think of Christ; and here is the most excellent rule for examination, namely, to ask our souls that question, *What think we of Christ?* Meditation and self-examination are duties much neglected among us; they are spiritual exercises, directly cross and opposite to our vain, wandering, idle, and unfixed hearts. A man will rather go betwixt the
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flits of a plough from morning to evening, than travel betwixt these two duties for one half hour, though yet they are like the flits of that plough by which the fallow-ground of the heart must be plowed up; but when the thoughts begin to come in betwixt these two flits of meditation and self-examination, behold on a sudden (to speak it in broad Scots) they *quit the plough, and run away with the harrows*. No doubt, you will know this from sad experience, that your thoughts are in this matter like wild vicious horses, running mad here and there through the fields, without keeping any road, or observing any rule; but here is the best matter and rule, both for regulating our thoughts in meditation and self-examination.—As for *meditation*, the best way is to think of Christ: why, you may think upon a promise, but out of Christ you will find no comfort in it; for, *all the promises are Yea and Amen in him*; and so you will not find it your own, but by looking to Christ: yea, you may think upon God, but out of Christ you will find no comfort in him; *I remembered God, and was troubled*, Psa. lxxvii. 3.: but the antidote against that trouble is believing thoughts of Christ; therefore says Christ to his disciples, *Let not your hearts be troubled; ye believe in God, believe also in me*, John xiv. 1. If you think upon the law, you will find there you are drowned in debt, both to the command and curse, till once ye look to Christ, the *end of the law for righteousness*. If you think upon your duties that God calls you to, you will find them a heavy task, till once you look to Christ, and then you will find his *yoke is easy*, and his *commands are not grievous*.—Again, as to *self-examination*, the best rule here is to say to your souls, *What think ye of Christ?* They are but proud self-conceited persons that do not think highly of Christ, and God approves them not; 2 Cor. x. 17, 18. *He that glories*, says the apostle, *let him glory in the Lord: for not he that commends himself is approved, but whom the Lord commends*; intimating, that they that glory only in the Lord, they discommend themselves, and are commended and approved of God; but they that do not glory in the Lord, nor think highly of him, they commend themselves, but are dis-
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mended and disapproved of God; yea, they deceive themselves; *If any man think himself to be something, when he is nothing, he deceives himself*, Gal. vi. 3. Self-conceit is self-deceit: and as they are self-deceivers who are self-exalters; they think not much of Christ, who think much of themselves: and so, to enquire what you think of Christ, is the best way to find yourself out, what you are in state or frame. You may, by this rule, know how to judge of your own thoughts: you may think of a thousand good things; you may think of sermons, you may think of death, judgment, and eternity; but though you may think seriously on these subjects, yet the rule whereby to judge of the rectitude of your thoughts about them is here: do they lead you to high thoughts of Christ, in whom alone we can think of death, without horror; judgment, without terror; and eternity, without fear or dread?

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

4. Hence we may see, what is the *great end and design of a gospel-ministry*, namely, to discover Christ, and remove the prejudices of people's minds against him; to rectify their mistakes about him; and to fill them with a high opinion of them. The sum of a gospel minister's business, is, to commend his Master, saying, *What think ye of Christ?* and that both in his preaching, and praying, and catechising, and visiting. The whole of their doctrine and practice is, as it were, a voice preaching Christ. If they preach the *law*, and its curses and threatenings against Christless and impenitent sinners, it is to *lead them to Christ*, and to drive them to the *city of refuge*. If they preach *faith*, they make Christ the *author and finisher*, as well as the *object* of it. If they preach *repentance*, they make Christ, as exalted by the right-hand of God *to be a Prince and Saviour to give repentance*, the fountain of it; and Christ crucified, viewed by faith, to be the immediate root of it. If they preach *duties and new obedience*, they make Christ the ALPHA and OMEGA of it.—Ministers may indeed speak much of Christ in their sermons, and yet not preach Christ: As for example, If one should preach of Christ mainly as a Law-giver, to be obeyed, and little or nothing of Christ as a Law-fulfiller, to be believed in, and served from love, because of his having saved us from the yoke of the law; for, a covenant of life and death, upon doing or not doing, may be preached, and called the gospel of Christ, in a mistake, while it is only the law that is preached, and not *Christ, the end of the law for righteousness*: and you may know it by this among other things, the tendency of such old-covenant doctrine, is to lead men to this question, not, *What think ye of Christ?* but, *What think ye of yourselves?* and

and, *What are you doing, that you may have eternal life?* Why, the man begins to think, God is standing upon some doing terms yet with him; and therefore, in order to life, he must do so and so: thus he is led to himself, and not to Christ. But gospel-doctrine tends to lead a man wholly out of himself, and wholly in to Christ; for, whatever be the text, the strain of gospel-doctrine is, *What think ye of Christ?* It is not the design of gospel-ministers to commend themselves, but Christ. There is a set of ministers, say some, that set up themselves above others, and study only to commend themselves, to the disparagement of all others, as if none but they were gospel-ministers; but, my friends, if any man's concern for Christ's cause and interest, or for his Maker's glory, shall commend him, he needs not think strange though the world of Pharisees envy him, as they did Christ himself, when his doctrine and life commended him. I will tell you what commendation a gospel-minister hunts most after; it is that of Paul, 2 Cor. iii. 1, 2, 3. to have an *epistle commendatory in the hearts of hearers*, by the power of the Spirit of God accompanying the word, and leaving an impression there, that it is indeed the word of God, and not of men, and that God is in it of a truth; he would desire, with the same apostle, 2 Cor. iv. 2. to *commend himself, by the manifestation of the truth, to every man's conscience in the sight of God*. Let truth be nick-named and reproached, as it will, the evidence of truth will commend itself to the consciences of all the lovers thereof. Mean time, it is possible that a man may commend Christ, in order to commend himself as an evangelical preacher; for such a good work he is indeed commendable, but for such a bad end, it is to God only that he is accountable. But it is possible also to know if a man intend not himself by preaching Christ; for sometimes there is such a power and virtue attending the word, and such a smell and favour of heaven with the preacher, as carries a secret demonstration of his spirituality and purity of intention into the heart even of the carnal by-standers, let be these whom he hath enlightened with the spirit of discerning, to know the voice of *Christ from a stranger*.

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However, Sirs, think of ministers what ye will, the great question is, *What think ye of Christ?* Wo to us, if our only design be to bring people to say, *What think ye of such a minister, and what think ye of such a sermon?* If we make Christ a covert for raising our own applause, he can instantly command an angel to smite us, as he did Herod, and order us to be eaten up of worms, for not giving God the glory. Oh! what should ye think of us? though we magnify our office as ambassadors of Christ, yet, in ourselves, some of us are as frail, feeble, sinful pieces of dust as any of you; we are among the chief of sinners, as well as you; we need the blood and Spirit of Christ to justify and sanctify us, as well as you; let us decrease, but let Christ increase. If any of us be made instruments of good to your souls, let it engage you to think the more of Christ, that could work such a work by such weak and unlikely instruments: He puts the treasure in earthen vessels, that the *excellency of the power may be of God*, and not of us. Whatever honour God calls you to put upon them for their work's sake, yet if your esteem centre upon the minister, or his work, saying, *O I think much of such a minister, and I think much of such a sermon*, you need to begin to think better; for the grand question is, *What think ye of Christ?* It is indeed the best sermon that works the highest thoughts of Christ.

Secondly, The *second use* is for *conviction* and *reproof* to all those that are filled with unworthy and unbecoming thoughts of Christ, with ignorant and erroneous thoughts of him. Some have no thoughts of Christ at all; some that think of him, yet think nothing of him; some think little of him; some think hardly and harshly of him; some think meanly and basely of him: to speak of all the base and mean thoughts of Christ that the world is filled with, would be impossible. Oh! how basely do the Arians think of Christ, and his supreme Godhead! If I had not found it necessary to confine myself to the first branch of Christ's question here, *What think ye of Christ?* The other branch, namely, *Whose Son is he?* might have led me particularly to have treat-

ed the doctrine of Christ's Sonship, and eternal Godhead, and co-equality with the Father, in opposition to the damnable heresy, which some tell us is creeping in to Scotland, as well as it is raging in England and Ireland: I shall only say, that the question concerns them, as well as the Pharisees of old, *What think ye of Christ?* and, *Whose Son is he?* Oh! can they say no more than, with the Pharisees, that he is *the Son of David?* Then, *How does David in Spirit call him Lord?* And if he be David's Lord and God, how can he be so, and yet not co-equal with the Father? For we have not two Lords, or two God; *The Lord our God is one Lord;* therefore Christ, being Lord, must be One with the Father essentially: *Christ is the true God, and eternal life.* But I cannot now enlarge on this subject. Oh! may Arian doctors begin to read over the Christian catechism again, and learn to answer this question, *What think ye of Christ?*—Again, as Arians think nothing of his Godhead, but, as if it were, an inferior deity; so some, that pretend a greater respect to him, yet think but basely of him: Papists think nothing of *the imputation of his righteousness*; Socinians think nothing of *the sacrifice of his death*; Arminians think nothing of *the power of his grace*; Quakers think nothing of *his word*; Atheists think nothing of *his Spirit*; Deists think nothing of *his revelations*.—If we look out to the *world*, the Pagans have no thoughts of him at all: the Mahometants think him nothing but a great prophet at best, and inferior to Mahomet: the Jews think him nothing but an impostor, and that he is not the Christ, but only the *carpenter's son*; or, it may be, a *blasphemer*, that had a *devil*.—And, again, if we look in to the *church*, even the purest churches in this world, among which I would fain hope the poor church of Scotland hath not yet lost the vogue; yet, Oh! how many dark and confused notions; yea, unwarrantable and unworthy thoughts of Christ may be there discovered, even among these churches that are supposed to be pure, Christian, protestant, and reformed churches! It were endless, to speak of doctrinal and practical errors that swarm in the churches, whereby contempt is poured upon Christ and his doctrine,

trine, his truth, his gospel, and his yoke; his loving yoke of gospel-obedience. What low thoughts of Christ appear in the strain of doctrine, that tends to confound the old and new covenant, law and gospel, faith and works, without ridding marches duly betwixt Christ, and all his rivals and competitors, that seek to share with him in the glory of salvation-work! What low thoughts of Christ appear in that sort of practice, that consists either in a life of legal righteousness, or a life of open wickedness! What low thoughts of Christ, as our righteousness, appear from every thing that tends to lead sinners back to the law as a covenant of works! And what low thoughts of Christ, as our sanctification, appear from every thing that tends to dead sinners off from the law, as a rule of holiness! How is Christ, and his merit, and righteousness disesteemed, to the encouragement of self and self-righteousness! And, how is Christ, and his Spirit and grace disesteemed, to the encouragement of sin and licentiousness*! It is not my business to expose the nakedness of any: they are singular persons, that are helped to guard against all right-hand and left-hand extremes, so as to think no less of Christ as a Lord, than Christ as a Saviour; and to esteem a whole Christ, without setting up one part of Christ against another: but my work especially is, to strike at the root of all that disesteem of Christ, that takes place in the world, especially in the visible church. Whence is it, that the world thinks so little of Christ, and so naughtily of him? Why,

1. *Ignorance* is a cause of it, *Ignoti nulla cupido*; as it is impossible for them to undervalue Christ, who have the saving knowledge of him; so it is not possible that any can prize him, whom they do not know. Many are like Festus, Acts xxv. 19. who told Agrippa, that Paul's enemies had questions against him, concerning one Jesus; Christ is to them a certain man, one *Jesus*, but for their part they know little of him, and are indifferent about him: as a blind man, what he does not

* The above topics are all touched at, and many of them treated at considerable length, Vol. I. Sermon. IV. Vol. II. Sermon. XXVII,—XXVII. Vol. III. Sermon. XXXIV,—XXXVII.

see, he cares not for, though he be told of it as never so fair and beautiful; so natural men are *blind*, 2 Cor. iv. 4.; they can see no beauty or comeliness in Christ, for which they should desire him. Therefore, though they may hear of his glory and comeliness, and be a little moved therewith, yet they care not so much for him, as to give him the highest room in their thoughts and esteem.

2. *Unbelief* is another cause why people think little of Christ; if they would believe, they would see the glory of God in him, and see him a glorious and lovely object: but, through unbelief, Christ is loathsome instead of lovely; hence his doctrine is loathsome, his righteousness, his holiness, his cross. Unbelief makes people think Christ is a cheat, and God is a liar, and that he says what he hath no mind to do; it makes them think that he is not able to save, or that he is not willing to save. Oh! how basely does unbelief think of Christ! Unbelief also will make a man think God like unto himself, and an approver of his sin, Psal. l. 21. *Thou thoughtest that I was altogether such an one as thyself*; and so it makes them to think of Christ but very basely.

3. *Pride and self-righteousness* is another cause why people think little of Christ, Rom. x. 3. While people think much of themselves, and their doing, they cannot think much of Christ, and his righteousness. This is that legal righteousness that makes men to do with the garment of Christ's righteousness, as the Ammonites did with the garments of David's messengers, they clipped them so short, that they were not able to hide their shame: but if it was a terror and smiting to David's heart, to cut off but a little of the lap of Saul's garment, ought it not to be a terror to us, to cut off a lap of Christ's garment, or to clip it so short, as to think that it cannot cover us completely, without some of our own rotten righteousness sewed to it?—Again, it is this legal principle that makes believers themselves think it cannot be that they are accepted as righteous, perfectly righteous in the sight of God, through the righteousness of Christ imputed; why, because they want a feeling of that righteousness in themselves, which the legal heart is ready

to make the foundation of pardon and acceptance: but, as Luther said, "We must not feel, but believe, that we are thus righteous;" yea, it is this hidden principle of self-righteousness, that will make a minister preach Christ alone for righteousness, as if he were as much for exalting Christ, as any that ever preached; and yet, before ever you know well where you are, you will find him bringing in some legal duty or qualification, in order to your being justified, that will spoil all; just like an untoward milkcow, that will let down a good deal of milk very well, but then, with an unhappy kick of her foot, she will tumble all down to the ground, when she hath done: even so, the sincere milk of the word of life, and justification through Christ's righteousness alone, may be let down abundantly, that you would think the man as evangelical as Paul himself, or any body that ever preached the gospel: but, behold, of a sudden, the legal foot gives it a kick, and spills all when he hath done, or else the law sets her foot among the midst of the milk; I mean, mixes some dirty righteousness, and qualification of our own, with the fair and clean milk of Christ's righteousness, so as the poor soul loaths to take a drink of it. Why, I thought this milk was for me, and this righteousness of Christ was for me; but there came in a qualification, that, before ever I could be justified, I behoved to do so and so, and be so and so humbled, and penitent; and sure I am, I want such a qualification, and therefore all is lost to me. But, poor soul, whatever come in this way, tending to make you look into yourself, and stand off from Christ, you may know it is but a switch of the law of works; slight it, and set it off, if it hinder you from thinking of Christ as your ALL, and from *buying and drinking his wine and milk, without money and without price.*

4. *Carnal reason* is another cause, why people think little of Christ; for, *the natural man receives not the things of the Spirit of God, they are foolishness to him,* 1 Cor. ii. 14. There is natural reason, which is so much cried up at this day, when man goes about to measure God's truths, and spiritual mysteries, with this short line of human reason; and finding, that reason agrees
with

with these mysteries, no more than the sound of ram-horns, in the view of carnal reason, was like to bring down the walls of Jericho; behold, no fault must be found with lady *Reason*, but Christ's gospel, and the mysteries thereof, must bear the blame, namely, That they are foolish and absurd; and therefore not to be received or esteemed by such wise heads as they are, who little remember the apostle's admonition, 1 Cor. iii. 18. *If any man will be wise, let him become a fool, that he may be wise.* Hence Luther gave it as an infallible mark that the gospel was not truly preached, and was not the gospel indeed, namely, "If it was so brewed, fitted, and adapted unto reason, that all approved of it, and yielded to it peaceably; for, how then should Christ be a *sign that should be spoken against*, Luke ii. 34. and a *stone of stumbling, and a rock of offence?*" This leads me to a

5. Cause, why people think so little of Christ, namely, the *calumny* cast upon the gospel of Christ, and the dispensers of it. Is it possible for the wisdom of the world to hold her peace from speaking against that which she judges to be foolishness? How then shall Christ be not only for *the rising*, but the *falling of many in Israel*? "Mark, says Luther, where this fall is, even in Israel, in that people that seemed to be Christ's only people, and upon Christ's side." It is even in Israel that many fall, and in Israel that Christ is spoken against. Thus, when he came to be a minister of the old and antient truths of God, to confirm the promises made unto the fathers, Rom. xv. 8. when he began to preach the same; the greatest part of the multitude cried out, *What new doctrine is this?* Mark i. 27. Whence we may see, that when a church hath gone off from any antient truth, or old way of expressing it, no sooner are these old truths revived, or set in their antient frame, than presently it is called a *new scheme of doctrine* *. However, by this means, Satan gets much of his will; for it tends to make people think little of Christ, and his gospel.

6. *Division* is another cause, why people think so little of Christ. There is a twofold *division* that I mean;

* See the reason of this assigned above, vol. I. p. 238. vol. II. p. 304, 305. vol. III. p. 46.

there is not only an outward church-division, but an inward heart-division. No doubt the former hath a great hand in making many to slight Christ; for, when a church is divided, the generality of people are apt to be stumbled: Why, say they, we know not whom to believe, and what side to turn to; every party says they are for Christ, and therefore the indifferent sort of people think we will even let Christ and them both alone. But it is especially inward *heart-division* that I mean: when the heart is divided betwixt Christ and the world, betwixt Christ and idols or lusts: the world, and the lusts thereof, will be sure to carry away the heart, that it cannot think highly of Christ, while it thinks so much of other things. A man may as soon, with one eye, observe the stars, and with the other, measure the earth at the same time, as the can think highly of Christ, and his idols too: therefore, when Satan, like the pretended mother, says, *Let it be neither thine nor mine, but divide it*; God, who is the Lord of the heart, says, Let the devil rather have all; for God will either have all or none. Now, when men have any approved idol in the heart, Christ is despised, his rival gets all: the divided heart, then, is a heart separate, and joined to idols; and this division causes disesteem of Christ, so as the man cannot think of Christ, he must, of necessity, think of some other thing. See how they that were invited to the great supper, the gospel-banquet, put it off with excuses; Luke xiv. 18. *I have bought a piece of ground, and I must needs go and see it*, says one: mark the phrase, *I must needs go*; he pleads necessity, and necessity hath no law. When the heart is not wholly for Christ, of necessity it will be for the world, and the lusts thereof: and he that is not for Christ, Satan will constantly find him enough of business to take up his thoughts, and which the man will reckon so necessary, that he will have no leisure to think of Christ. Now, when this question is proposed, *What think ye of Christ?* or, when Christ is offered, there are two sorts of persons that shew very little esteem of him; yea, that shew they do nothing but despise him in their heart: the apostle compares them to dogs and swine, 2 Pet. ii. 22.

(1.) There are some like *swine*, namely, the *profane worldly people*; for, as swine think more of the mire, than any thing else; so, if one go to drive him away from the mire, he only gives a grunt, and away he goes to the mire again, or else rooting his snout in the earth: so profane and worldly people love to wallow in the mire of sin, and to be rooting and rotting in the earth; and if any go about to drive them from sin, and to pull their noses out of the earth, they go away grunting and grumbling in their heart, that they cannot be allowed their necessary pleasure and profit; and they return to the wallowing in the mire, and rooting in the earth as eagerly as ever. All the answer they give to the question, *What think ye of Christ?* is a grunt; they are a little disturbed about it, and moved a little to mutter some words, according as they are affected; but away they go grunting, with their mouth towards the dust: it is not Christ they are thinking of.

(2.) There are others like *dogs*, namely, *legalists*, and *self-justiciaries*, that are worse enemies to the gospel of Christ, than the worldling, or openly profane; for, as a dog thinks more of a stinking carcase than any thing else; so, if you go about to drive the dog from his vomit, or stinking carrion, he will be ready either to bark or bite, or flee in your face: even so, legalists and self-justiciaries, think more of the stinking carcase of their own righteousness, and legal duties, than any thing else; and when any goes about to draw them away from the high esteem of the filthy rags of their own righteousness, shewing the loathsomeness and vileness thereof, the absolute necessity of being wholly denied thereto, and adorned with nothing but Christ's perfect righteousness for justification before God; if we show them how God justifies the ungodly, and how the righteousness of God, without the works of the law, is manifested in the gospel; why, then they go away from ordinances, barking and biting, slandering, and calumniating the gospel, which they do not understand or esteem, as if it were a doctrine of licentiousness, and an encouragement of sin; and they return to their vomit, their stinking carrion, neglecting the heavenly carcase, to which the believing

eagles

eagles gather together, that they may live by faith upon the Son of God.—Now, both these sorts of persons, however differently affected, yet agree in their slighting of Christ, upon different grounds. What do they think of Christ? Nothing at all. The Lord convince and awaken such!

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

1. By the quality of your thoughts.
2. By the object thereof.

1st, Try yourselves upon this question, by the *quality* of your thoughts; for it is not a simple thought, like a flying vapour, that is here intended, but a qualified thought, that you are to try yourselves by; for example,

1. Right and becoming thoughts of Christ are *pre-ferring* and *superlative* thoughts; Christ is beyond comparison to the man: the language of such a thought of Christ is this, O what can he be compared unto! If you compare him to a *rose*; he is the *Rose of Sharon*: If you compare him to a *lily*; he is the *lily of the valley*: If you compare him to a *sun*; he is the *Sun of righteousness*: If you compare him to a *star*; he is the *bright and Morning-star*: If you compare him to a *chief and honourable worthy*; he is the *Chief among ten thousand*: If you compare him to a *head*; he is the *Head of principalities and powers*: If you compare him to a *flower*; he is the *Flower of the stem of Jesse*: If you compare him to a *branch*; he is the *Branch of righteousness*: If you compare him to an *advocate*; he is an *Advocate with the Father*: If you compare him to a *counsellor*; he is the *wonderful Counsellor*: If you compare him to a *king*; he is the *King of kings, and Lord of lords*: If you compare him to a *prince*; he is the *Prince of peace; the Prince of the kings of the earth*: If you compare him with *men*; he is *fairer than the sons of men*: If you compare him

with angels ; he is the *Lord of angels* ; let all the angels of God worship him.—The man does in his thoughts prefer Christ to all things in heaven and earth ; *Whom have I in heaven but thee ? and there is none upon the earth whom I desire besides thee*, Psal. lxxiii. 25. *In all things he gives him the pre-eminence*, Col. i. 18. Then again,

2. Right and becoming thoughts of Christ are *admiring* and *adoring* thoughts ; *exalting* and *extolling* thoughts : if you have due thoughts of him in your heart, you will find in your heart to bless him, saying, as Psal. cxviii. 26.

Blessed is he, in God's great name,

That cometh us to save :

We, from the house which to the Lord

Pertains, you blessed have.

And, *O magnify the Lord with me* : you would wish that all the world would fall a blessing, and praising, and extolling him. They are glorying and glorifying thoughts : the man's heart glories in the Lord, and glorifies the Lord ; and would desire his glory might be advanced above the heavens. Why, because,

3. Right and becoming thoughts of Christ are *spiritual* and *sublimating* thoughts ; natural thoughts can rise no higher than nature, 1 Cor. ii. 14. ; but spiritual thoughts, being managed by the conduct and influence of the Spirit of God ; *The Spirit searcheth all things, even the deep things of God*. Indeed, the Spirit of God is the *all in all* of these thoughts ; for he comes, according to the promise, and *glorifies Christ*, by *receiving the things of Christ*, and *showing them unto the soul*, John xvi. 14. *They that are after the flesh, do mind the things of the flesh ; but they that are after the Spirit, the things of the Spirit*, Rom. viii. 5. Indeed, the things of Christ, and the things of the Spirit, are the same ; no human natural wisdom can reach to them : wise naturalists may indeed dream of them, and speak of them like a man speaking in his dream of the light of the sun, while yet it is dark night with him, and he was never awakened, convinced, and savingly illuminated.

4. Right and becoming thoughts of Christ are *applying* and *appropriating* thoughts ; inasmuch that the man takes

takes Christ into his soul, as he takes meat and drink into his body; *Whoso eateth my flesh, and drinketh my blood, hath eternal life*, John vi. 54. This is that believing thought, without which a man receives no benefit, any more than a man that wants meat can have benefit by thinking upon meat, without eating thereof. The man takes in Christ to himself for his own good. To think of Christ, without applying him, is like a man thinking of meat and drink, without taking it; which does no good.

QUEST. *But can there be no right thinking of Christ, without applying?* Indeed, man, the thought is but a vain thought, an unbelieving thought, an unprofitable thought, if it be not either an applying thought of Christ, or a thought of Christ in order to application; like a sick man receiving a cordial out of his physician's hand, he takes it from him, not to hold it in his hand, and no more, but in order to make it his own, by drinking it down for his refreshment, healing, and strengthening. The man's taking the cordial in his hand, is not properly the taking that the physician means, but his taking it in to himself, or down into his stomach, is the proper taking of it: yet the former taking of it in his hand is right, in so far as it is in order to the other; so here, a bare thinking of Christ is of no avail, unless it be an applying thought, or a thought in order to application: and though the thoughts of Christ, in order to application, be not application itself properly; yet it is good, in so far as it is a taking Christ into your hand, in order to take him into your heart, and that for your own souls refreshment, life, health, and everlasting salvation.

5. Right thoughts of Christ are *sinking* and *serious* thoughts, in opposition to *swimming*, *roving*, and *indifferent* thoughts. Some have a wild thought about Christ, that if he be good for any thing, they shall have a share of him, as well as others: but what he is, and how they shall come by him, they never deeply pondered; for they were never touched with a sense of their sin, misery, and undone state without him. A swimming thought of Christ is like that of some ignorant creatures,

creatures, crying out in a surprize, *Christ, have mercy on us*; but the thought that sinks deep is like that of the publican smiting on his breast, and crying, *Lord, have mercy on me a sinner*. But there are learned fools in the world, as well as ignorant ones, that have nothing but swimming thoughts, roving speculations; and yet, it may be, they can speak of Christ to better purpose, you would think, than one that is exercised to godliness: but yet these two sorts differ as far as the pleading of an orator differs from the pleading of a malefactor; the one vents his great wit, but the other his heart-concern. Again,

6. Right thoughts of Christ are *trading* and *trafficking* thoughts; the man hath it for his constant trade, to think highly of Christ, and give him the chief room in his heart and esteem. In this respect, his *heart is fixed, trusting in the Lord*. *The desire of our soul is to thy name* says the church, *and to the remembrance of thee*. *With my soul have I desired thee in the night, and with my spirit within me will I seek thee early*, Isa. xxvi. 8, 9. There was a trading with heaven late at night, and early in the morning. Yea, David makes it *morning, and evening, and mid-time of the day*; yea more, *seven times a day*; and yet most of all, when he says, *My soul breaks for the longing that it hath to thy righteous judgments at ALL TIMES*. It is a constant trading. True, indeed, there are innumerable intermissions in the believer's Christian thoughts and desires: but as we say, It is such a man's trade to buy and sell, while he follows that employment, though it is not every moment he is thus occupied; but though there be several intermissions in the exercise of his employment, yet the bent of his mind goes that way: so here, we may call this the believer's constant trade; because, whatever intermissions there are in this, his mental trading with heaven, yet the bent of his soul is towards Christ: yea, it is not only his business, but his pleasure; and that makes him go on. If a man thrive at his trade, he takes pleasure in it; and if not, he is in danger of giving it over. We go sometimes upon business to these we never saw, nor care for seeing again, and whom we take little pleasure to converse with: they that never go
to

to Christ but merely upon business, and never find any pleasure in conversing with him, surely they are too great strangers to him. Certainly, believer, there is too much strangeness betwixt Christ and you, if your business you have ado with Christ be seldom your pleasure, or if it be merely business that takes you to him, saying, "I want a pardon, I want a promise, I want this and that." But, is there never a love-visit you make to him, saying, "Lord, I have got a pardon, and I am come to bless thee for it; I have got a promise, and I am come to praise thee for it; thy company is sweet, and I am come to get thee in my arms, that I may have more of thy embraces?" O sweet trading! *My meditation of him shall be sweet.* Indeed, these thoughts of Christ that are right, are glad, joyful, satisfying thoughts.

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

8. Right thoughts of Christ are *assimulating* thoughts, *sanctifying* and *transforming* thoughts; 2 Cor. iii. 18. *But we all with open face, beholding as in a glass the glory* indeed, that a believer that hath Christ in him, may think that he hath more sin than ever, and that sin is on the growing hand, instead of the decaying; but he is *of the Lord, are changed into the same image, from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord.* They that see Christ, cannot but love him, and desire to be like him, for there is a smiting favour in his face. They that are in heaven are *like him*, because they *see him as he is*: the beatifical vision brings in full conformity to him. Now, a spiritual thought, and a believing thought, is a mental sight; a fiducial vision of him: and the more of this, the more conformity to him in holiness. The thought that endears Christ, imbitters sin: a man cannot think duly of the loveliness of Christ, without thinking of the loathsomeness of sin. O! when the Sun of righteousness ariseth, there is a heat that accompanies the light, and warms the heart. And, indeed, high thoughts of Christ do warm the heart, and make it burn within him; and heart-warming thoughts tend to burn up corruption; for, as Christ comes into the heart, sin must go out, according to the measure and degree of his coming. As a talent of gold, or some weighty metal, falling into a vessel of water, dashes out all that is in the vessel, to make room for itself; so, Christ coming in to the heart, dashes out sin to make room for himself. And, indeed, they that have honourable thoughts of Christ in their hearts, cannot have favourable thoughts of sin; because, whenever Christ comes into the thoughts, if he do not dash out the life, yet he dashes out the love of sin. What, man! will you say that *Christ is in you*, and that you have faith, and yet the love of sin as great as ever, and you can indulge yourself in whoredom, and drunkenness, and lying, and swearing, and Sabbath-breaking, or any other piece of wickedness and profanity. You will never make a good man believe that Christ is in you, or that you have faith, even though you should swear by your faith, as some do, who even thereby testify to the world, that they

they have no faith at all; being so prodigal of it, as to swear away the faith which they say or think they have. So far as Christ comes in, sin goes out. It is possible mistaken: it is in this case as it is with a cup of water; put silver and gold in a cup, and the water swells up; and the more you put in, the more will the water swell and run over, that you would think there is still more water than before, the more gold is put in: Christ is the tried gold; and the more the vessel of the believer's heart is filled with it, the more may sin appear to rise and swell, and run over all its banks: this frightens and terrifies the poor soul, because now he sees that which, it may be, was hid in the vessel of his heart before, and out of his sight. But it is not that there is more sin, more water than before, but more gold cast in; only every dash perhaps makes the water flee about, that he thinks he was never so full of sin and corruption as now: yet still it holds good, Christ's coming in makes sin flee out; and the more it seems to rise and swell, the more does the soul's indignation rise and swell against it. All right thoughts of Christ are sanctifying thoughts.

9. High thoughts of Christ are *new* thoughts; they that suppose they have thoughts well enough of Christ all their days, and have no better thoughts, no higher thoughts, no weightier thoughts, no clearer thoughts of him than ever they had, surely they are strangers to this esteem of Christ that we are enquiring into: *If any man be in Christ, he is a new creature; old things are done away, and all things are become a new; and new thoughts among the rest.* Where grace comes, there the *wicked man forsakes his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts; his carnal thoughts, his legal thoughts: they are changed into spiritual thoughts, evangelical thoughts, such as he never had before.* And,

10. New thoughts of Christ will bring in *new words and new actions; the words follow the thoughts.* You may then turn the question, *What think ye of Christ?* to another, *What speak ye of him?* for, *Out of the abundance of the heart, the mouth speaketh.* If you think it ill-breeding, or ungentle manners, as many do, to speak of Christ and spiritual things, and cannot drop a word for
him

him from Sabbath to Sabbath, who can believe that you think highly of Christ. Nay, that which is most in the heart and thoughts, will be most in your lips.—The actions also follow the thoughts: can you think highly of Christ, and yet do nothing for him? Nay, new and precious thoughts of Christ will bring in new gospel-obedience from a principle of love to him.—Thus you may try yourselves now on this question, *What think ye of Christ?* by the *quality* of your thoughts. Examination is the very design of the question, namely, to discover what our thoughts of Christ are; and therefore I insist mainly upon this.—But having tried yourselves by the quality of your thoughts,

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

1. What think ye of his *eminent station* he is in as Mediator betwixt God and you, and his relation to God and you; his relation to God by nature, as his eternal Son; and by office, as his righteous Servant? God calls you to wonder at him in this station; Isa. xlii. 1. *Behold my Servant, whom I uphold; mine Elect, in whom my soul delighteth.* His Father called him forth to serve him and you, and to serve him for your sake; to serve him as a Redeemer, to ransom you; to serve him as a Surety, to pay your debt; to serve him as a Physician, to heal your souls; to serve him in all the offices that your need requires: and what think ye of him?

2. What think ye of his *travels*, in order to accomplish the work that belongs to that station and relation wherein he stands to God and you? The travel of his eternal mind before time, when *his delights were with the sons of men*; the travel of his soul, and the travel of his body in time; his travel from heaven to earth, and from earth to heaven again; in all his mediatory actions; his incarnation, birth, life, death, resurrection, ascension, and intercession! O but the Lord can give a glance
of

of his glory in the very naming of these things! How did he travel as in birth, when he went about his *Father's business!* Luke ii. 49.

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

4. What think ye of his *thoughts*? Psa. cxxxix. 17. *How precious are thy thoughts unto me, O God! how great is the sum of them! if I count them, says he, they are more in number than the sand: when I awake, I am still with thee.* O his thoughts! dwell with wonder and admiration upon God's thoughts. Is it nothing to you, that ever he had thoughts of love towards the like of you; thoughts of pardon, thoughts of peace; *thoughts of good and not of evil, to give you an expected end!* O believer, his thoughts are not precious to the rest of the world; but what are they to you? Think you nothing that his thought and care should have been about you from eternity, and now manifested in time? Having loved you with an everlasting love, how is he drawing you with loving-kindness? Besides all his providential care in bringing things about for your good, and that in a way beyond your contrivance and foresight; yea, in such a manner as never entered into your thoughts.

You little thought what was his design in ordering your lot in such a part of the world, and such a spot of his vineyard, and bringing you to such a sermon, or under such a ministry. O how innumerable are his precious thoughts! And what think ye of him?

5. What think ye of his *words*, as well as his thoughts? Surely, if you think duly, you will think them sweet words; *How sweet are thy words unto my taste! yea, sweeter than honey to my mouth*, Psalm cxix. 103. Does the Spirit never take some of his words, and put a spiritual majesty thereupon? Though many times, like Samuel, you mistake the Lord's voice, believer, and think it is Eli that speaks, and cannot discern the voice of Christ from the voice of Moses; the voice of grace from the voice of the law; yet, when the Spirit comes, and whispers in a word from Christ sometimes, what think ye of it? *It is the voice of my Beloved, behold he cometh, skipping upon the mountains, and leaping upon the hills!*—What think ye of his *inciting* words, saying, *Come to me, all ye that are weary and heavy laden?*—What think ye of his *expostulating* words, saying, *Why will ye die, O house of Israel?*—What think ye of his *intreating* words, and his *promising* words, his *I will's*, and *ye shall's*; *I will be your God, and ye shall be my people?* Do you think so much of them, that your hearts say AMEN to them?—What think ye of his *may be's*? Believers will think right much of a *may-be* from him sometimes. *It MAY BE he will be gracious; It MAY BE ye shall be hid in the day of the Lord's anger.*—What think ye of his *shall be's*? There are *shall be's* for the church in general: *Upon all the glory there SHALL BE a defence: In the mount of the Lord it SHALL BE seen:* What think ye of these? There are *shall be's* for yourself in particular: There is a *shall be* for your protection; *A man SHALL BE a hiding-place from the storm. This man SHALL BE the peace, when the Assyrian shall come into our land.* There is a *shall be* for your provision; *Bread SHALL BE given thee, and thy water SHALL BE sure.* There is a *shall be* for your instruction; *They SHALL BE all taught of God.* There is a *shall be* for your justification; *His name SHALL BE cal-*
led,

led, THE LORD OUR RIGHTEOUSNESS. There is a *shall be* for your salvation from sin and wrath; *His name SHALL BE called JESUS, because he saves his people from their sins; even Jesus, which delivers from the wrath to come.* There is a *shall be* for a happy death; *Death SHALL BE swallowed up in victory.* There is a *shall be* for a happy welcome at the day of judgment; *They SHALL BE mine, in the day that I make up my jewels.* There is a *shall be* for a happy eternity; *And so we SHALL BE ever with the Lord.* What think ye of all these words and *shall be's*? Is there any faith here, saying, AMEN; *so let it be; so shall it be?*—What think ye of his *verily's*? We cannot go through these, to tell you how oft he hath confirmed his words with a *Verily, verily, I say unto you*: Many a WRATHFUL *verily* against his enemies, that think nothing of him; many a LOVING *verily* towards his people, that think much of him. O Sirs, do you esteem them all to be the truth, and that *verily* it is, and shall be as he hath said?—What think ye of his *dying* words, as when he said upon the cross, *It is finished?*—What thing ye of his *living* words; *I am he that was dead, and am alive, and behold I live for evermore?*—O! what think ye of his words? Cannot your heart say, *Lord, to whom shall I go? thou hast the words of eternal life?* O what think ye of him?

6. What think ye of his *works*? even his works of creation; what think ye of these? For *by him all things were made that were made, and without him was nothing made,* John i. 3. O when you behold the *heavens, the works of his hands, the moon and the stars, which he hath ordained,* may you not say, *What is man that thou art mindful of him? and the son of man that thou visitest him?*—What think ye of his works of providence? For *he upholds all things by the word of his power,* Heb. i. 3. If you wonder how he can raise your dead bodies at the great day, and sever your dust from other dust; may you not as well wonder, how he every day rises up in your view innumerable stalks of corn out of the dust, and gives to every pickle of seed his own body? as the apostle argues, 1 Cor. xv. 35. and downward. How

will he raise the *believer's vile body*, out of the filthy dust where it roots, and make it *like unto his own glorious body*? O fools that we are, and slow of heart to believe, how does he raise the beautiful lilies out of the dung? Solomon, in all his glory, is not comparable to one of these; and all the world cannot make one of them to rise, without his powerful providence. These miracles of providence are common every day in your view, and so we think nothing of them; but we might see the power of Christ in them. If you wonder how it was possible for Christ to turn the water into wine, or multiply a few loaves, and a few fishes, so as to feed so many thousands; we needed not wonder so much, if we but thought how his providence is doing that every year: the water falls from the clouds, and the vine by his order turns it unto wine; and by the span of such fishes, and the grain of such loaves, he is feeding millions every day. Wo is us, that we cannot think of him, and his works as we ought!—Above all, what think ye of his works of *grace*, and *redeeming love*? All his other works are as the drop of a bucket, in comparison of this ocean; for herein we may see him appear in his own, and his Father's pomp and splendor, manifesting all the glorious perfections of God; even his infinite power, and wisdom, holiness, justice, mercy, truth, faithfulness, and all God's attributes. I might here mention his works of grace *for us* and his works of grace *in us*; but it were endless to speak of the thousandth part.—His work of grace *for us* lies in his *bringing in everlasting righteousness*, especially if we speak of his good works; surely it is a good work, that can fulfil the holy precepts of that good law which we have broken, and can answer the righteous threatening of the just law which we have incurred. Well, here is the doing and dying of the Son of God, for both these ends, that divine holiness may be vindicated, and justice satisfied, in the way and manner of our salvation through him. The law of God is a perfect law, and exceeding broad; but here is a righteousness as broad as it can be, so as to magnify the law and make it honourable. O! what think ye of that good work?—His work of grace *in us*

is also much to be thought of; and that lies mainly, I think, in imputing his perfect righteousness to us for our justification, (which is indeed properly an act of grace upon us, Rom. iii. 22.) and implanting another righteousness beside it for our sanctification, which he carries on to perfection. This internal work of grace may be begun with sighs and groans, advanced in battles and conflicts; but it will be completed in victory and glory. — Well, then, in this short glance of his works, what think ye of them! May ye not say, as Psalm cxi. 3. *His work is honourable and glorious, and his righteousness endures for ever?* And when you notice his works, what think you of himself?

7. What think ye of his *gospel*, and the *terms* of it? that gospel, which we preach in his name, wherein his *righteousness is revealed from faith to faith*? If you think highly of him, you will think highly of it, as the best news, and most glad tidings that ever you heard; *How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of those that preach the gospel of peace, that bring glad tidings of good things, that publisheth salvation!* Isa. lv. 7. Rom. x. 15. Some are ready to think the gospel of grace, and salvation through Christ, is too good news to be true with respect to them, as if it were not to be supposed that God will bestow so great salvation so freely upon so great sinners; not considering, that God in the gospel aims not at our glory chiefly, but at the declaration of his own glory, and the magnifying of his own free grace; and that therefore we ought to take freely what he gives freely. It is a manifestation of free grace, sovereign grace, which is neither hindered by our evil, nor furthered by our good, Rom. iii. 24.; and regards neither our worthiness to deserve it, nor our unworthiness to impede it, Rom. ix. 15. Hence Luther alledged, that “*mens* “*minds were so occupied with fantastical imaginations* “*of their own works, that the glad tidings of the gos-* “*pel will seem strange matters to them.*” Men will be astonished at the greatness of his grace, as it is, Jer. xxxiii. 9. Many think of the gospel, as if it were a *new law*, wherein God stands upon some easier terms with us than in the covenant of works; thus confounding law and

and gospel, and making a hotch-potch of both. Indeed, if we speak of law-terms, upon which our salvation stands, they are no easier than ever they were: a perfect righteousness is the only condition of salvation; and we not having that in ourselves, the gospel offers it in Christ, and there is the ground of our eternal salvation: but if we speak of the gospel-terms, we need not say, you must come up to them; but rather, *Come down, Zaccheus; for this day is salvation come to thy house*: salvation is come to you, and offered freely to you, *Without money, and without price*; come down and take it. And indeed faith, which belongs to the order and method of God's applying the gospel, is a coming down from all our legal hopes of salvation for something to be done by us, in order to our being obliged to another, even to Christ for all, Isa. lv. 1, 2. Rev. xxii. 17. Come down from the sycamore-tree of your vain hopes, and get all freely: that is the gospel. What think ye of it? This is indeed a hard saying to proud flesh and blood, which thinks rather they should go up, and do more for their justification and salvation, than come down, and be obliged to another to pay all their law-debt completely. He will do all for you, or nothing: and, O man, what think ye of him and his gospel? But then,

3. What think ye of his *service*, and his *wages*? When a man is once brought in to the gospel-terms, and understands them, then, and not till then, does he come up to the gospel-rule; for, *Faith works by love*, and love is the fulfilling of the law as a rule, from thankfulness to him that hath delivered from the law as a covenant. If you think his service hard and uneasy, it seems you are not thinking much of Christ, but rather of the law, which is a heavy yoke, that neither we nor our fathers were able to bear: but *Christ's yoke is easy, and his burden is light*, Mat. xi. 29, 30. because in this service the man hath no law-debt to pay, for Christ hath done that to his hand, but only a love-debt; *If you love me, keep my commandments*: and thus, *his commandments are not grievous*. Here grace is all and all, both of the service and wages. Grace says, "Up and be doing, man, in my strength; for the greatest work is done

“ to your hand, and now my grace shall be sufficient for thee.” Grace says also, “ Behold a crown of glory, a reward of grace awaiting you, after you have fought the good fight of faith; therefore have an eye to this recompence of reward.” Death is the proper wages of sin, and it is a just debt; but grace’s wages is free; *The gift of God is eternal life, through Jesus Christ our Lord*; that is, there is here no promise of life upon our doing, but a promise of grace to do, and of glory to crown our doing, and of both grace and glory as the reward of Christ’s doing all; and therefore, what think ye of him and his service?

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

10. What think ye of his *love*, and the *reasons* of it? Who can understand the height, and breadth, and depth, and length of his love? It is without all dimension. And why does he love any of the lost posterity of Adam? He tells us the reason, Deut. vii. 7, 8. *He loved you, because he loved you.* Do you think he loves you for your beauty, O black and ugly sinner! Nay, he professes his love and kindness upon you in the gospel freely, not for your own beauty’s sake, but for his own name’s sake: and his grace, love, and good-will, as revealed in the gospel, is to be believed with applicati-

on to yourself, for no other reason but because it is his will and pleasure. His love must make you beautiful, but cannot find you so. And if you cannot believe his grace and good-will to you, because you have no beauty, you are but rejecting the reason of his love, despising the freedom of his grace, and standing upon the terms of the old covenant of works, slighting the grace of the new covenant. This is such a disease to mankind, that even believers in Christ, when they are helped to perform duty, with any lively frame, they are ready to say, with Leah, Jacob's wife, when she brought forth several children to him, *Now my husband will love me, because of my fruitfulness*; so says the believer, when he is helped to bring forth fruit unto God, and finds his Spirit revived in duty, his soul strengthened, his heart enlarged, and a great deal of comfort there, *O now, says he, my Husband will love me because of my fruitfulness*. But what comes of it? the person having such a legal sett, the Lord, to correct it, takes away all fruitfulness out of his view, in a manner, and leaves him barren; "O says the believer then, where is my former sweet hearing, and sweet praying and praising, and sweet meditation?" Why, the Lord has cut off these, that he may cut off your legal pride of being loved for your beauty and fruitfulness, and that you may *return to your first Husband, for then it was better with you than now*. You must begin, believer, where you began at first, and think of his loving you merely because he loves you. They that build their conjugal comfort only, or mainly, upon their righteousness of sanctification, and so secretly incline to follow after the law, will find their souls very unsettled, even up and down with their changeable frame. But again,

11. I may ask, what think ye of his *loveliness*? O! is he *white* and *ruddy* in your view? O! see how the spouse describes him, Song v. 10. and downward, in the beauty of his head, his locks, his eyes, and all and every part of him; his belly, or bowels of mercy: *His mouth is most sweet*, says she. O the words, the smiles, the kisses of his mouth, his kindly embraces! I have read of one Agatho, that was a man so holy, that with

a kiss he cured one of his leprosy; whether that be true or false, yet what I intend by telling it, is true, that such is the virtue of Christ, that a kiss of his mouth, a smile of his countenance, will cure the soul of spiritual leprosy; yea, a word of his mouth will do it: *Now are you clean through the word that I have spoken*, John xv. 3.

Again,

12. What think ye of his *favour* and his *blessing*? Surely if you esteem him duly, you will think *his favour is life, and his loving-kindness better than life*, and that *his blessing only makes rich*. Especially, what think ye of his blessings and benefits that cannot be enjoyed by feeling, but by faith; nor by the sight of sense, but by the sight of faith? *We walk by faith, and not by sight*, says the apostle. But it is the fault even of believers, that they can hardly believe they have any more than they feel: and hence, when they are in the darkness of desertion, they think they have nothing; they have lost his favour, because they do not feel it; they have lost his righteousness, because they do not feel it: but remember, that when Aaph said, *Hath the Lord forgotten to be gracious? hath he in anger shut up his tender mercies?* he added, *This was my infirmity*. You know, in a house where it is dark, all things are there that were before, though you see them not; so it is with you, believer, though you be in darkness, all things are as they were before: do you think all is gone, because you cannot see it? Well, you never walk by faith, but by feeling; nay, *He that walks in darkness, and hath no light, let him trust in the name of the Lord, and stay himself upon his God*. The name of the Lord is to the fore; his God is to the fore; the object of his faith is to the fore, as much as ever; and *the just shall live by faith*. Will you not believe the sun is in the firmament where it was, because a cloud hath come and intercepted the light of its beams? “Why, says one, but my misery is, when I am in the “dark night, I fear it was all but delusion that ever I “met with, and that there was nothing real or saving “in it.” This I find is a common thought among ferocious souls; but all that I shall say to it, is by enlarging

the similitude; ask a man when it is dark night, how do you know that ever you saw the natural sun? it may be you was but dreaming, and deluding yourself; it was nothing but a strong imagination. Why, says the man, I am sure I saw it, because my eyes were dazzled with the light of it, and I was warmed with the heat of it, and I saw to work by it; and by the light of it I saw every thing about me. So may you say, believer; when a dark night of desertion or temptation comes on, the tempter suggests, *It may be all was but a delusion.* Why, man, were not your eyes enlightened? was not your heart warmed? did you not see to work, and went on in your work joyfully, *the joy of the Lord being your strength?* and did you not see every thing about you? You saw God in his glory; you saw sin in its vileness; you saw holiness in its beauty; you saw the world in its vanity; you saw the creature in its emptiness; Christ in his fulness; you saw yourself in your loathsomeness: but now, when the light is withdrawn, *What think ye of Christ?* Is there no sun because it is set to your view? Do you think it never shone upon you, because it is not now shining? What think ye of an absent Christ? do you think nothing of him because he is absent? Surely, believer, that is not thought like a believer: sense is many times denied you, that you may learn to believe more than you do.

“ But, say you, when he is not present with me, I cannot believe.” I shall tell you my mind here. There is a *powerful* presence necessary to believing: but there is a *sensible* presence that is not necessary to it, but rather usually comes upon the back of faith. Now, that powerful presence of God, that is necessary to believing, does open up the object of faith, namely, Christ’s righteousness, God’s promise, the truth of God, the blood of Christ; power is sometimes insensibly exerted, not by an outward open violence upon the man, but by an inward, secret, and sweet enchantment, as it were: ere he is aware, and before ever he knows that it is divine power that is doing the work, he finds the object of faith, that he is thinking upon, making room for itself in his heart, and drawing out his soul, as it were, insensibly

sensibly to it: and thereupon comes in sensible presence upon the back of that; *After ye believed, ye were sealed*, Eph. i. 13. Now, if you say, you cannot believe without his powerful presence, that is true; divine power must be exerted to every act of faith, but then this power does ordinarily put forth itself insensibly and unawares, while we are thinking on, or viewing the object of faith; *While I was musing, the fire burned*, Psal. xxxix. 3. The Spirit of God clears the object of faith, that being viewed and applied, the heart is set on fire with it; there is his powerful presence ushering in the sensible presence. But if you say, You cannot believe till you have his sensible presence; that is to make sense the foundation of your faith, and not the word of God, or the Christ of God: therefore, in order to believe, let not your question be first, What find you in yourself? but rather, *What think ye of Christ?* You will find none of the sweet effects of faith, till you think on Christ the object of it. Again,

13. What think ye of his *invisible glories?* *Faith is the evidence of things not seen.* Faith sees not the things that are seen and felt; sensible enjoyments, for example, are not the object of faith, but sense: but faith sees the things that can neither be seen nor felt; it believes contrary to sense; yea, things impossible to nature, and incredible to carnal reason, considering only the power of God, that speaks in the word, as you see in the faith of Abraham. The greatest glory of Christ is invisible and incredible to nature; therefore we do not think much of him, if our faith does not terminate on things not seen. Again,

14. What think ye of his *tabernacles and ordinances?* Surely, if you think much of Christ, his tabernacles will be *amiable* to you. The slighter of his ordinances, is a slighter of Christ; a slighter of prayer, is a slighter of Christ; a slighter of the word, is a slighter of Christ: *He that despises you, despises me; and he that despises me, despises him that sent me.* Again,

15. What think ye of his *cause and interest*, such as the much forgotten Reformation-work in Scotland, which our forefathers established by solemn National

Covenants? If, the more it is forgotten among ministers and people, the more nearly it lies to your heart, and the more you long for its reviving, it were an evidence you think something of Christ, when others think little of him. But, alas! How little is this thought of in the age we live in! If the generation thought more of Christ, there would be more zeal for his interest, honour, and public Reformation-work. And, perhaps, the confusions of our day, the heavy bondage we are complaining of through the land, will never cease to grow to a height of terrible wrath, till we be brought to a sense of our defection, and a humble confession and reformation. Further,

16. What think ye of his *cross* and *crown*? Is his cross your crown? Surely they think much of Christ, that can say with Paul, *God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ*. Moses thought his cross better than a crown, *esteeming the reproach of Christ greater riches than all the treasures of Egypt*. They that think much of Christ, must resolve upon it, that the world will not think much of them, but that they will be crossed, reproached, and nicknamed; but if Christ was nicknamed for us, and *endured the contradiction of sinners against himself*, we may well bear a reproach for him, especially when he hath said, *If ye be reproached for the name of Christ, happy are ye; for the Spirit of glory and of God resteth on you: on their part he is evil spoken of, but on your part he is glorified; his cross makes way for his crown, and in the mean time his sweetness swallows up all the bitterness thereof*.

17. What think ye of his *friends*? If you think highly of him, surely his friends and followers will be esteemed as *the excellent ones of the earth, in whom is all your delight*; and consequently his foes will be disesteemed by you: and therefore,

18. What think ye of his *enemies*? Though they were appearing in never so much worldly pomp, you will think very little of them, if you know them to be his enemies: *O my soul, come not thou into their secret; to their assembly, mine honour, be not thou united*.—What think ye of his enemies *within* you? When you find these

these like *thorns in the flesh*, like splinters run into the flesh, does it not make you, with Paul, *to beseech the Lord thrice*; yea, to pray thrice, and thrice, and a hundred times thrice, with sighs and groans, to be freed from them?—What think ye of his enemies *about you*? I mean, the world, and the lusts thereof; *the lusts of the flesh, the lusts of the eye, and the pride of life*. I have read a pretty story, which I reckon useful no other way than for the moral of it, how an angel and an hermit should have been travelling together: when first they went by a dead carcase, the hermit stopt his nose, and the angel smiled; and, after that, they went by a wanton strumpet proudly dressed, at which the hermit smiled, and the angel stopt his nose. The moral shews us, that in the sight of God and angels, no carrion is so noisom as pride is. But the more highly that any think of Christ, surely the more humble they are; and pride will accordingly be hid from their eyes. Again,

19. What think ye of the *world's thoughts* of Christ? If you think highly of him yourself, you will be mightily surprized, and look upon it as a great wonder why the world think so little of him. O strange! that all the world are not taken up with him!

20. What think ye of your *own thoughts* of him? Surely, if you think duly of him, you will think you have but very poor, mean, low, contemptible, and unworthy thoughts of him; you will think that you cannot think enough of him, *who is fairer than the sons of men; the Prince of the kings of the earth; altogether lovely*.—These are some probationary questions, by which you may take your own hearts to task before the Lord.

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

Fourthly, This doctrine might again be applied by way of *lamentation* over all Christ-despisers, who either stand

stand upon a legal bottom, trusting in themselves, and their own righteousness; or who slight Christ and his ordinances, not loving the place where his honour dwells; who delay and postpone their closing with him, giving away the prime and virginity of their affections to the world, prostituting their precious souls to their lusts and the ignoble things of time; who sit down satisfied and content without Christ, never miss him, nor feel a want of him, nor seek after union and communion with him. Oh! whence is it that you despise Christ at this rate! Alas! it is through ignorance and unbelief, that you *see no form nor comeliness in Christ, why he should be desired*; and the god of this world hath blinded your minds who believe not, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine into them. Do you consider what a miserable case you are in, while you despise and think so little of Christ? — You are in imminent danger of *temporal* judgments; for God, in his holy providence, may resent the injuries done to his Son; he may *leave your house desolate*. — You are exposed to *spiritual* judgments, such as that, Isa. vi. 10. of having your *heart made fat, your ears heavy, and your eyes shut*; and to *eternal* wrath, even everlasting destruction from his presence: *He that believes not shall be damned*. Now,

Fifthly, Let me offer a word of *exhortation*. O Sirs, seek that the Spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of Christ may be sent, that, beholding his glory, your thoughts concerning Christ may be changed; and you may be brought to esteem him, and to go home with the *Rose of Sharon* in your bosom; Christ in your heart. O sinner, will you tell me, do you think it worth your while to take Christ, and embrace him before you go? If you say you cannot believe, you cannot repent, you cannot mourn for sin, you cannot pray, you cannot obey; and so, because you have no grace, no strength to do any thing, you are discouraged: I must tell you, sinner, when you conceive religion to be some great difficulty above your power, and thereupon are discouraged and damped, you do not think of Christ

as you ought, but of yourself, forsooth, as if you were the fountain from whence these good things should flow. The law may and does discourage sinners; yea, curses every Christless sinner unto hell; but the gospel offers no discouragement to sinners, but all encouragement. Perhaps you will find us that are ministers, sometimes going off from our most gospel-texts that we can choose; and when we explain faith, we will tell you how many things it includes; such as, the forsaking of all sin, and the performing of all duty, and studying universal holiness: but whatever be the fruits of faith, which the Lord makes to grow out of it, yet faith itself is a great mystery; and whatever you hear us say, that leads you off from this question, *What think ye of Christ?* suspect it. I will tell you, in the Lord's name, that to believe imports no more than to take Christ for all; it is to think you have nothing, and can do nothing; but that he hath all, and can do all; and therefore you will take him for all.—You think you cannot *believe*: well said, but, *What think ye of Christ?* If you think to bring faith out of your own bowels, you think unworthily of Christ, who is the *author of faith*; and of his Father, who is the giver of it.—You think you cannot *repent*: true; but, *What think ye of Christ?* If you think to bring repentance out of yourselves, you think unworthily of him, who is *exalted by the right-hand of God, to give repentance*.—You think you cannot do this, or that *duty* you are called to; but, *What think ye of Christ?* If you sit poring on yourself, and your own abilities, never a good turn will you do: nay, you think unworthily of Christ, who hath said, *Without me ye can do nothing*, but by me strengthening you, ye can do all things. You are discouraged, because you think you have not this thing in yourself, or that thing in yourself: but that is unbelief, man; for, faith lies in thinking, what am I in Christ? Isa. xlv. 24. *Surely shall one say,* [and they shall not only say it with their mouth verbally, but think it in their heart believingly] *In the Lord have I righteousness and strength.* And because, by the mouth of two or three witnesses, every word is confirmed there are three *in the Lords* in that one chapter, *ye*

Israel shall be saved IN THE LORD, with an everlasting salvation; ver. 25. IN THE LORD shall all the seed of Israel be justified, and shall glory; and in this 24th ver. IN THE LORD have I righteousness and strength. And if you be once brought to this believing thought, In the Lord have I righteousness; in the Lord have I strength; in the Lord I have salvation; in the Lord I have all; then you will find your work easy, and all going right.

Now, you that cannot be brought to think much of Christ: O pray God, if perhaps the thoughts of your heart may be forgiven you! and whereas you think nothing of him now, O consider what you will think of him in a day of challenges, when conscience awakens! in a day of desolation, Isa. x. in the day of death, in the day of judgment! What will you think of him, when you see him mounting the tribunal, and when pronouncing the fearful sentence, *Depart from me ye cursed!*? Surely you must have dreadful thoughts of him then, if you cannot be brought to think highly of him now; now, when he is not come to destroy mens lives, but to save. But you, believer, that now think highly of him, whatever great thoughts you have of Christ now, yet what will you think of him in that day, when *he who is your life shall appear, and ye shall appear with him in glory?* O believer, what will ye think of him, when he pronounces the sentence of absolution, *Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you?* O! what will ye think of his palace, his attendants, his throne, crown, and glory?

Sixthly, I would offer an *advice* to you that think much of Christ, and have a high esteem of him.

1st, That you would evidence your hearty *esteem* of him; and that,

1. By the *degrees* of it; so as to esteem him above all things else, above all your relations: *He that loveth father or mother more than me, is not worthy of me*, Matt. x. 37. Our love to them must be hatred, when it comes to compete with Christ; *If any man come after me, and hate not father and mother, he is not worthy of*

me. Above all worldly advantages; yea, above life; Rev. xxi. 11. *They loved not their lives to the death; their pangs of love were stronger than the pangs of death.*

2. By the *effects* of it; such as,

(1.) Desire of *converse*: if you think much of Christ, you will desire his company in all ordinances; you will seek him in the temple, you will seek him in the closet; in every ordinance, public or private, you will earnestly seek and desire him.

(2.) Entertaining no *rival* that comes in competition with him, but saying, *What have I to do any more with idols?* giving cheerfully up with all other lords and lovers.

(3.) *Sympathy*; grieving at these things that are grievous to him.

(4.) Preserving his *memory*, living upon him: like the woman that drank the powder of her dead husband's body, mingled with her daily drink; so should ye, by faith, daily eat the flesh, and drink the blood of the Son of God.

2dly, A *second* advice is, that you would do all that you can, to make *others think as much of him as you do*; and that,

1. By *commending* him, and telling others of his beauty, that they may admire him. See the practice of the spouse for this, Song v.; and what influence it had upon the daughters of Jerusalem their beginning to think much of him, and seek after him also, Song vi. 1. O then, commend him to your families, your children, and your neighbours.

2. By *adorning the gospel*, and *walking worthy of him*, and *wearing his livery*. It is a master's honour and credit to have a good servant, and well arrayed; they think much of the master that hath such a servant. And how does it proclaim the praises of Christ, when they that profess him are eminent for piety, 1 Pet. ii. 9.

3. In a word, *Let your light so shine before men, that others, seeing your good works, may glorify God*, and think much of Christ. O let your hearts be still thinking of him, your life praising, and your tongue speaking of

him! Here is a fountain for spiritual discourse: if you have an opportunity of conversing with any, concerning the great solemnity you have been witnesses to here; or if any ask you, Where was such or such a minister's text? here is a fair occasion for spiritual converse; for, you cannot, in a manner tell them this text, without asking them a question, *What think ye of Christ?*





S E R M O N LII, LIII:

The GRADUAL CONQUEST; or,
Heaven won by little and little.

DEUT. vii. 22.

*And the Lord thy God will put out these nations before thee,
by little and little.*

YOU that have been right communicants at this occasion, you have been upon the field of battle, fighting in the name and strength of the Lord against your spiritual enemies; what victory you have got, I cannot tell: but some may, perhaps, be saying, Oh! I find my enemies to be yet strong and mighty; *Iniquities prevail against me*; and, I fear, I never get to the full possession of the heavenly Canaan, there are so many and strong nations of enemies in the way, which I cannot get conquered. To such as may be thus exercised, the words of my text may be welcome news, *The Lord thy God will put out these nations before thee, by little and little.* We have here God's promise to Israel of old, concerning their being brought to the possession of the earthly Canaan, which you know was a type of the heavenly Canaan; and, lest they should be discouraged by the difficulty of the conquest, so many enemies being in the way, he animates them against the greatest discouragement. 1. If they objected the *number* of their enemies, and their strength; he answers that objection, ver. 17, 18. He had destroyed greater enemies than these for them; and he that had done the greater,

• This subject was discussed in two sermons, preached at the sacramental solemnity at Carnock, July 3d, 1727. It has undergone six impressions.

would easily do the less; he that began the work, would finish it. 2. If they objected the *weakness* of their own strength and forces; he answers that objection, ver. 20, 21. Their greatest encouragement was, that they had God among them, a mighty God, and terrible; and if God be with us, if God be for us, we need not fear the power of any creature against us. 3. If they objected the *slow progress* of their arms, and feared that the Canaanites would never be subdued, if they were not expelled at the first; to this it is answered in the words of our text, *The Lord thy God will put out these nations, by little and little.* Where you may notice two things.

1st. Israel's *enemies* described; they are called *nations*, because of their multitude and power.

2^{dly}. Israel's *conquest*; *The Lord thy God will put them out before thee, by little and little.* Where you may notice both the glorious Conqueror, and the manner of the conquest.

1. The *Conqueror* is God, described by his sovereignty over them, *the Lord*: and by his propriety in them, *thy God.* He it is that fights their battles.

2. The *manner* of the conquest: he will do it, 1. *Effectually*; He will put them out. 2. *Remarkably*; He will put them out *before thee.* 3. *Gradually*, which is the special thing here noticed in the manner of the conquest, namely, *by little and little.* The same you read, Exod. xxiii. 29, 30. The wisdom of God is to be remarked in the gradual conquest of his people's enemies; and it is in real kindness to the church, that her enemies are subdued by little and little.

Now, Israel, being typical of the church; and the land of Canaan typical of heaven; and Israel's conquest over the nations, their enemies, typical of the spiritual conquest of the Lord's people over their spiritual enemies; and the manner of God's dealing with them for the most part, typical of the way of God's dealing with his people in all ages: therefore I would deliver to you the gospel of this text, and open it in this one doctrinal observation;

DOCT. *That as the true Israel of God have nations of enemies in their way to the possession of the heavenly Canaan;*

Canaan; so the Lord their God will conquer these nations, by little and little.

I shall endeavour to open and confirm this doctrine in the following method.

- I. Enquire who are the *true Israel* of God.
- II. Speak a little of the *heavenly Canaan*, which they will be brought to the possession of.
- III. Enquire what *nations of enemies* they have in their way.
- IV. Speak a little of the *Conqueror*, the *Lord their God*.
- V. The *manner* of the conquest, his putting them out before them by *little and little*.
- VI. The *reasons* of this gradual conquest.
- VII. Make *application* of the whole, in several uses.

And in all these, I shall endeavour as much brevity as possible. Mean time, look to the Lord, that he would give some word with power, and with a blessing.

I. The *first* thing, Who are the *true Israel* of God, to whom this promise is made in the mystical and spiritual sense of it? *They are not all Israel that are of Israel.*

1. The true Israel of God, whom he will bring to the heavenly Canaan, are a people whom he hath *set apart for himself*, and *separated from the rest of the world*, as Israel was. The true Israel are set apart, not only by election, from eternity; but by effectual calling, in time. As, in the first creation, God separated the *light* from the *darkness*, and made the one *day*, and the other *night*; so, in effectual calling, he separates the elect from others, as light from darkness: he leaves the rest of the world buried in their own obscurity, and makes the others children of light. By effectual calling, they get convincing grace, others are left stupid and seared; they get enlightening grace, and others are left in the dark; they get renewing grace, and others are left in their enmity; they get persuading and enabling grace to believe, others are left in their unbelief, and remain *children of disobedience* and unperfuadableness: *This people*

ple have I formed for myself, they shall shew forth my praise.
Hence,

2. The true Israel of God are a people whom he hath *brought out of Egypt*, in a spiritual sense, as Israel was in a temporal; and that with a *high hand*, and *outstretched arm*. He hath brought them out of the Egypt of a natural state, and out of the house of bondage; from their natural bondage to sin and Satan, their bondage to the law, as a covenant of works, putting them to the hard task and intolerable labour of *doing for life*; a task much worse than the Egyptian bondage, of making *brick without straw*: he hath brought them, I say, out of the *house of bondage* with a high hand: no power in the world being able to loose their bonds, if the power of a God had not been put forth for that end. They are a people redeemed, not only by the price of the Mediator's blood, but also by the power of his Spirit: by his power he hath begun to plague their enemies, and to drown them in the Red-sea of his blood; for, they *overcome by the blood of the Lamb*.

3. The true Israel of God are a people acquaint with *travelling in the wilderness*, from Sinai to Zion, as Israel was; I mean, from the law to the gospel; from the covenant of works to the covenant of grace. As Israel at Sinai was amazed at the sight of God appearing in his terrible majesty, and afterwards were brought into covenant with him; so the true Israel of God are a people that have been humbled with the views of God's holiness and infinite justice in the command and threatening of the law; and been made to *flie for refuge to the hope set before them*, in the gospel-covenant: they have come from Sinai to Zion; to *Jesus the Mediator of the new covenant*, and to the *blood of sprinkling*.

4. The true Israel of God are a people acquaint with the *conduct of the pillar of cloud and of fire*, as Israel was; I mean, they have gotten the Spirit of Christ to be their guide in the way to Canaan: *If any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his*; and if any man have the Spirit of Christ, he is guided thereby, and *led into all truth*, and out of all the paths of damnable error. There is a leading of the Spirit by a secret invisible hand,
and

and by the means of the word, that all the Israel of God are partakers of; even a voice behind them, saying, *This is the way*, and that is not the way; and all *his sheep know his voice*.

5. The true Israel of God are a people *fed with manna from heaven*, in a spiritual sense, as Israel was in another sense: they are a people that eat the *hidden manna*; that *have bread to eat the world knows not of*; even *the bread of life that came down from heaven*: they live by faith on the Son of God; Christ is the ALPHA and OMEGA of their life; the food and medicine of their life; the restorer and preserver of their life: they cannot live without him. The worldling lives upon his riches, the carnal man lives upon his lusts, hypocrites live upon their profession, legalists live upon their duties; but the true Israel of God live, in the way of duty upon Christ himself, as their *wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, and redemption*. If I have any wisdom, Christ is my wisdom; if any righteousness, Christ is my righteousness; if any holiness, Christ is my sanctification: Christ is my ALL; my life, my strength, my treasure, my hope, my deliverer, my friend, my Saviour, my complete salvation.

6. The true Israel of God are a people acquaint with *wrestling with God for the blessing*, as Jacob was, who thereupon obtained the name of ISRAEL; and all believers are thereupon called the *seed of Jacob*, that shall *not seek his face in vain*. They are a people, whose life of faith is acted much upon their knees; or in a way of praying in the name of Christ, and in the Spirit of Christ; *Praying in the Holy Ghost: This is the generation of them that seek thee; that seek thy face, O Jacob's God*. They are always wanters, and that makes them constantly seekers and beggars.

II. The *second* thing was, to speak a little of the *heavenly Canaan*, that they will be brought to the possession of. I would hold it forth in these four particulars, namely, in its *types, epithets, parts, and properties*.

1st, In its *types*. The types of the heavenly Canaan were many. I shall name a few of them.

1. The *earthly Canaan* was a type of the *heavenly*
and

and *celestial* Canaan. How magnificently does the Lord speak of Canaan? It is called *a goodly land; a holy land; a land flowing with milk and honey*: yet this land was but a type and shadow of the heavenly.

2. *Paradise* was a type of this heavenly Canaan. Though all the pleasant orchards, and comely things in the world were unite in one, they could not come that length as to compete with the earthly paradise for pleasure and comeliness, when God placed our first parents there in their innocent state: yet, what was it but a faint resemblance of the heavenly paradise? nothing but a shadow of it.

3. The *Sabbath* was a type of this heavenly, happy, and eternal Sabbath of rest. Indeed it is unsettled rest the Lord's people have here; when they rest in the Lord at any time, their rest is soon disturbed: even though they can say at times, *Return unto thy rest, O my soul, for the Lord hath dealt bountifully with thee*; how soon does the devil, the ill heart, and the world disquiet them again? But *there remains a rest*, [a *SABBATISM*,] *for the people of God, when they shall rest from their labour*; rest from sin and sorrow.

4. The *tabernacle* was a type of the heavenly Canaan: *the Lord's presence filled the tabernacle*. O how does his glorious presence fill heaven, and fill all the hearts of the heavenly inhabitants! glorious things are spoken of the earthly Zion: how much more glorious things may be spoken of the new Jerusalem above! But then, *2dly*, We may consider the heavenly Canaan in its *epiteths*; as,

1. It is called a *house*, John xiv. 2. *A mansion-house, a prepared place*. *In my Father's house are many mansions; I go to prepare a place for you*. O what a noble house is it, where glory dwells! What an excellent house will it be, when the Father of the family will be in the midst of the house, and all his children about him; all his elect gathered together from all the corners of the earth; where the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, Christ himself, the elder Brother, and all the younger brethren will dwell together!

2. It is called the *joy of the Lord*: *Enter thou into the joy*

joy of thy Lord. Joy here enters into the believer; but there the believer enters into joy: he enters, as it were, into an ocean of joy; and it is the joy of his Lord Jesus. How great is the joy that our Lord entered into, as the reward of his obedience unto death? of which it is said, Heb. xii. 2. that, *For the joy that was set before him, he endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right-hand of the throne of God.* That same joy the saints are to enter into; *In thy presence there is fulness of joy, and at thy right-hand, there are pleasures for evermore.*

3. It is called *life, eternal life*; Rom. vi. 23. *The gift of God is eternal life, through Jesus Christ our Lord.* Life is sweet; and the more excellent the life is, the more sweet. A living fly is more happy, by reason of life, than the glorious sun in the firmament. The rational life is yet more sweet; the life of grace is yet sweeter than any of these: but the life of glory is sweetest of all; and this life is eternal; it is life for evermore.

4. It is called a *kingdom, a heavenly kingdom*; 2 Tim. iv. 18. *The Lord shall preserve me to his heavenly kingdom.* Yea, such a kingdom, that all the subjects here are kings. One said of Rome once, that it was *Republica regum*; "A commonwealth of kings:" it is true of heaven, it is a commonwealth of kings; they are all *kings and priests unto their God.* And there all the kings have their *crowns*; a crown of glory, righteousness, and joy. They will have their *thrones*; *To him that overcomes, will I give to sit with me on my throne, &c.* They will have their *royal robes*; their *robes of glory, and palms of victory.* But again,

3dly, We may consider this heavenly Canaan in its *parts.* There are especially these four parts of heaven and glory mentioned in scripture, namely, *vision, likeness, love, satisfaction.*

The *first* part of it is the *vision* of God; 1 Cor. xiii. 12. *Now we see through a glass darkly, but then face to face. Father, I will, that these whom thou hast given me, may be with me where I am, to behold my glory.* New cabinets of rich treasure will be opened up to them every moment to eternity.

2. The *second* part of it is *likeness*, which follows upon the former; *We shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is*, 1 John iii. 2. This is the native fruit of beholding Christ, to be thereby brought to conformity to him, 2 Cor. iii. 18.

3. The *third* part of it is *love*: this follows upon the former. Likeness breeds love, even upon earth: then will the saints be made *perfect in love*, 1 John iv. 18. O what flames of love will burn in heaven! Every faint will be a flame.

4. The *fourth* part of it is *satisfaction*, which proceeds from the rest; Psalm xvii. 15. *I will behold thy face in righteousness; when I awake, I shall be satisfied with thy likeness.*—All this is begun on earth in the heirs of glory. The brighter view a believer gets of Christ, the more likeness; the more likeness, the more love; and the more love, the more satisfaction. But, O when there shall be perfect seeing, there will be perfect likeness; when perfect likeness, perfect love; and when perfect love, perfect satisfaction and joy: then *the ransomed of the Lord shall return, and come unto Zion with songs, and everlasting joy upon their heads: they shall obtain joy and gladness, and sorrow and sighing shall flee away*, Isa. xxxv. 10.

4thly, We might consider this heavenly Canaan in its *properties*. It is another sort of inheritance than the earthly Canaan.

1. It is a *glorious* inheritance: it is glory itself; yea, an *exceeding great and eternal weight of glory*, 2 Cor. iv. 17. God, who is every-where present, is there gloriously. To make a weak allusion: The sun in the firmament, is in this or that place, by his rays and beams; but in the firmament, in a glorious manner: so God is here on earth, in his grace, and the rays of his countenance; but in heaven, in a glorious way. O Sirs, there the saints are, indeed, *all glorious within*, and without both; their bodies glorious, *like unto Christ's glorious body*, when once they are raised; their souls glorious, because *perfect in holiness*.

2. It is an *heavenly* inheritance; therefore called a *heavenly kingdom*, as I said, in opposition to earthly king-

kingdoms. There the great King is heavenly, the subjects are heavenly, the work is heavenly, the reward heavenly, the company heavenly, the converse heavenly, all heavenly.

3. It is a *purchased* and *promised* inheritance; called a *purchased possession*, Eph. i. 14. The crown is purchased, the throne purchased, the robes purchased, and all purchased by the blood of the Lamb; which makes them sing that melodious song, *Worthy is the Lamb that was slain*. And as it is purchased, so it is *promised in Christ before the world began*, 2 Tim. i. 9. and Titus i. 2. The earthly Canaan was a promised land; they had it by promise made to Abraham first, and in him to them: so is heaven promised to Christ, and in him to all the spiritual Israel.

4. It is an *eternal* inheritance; 1 Pet. i. 4. *An inheritance incorruptible, undefiled, and that fadeth not away*. The earthly Canaan was but temporary, subject to be laid desolate for the sins of the inhabitants thereof; and accordingly it was laid waste, and remains so to this day: but the heavenly Canaan is an inheritance that is not liable to corruption nor defilement, and therefore it fades not away. It cannot, like the former, be infested with enemies or ill neighbours, nor with any plague or malady: *The inhabitants of that land shall not say, I am sick*. It is a place of perfect health, without any sickness; and a happy immortality, without any death, or fear of death: a blest eternity; for, when thousands, thousands, thousands of years are gone, their happiness is but beginning. Earthly kingdoms fade, and this world's monarchs die; but, in that everlasting kingdom, *death is swallowed up in victory*. If it were to have an end after millions of years, it were enough to make them live in perplexity and trouble; but it is eternal and everlasting.—There is a short description, from the word, of that heavenly Canaan.

III. The *third* thing is, to show what *nations of enemies and oppositions* are in the way to this heavenly Zion. See how many and mighty nations stood in the way of Israel's possessing the earthly Canaan, verse first

of this chapter where our text lies: *Seven nations greater and mightier than they.* And after they came to that land of promise, some of these nations were suffered to dwell among them, particularly the Jebusites, that were prickles in their eyes, and thorns in their sides. And, in process of time, God stirred up other nations against them, for just and holy causes; as the Philistines, the Moabites, the Ammonites, that coasted near their dwelling; besides the Assyrians and Babylonians from remoter countries, that led them captive. And, besides outward enemies and foreign invasions, they were not a little vexed and disquieted with civil and intestine dissensions: there was Saul's house against David's, and David's against Saul; Israel against Judah, and Judah against Israel; Manasse's against Ephraim, and Ephraim against Manasse: nations thus both without and within, and enemies on every side. Now, in like manner, there are great and mighty nations that oppose the true Israel of God in their way to the heavenly Canaan above, and that hinder their peaceable possession of any part of heaven that, through grace, they possess on earth. In allusion, therefore, to the seven nations here, that God cast out before Israel of old; I shall show seven of these nations of spiritual enemies and oppositions that are in the way to the heavenly Canaan, and that disturb the Israel of God in any begun possession that they may have here, through grace.

I only premise, that as, in an outward sense, all nations of the earth proceed from one root and original, namely, the first man Adam; so, in a spiritual sense, most part of all the nations that oppose our happiness do spring from one root; and the grand root is original sin and natural corruption: here is the great commander, that leads forth multitudes of nations of actual oppositions against God, and the Israel of God that are bound for the heavenly Canaan. *A body of sin and death* is the fertile womb that brings forth swarms in one day; yea, there, as it were, *whole nations are born at once.* But more particularly, there are these *seven nations* that oppose and vex the Israel of God in their way to Canaan.

1. A nation of *vain thoughts.* We are by nature *vain*

in our imaginations, Rom. i. 21.: and these vain thoughts lodge within the walls of Jerusalem; *O Jerusalem, wash thine heart from wickedness; how long shall vain thoughts lodge within thee?* Jer. iv. 14. These nations lodge within, take bed and board with you, and eat up the very sap of your souls; therefore, when David says, Psal. cxix. 113. *I hate vain thoughts*, he expresses them with a word that signifies the *sprig* and *branch* that grows in a tree, which draws the sap out of it, and makes it fruitless. Do you not find a nation of this sort swarming about your heart every day, and every hour of the day? Yea, I am mistaken if these Philistines have not been upon you, and if these nations have not been besetting you, and besieging your souls in time of hearing, praying, communicating at this occasion; and, I imagine, they who are exercised and bound for heaven, will find a need of almighty power to put out this nation before them, though there were no more. And, indeed, these vain thoughts are like the flying posts to the rest of the nations that may be named. But then,

2. There is a nation of *worldly cares*, which Christ compares to *briars* and *thorns*, that *choke the seed of the word*, Mark iv. 9. and Luke viii. 14. This nation goes under the name of *Frugality*; but, if you look narrowly to its armour, you will find the motto thereof to be *Careful about many things, but neglecting the one thing necessary*: and yet this is such a powerful nation, that many people are subdued by it, so as they can do nothing but mind earthly things, and so lose heaven, and come short of salvation; yea, such is the power of this nation even over the Israel of God, that he is obliged, in a manner, to smite them, and extirpate the world out of their heart with a rod of correction; *For the iniquity of his covetousness was I wroth, and smote him*, Isa. lvii. 17.: yea, the rod of God will not do it, till the grace of God efficaciously be exerted; *I hid me, and was wroth; and yet he went on frowardly in the way of his heart*: but sovereign powerful grace steps in; *I have seen his ways, and will heal him*.

3. There is a nation of *doubts* and *fears*, and *sinful discouragements*, and *unbelieving objections*, Psal. xliii. 6, 7.

The soul is overfet and overwhelmed oft-times with them. They may well be compared unto a nation; they are so many, that no sooner does a minister begin to answer objections, but the unbelieving heart will raise a thousand more; and so mighty, that there is no subduing of them, till Christ himself rebuke them, as he did the raging waves of the sea, with a word of power, and so create a calm in the soul. This is a nation that *rages*, like the *heathen* spoken of, Psal. ii. and *imagines* many *vain things against the Lord, and his Anointed*; but the Lord stills the rage with the *rod of his strength*, that he *sends out of Zion*, when he *makes a people willing in the day of his power*. He answers the doubts and objections of unbelief, and stills the fears and discouragements of his people, either by a word of power let into the heart, such as that, *Fear not, it is I; be not afraid: O thou of little faith, wherefore didst thou doubt?* Or by a breathing of his Spirit, accompanying a word that is spoken to the ear.

4. There is a nation of *ungodly men* from without, that also vex and oppose the Israel of God in their way to the heavenly Canaan; *Judge me, O God, and plead my cause against an ungodly nation*, Psalm xliii. 1. This is a nation that many times suppresses and bears down the work of God in the soul. The company and influence of the ungodly, that mock at religion, and laugh at sacred things, is a great let and impediment to the salvation of a soul. And as it was with Israel of old, so it is with the church in all ages; she is never without enemies that annoy her: there are four sorts of ungodly men, that the church of God generally complain of; the *tyrant*, the *atheist*, the *heretic*, and the *hypocrite*: some of these would subvert, and others pervert her. The *tyrant*, by heart-hatred and open persecution; the *atheist*, by profanity of life; the *heretic*, by corruption of doctrine; and the *hypocrite*, by pretences of holiness. These nations of ungodly men do oppose the Israel of God, partly by force, and partly by fraud: and, indeed, the secret enemies are usually the most dangerous of the two; they that use fraud, more dangerous than these that use force: for these, being seen and known, are

are more easily avoided ; but the other not so easily shunned, because not suspected.

5. There is a nation of *mighty kings*, and *powerful giants*, as the sons of Anak are called, Num. xiii. 33. How many great kings did the Lord give unto the hand of Israel? such as, Og, king of Bashan ; Sihon, king of the Amorites, Psa. cxxxvi. 18, 19, 20. Psa. cxxxv. 10, 11. But there are greater kings and potentates than these, that stand in the way of the possession of the heavenly Canaan. There are more especially, four kings, mighty kings, to be subdued : for,

(1.) As *sin* is a mighty king, that reigns in us, and over us naturally ; therefore says the apostle, Rom. vi. 12. *Let not sin reign in your mortal body : so,*

(2.) *Satan* is a mighty king in his own territories ; therefore called the *prince of this world* ; the *prince of the power of the air, that rules in the hearts of the children of disobedience*, Eph. ii. 2.

(3.) *Self* is a mighty king ; it competes with king Jesus, and keeps his throne, so long as the *loftiness of man is not brought down*, and the *haughtiness of man made low*, Isa. ii. 11. that the *Lord alone may be exalted in the heart* : and, even after Christ is exalted to the throne of the heart, *Self* is still fighting and working for the throne. It is a king that all the world adores.

(4.) *Death* is a mighty king ; therefore called the *king of terrors*, Job xviii. 14. He is a king, that is the terror of kings, as well as inferior subjects. This is called the *last enemy of God's Israel* ; *The last enemy to be destroyed is death* : and happy they that get the *sting of death* removed, which is *sin*. See 1 Cor. xv. 54,—57. *Death shall be swallowed up in victory*. Christ is the victorious conqueror of this and all other enemies : however, these are mighty kings in the way ; and some of them have mighty giants in their armies, particularly these three, *viz.* king *Sin*, king *Satan*, and king *Self* ; these three have powerful armies to fight their hellish battles. And there are,

6. A nation of *deceitful lusts* in the heart ; so called, Eph. iv. 22. These are like so many deputies and officers, captains, and lieutenants, fighting under the banner

ner of king *Sin*, king *Self*, and king *Satan*, against king JESUS, the God of glory. O what swarms of lusts make up this army of hell! If you will travel through the camp of your heart, you will see an armed regiment of gigantic lusts: there you may see *grim-faced ignorance*, armed with the devil's black livery: there you may see *curst atheism* and *unbelief*, armed with lies and blasphemies, and bitter invectives against heaven: there you will see *cruel enmity*, armed with a bloody sword of forcible opposition unto God and Christ: there you will see *subtile hypocrisy*, armed with fraud, and flattery: there you will see *brazen-faced hardness of heart*, armed with a brow of brass: there you may see *dulcish security*, armed with a fearless spirit, and a stupid conscience; *bold presumption*, armed with a daring countenance; *towering pride*, armed with a robe of gaudy attire, and an eye of scorn, contempt, and disdain; as also *self-righteous confidence*, armed with gross ignorance both of the spirituality of the law, and mystery of the gospel. There is a powerful nation of heart-plagues and deceitful lusts, that reign over the ungodly world, and many times rage in the hearts of unbelievers to the leading of them captive.

7. There is a nation of *actual out-breakings* in the life, and *sins* in the conversation: these are, like the common soldiers of the army of hell, making daily excursions into the camp of Israel; yea, every hour of the day they are breaking out on this hand, and on that hand, and round about us on all hands, in innumerable omissions and commissions. Here breaks out *intemperance* and *insobriety*, in eating, drinking, and using of the comforts of life; there breaks out *idle words*, *vain talking*, *unprofitable conversation*: here appears *negligence* in duty, and *carelessness* and *indifferency* in hearing, reading, praying, communicating; and there appears *mispending* of time, Sabbath and week days both, wasting our precious opportunities, and mis-improving our talents, without endeavouring to do good or get good, to glorify God, or edify these that are conversant with us. The former nation I mentioned was the *lusts of the flesh*, and this nation is the *works of the flesh*: the lusts
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of the flesh are deceitfully hidden within the walls; the works of the flesh are open and manifest, making continual outward excursions. You may have a list of them, Gal. v. 19,—21. *Now the works of the flesh are manifest, which are these, adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lasciviousness, envyings, murders, drunkenness, revellings.* Another list of the names of the soldiers of this army you may read, 2 Tim. iii. 1,—5. *Men shall be lovers of themselves:* there goes the king and commander in chief, SELF-LOVE; and then follows a list of the common soldiers, *Covetous, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy, without natural affection, truce-breakers, false accusers, incontinent, fierce, despisers of those that are good, traitors, heady, high-minded, lovers of pleasures, &c.*

Now, these are the seven nations continually in arms, and at work for hell, and against heaven: the nation of *vain thoughts* continually flying post through the rest of the nations for intelligence; the nation of *worldly cares*, continually making provision for the flesh, to fulfil the lusts thereof; the nation of *doubts*, and *unbelieving fears*, and *jealousies*, is still keeping watch, and standing centry at the door of the heart, to keep out all heavenly messages, and exclude all proposals of peace with heaven; the nation of *ungodly men* continually guarding the out-works of hell, and plying their large artillery and battering rams, to beat down what God, and Christ, and the gospel would build up; the nation of *mighty kings*, that I mentioned, are still issuing forth new commands and orders for war against heaven; the nation of *deceitful lusts*, like officers of the army, are still mustering the host, leading them forth to the field of battle, and setting them in battle-array; and the nation of *actual sins* and *out-breakings*, are still brandishing their swords and spears, and other impliments of war, making daily and hourly excursions out of the camp of hell, and incursions upon their opposites and antagonist; running upon the camp of Israel, to destroy them, and hinder their march to the heavenly Canaan.

Now, to these seven nations all the world of mankind are, by nature, kept in subjection; and, which is worse, they are willing slaves and captives to them: and even

the Israel of God, that have left their camp, and fled under the colours and standard of the Lord Jesus Christ, the Captain of salvation, are many times led captive to them: they are still giving battle to Israel.—Now, O thou that art bound for the celestial Canaan, what thinkest thou of these nations? Are they not seven nations greater and mightier than thou? Surely, if thou hast found, to thy sad experience, the power, and the policy, and the pernicious influence of these mighty nations upon thee, it will be welcome news to hear that *the Lord thy God will put out these nations from before thee, by little and little.*

IV. The *fourth* thing that I proposed, was, to speak a little of the *Conqueror* of these nations; that is, *The King of glory; the Lord, strong and mighty; the Lord, mighty in battle.* Indeed, they that have such mighty nations to fight and debate with, have need of a mighty conqueror to subdue them: and he is here said to be *the Lord thy God*; where he is described, 1. By his name, JEHOVAH. 2. By his relation to them in Christ, **THY GOD.**

1st, Israel's Captain, that fights their battles, is described by his great name JEHOVAH, *the LORD*, in capital letters; which is ordinarily used in all our English translations, to intimate, that in the original it is JEHOVAH: and it is a name that points out the perfection of his nature. It is remarked, that all along the first chapter of Genesis, while God was yet upon his creating work, he is called ELOCHIM, *a God of power*; but in the second chapter of Genesis, ver. 4. God having compleated his work, he is then called JEHOVAH-ELOCHIM, *a God of power, and perfection.* And as he here takes that name, when he perfects what he had begun; so we find him making himself known by this name, when he appears to perform what he had promised to Israel, Exod. vi. 3. *I appeared to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, by the name of GOD ALMIGHTY; but by my name JEHOVAH was I not made known to them.* God would now be known by his name JEHOVAH, as being, 1. A God performing what he had promised, and
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fo giving a being to his promifes. 2. A God *perfecting* what he had begun, and finishing his own work. And now, the subduing of the Canaanites before Ifrael, was a work that God had promifed, and a work that now he had begun; therefore, he makes himfelf known in this work by his name JEHOVAH, a *performing* and *perfecting* God. This is the powerful Conqueror, that all the true Ifrael of God have to look to, and depend upon, for destroying the nations of fpiritual enemies for them. This name belongs to our Lord Jefus Chrift, equally with the Father and the eternal Spirit. It is he that led Ifrael out of Egypt by the hand of Mofes, wrought wonders for them, and brought them to Canaan, and delivered their enemies into their hand; by all which was typified the greater falvation and deliverance that he was to work, in accomplifhing the bufinefs of our redemption in our nature. And by taking to himfelf the name JESUS, he hath not loft the name JEHOVAH; nay, he could not be a JESUS, if he were not JEHOVAH: he could not destroy thefe nations I have named, the fum of which is *fin*; for to destroy fin, is more than to make a world: fin cannot be destroyed, without fatisfying that infinite juftice that fin offended, and glorifying that infinite holinefs that fin affronted, and fulfilling the law that fin had violated, and appeafing the wrath and vengeance that fin had kindled. Further, fin could not be destroyed, without destroying the devil that begat it, and the wicked heart that brought it forth; all which requires a new creation, more great and glorious than the firft, and belongs to none but JEHOVAH. This name points out the divine glory of our Redeemer and Conqueror, which I offer in thefe two further remarks upon it.

1. This great name JEHOVAH, (as thefe that investigate the Hebrew root, obferve) fignifies *being, effence, fimple-exiftence, or felf-fubfiftence*; and imports his moft *fimple, abfolute, eternal, and independent being, and exiftence*; having his being in, of, and from himfelf; and from whofe infinite being, all creatures have their finite being.

2. This name JEHOVAH comprehends in itfelf the

three Hebrew tenses; the *preterit*, signifying the *time past*; the *present*, signifying what *is now*; and the *future*, signifying the *time to come*: and imports that designation given to Christ, Rev. i. 4, 8. *Which is, and which was, and which is to come.* Thus he is the I AM THAT I AM, as he is called, Exod. iii. 14. The ALPHA and OMEGA, the *First* and the *Last*: the first, without beginning; and the last, without end. O but they who have such a glorious General to follow, need not fear to take the field against the nations! He is JEHOVAH.

2^{dly}, Israel's Captain-general is here described by his relation to them, *THY God; the Lord THY God.* This relation is stated upon the ground of a new-covenant dispensation, even a covenant of promise in Christ Jesus. Of this covenant there was an Old-Testament dispensation, under which this people of Israel were; and a New-Testament dispensation, under which we are: the former was a darker, and this is a clearer and brighter dispensation of the same new covenant. The old covenant of works being broken and violated by the sin of man, God could not, in honour, come under this relation again to sinners, but upon the ground of a new covenant, established in Christ.—This covenant of promise was first discovered to Adam in paradise, afterwards to Abraham, and others. The promise of that new covenant was sealed by the blood of Christ *typically*, under the Old-Testament, by the sacrifices then offered; and *actually* at Jerusalem, when he *gave his life a ransom for many.* Upon the footing of this covenant, I say, it is, that he asserts this relation, *The Lord THY God.* But more particularly, for explaining this relative designation, *THY God*: we may take a fourfold view thereof.

1. As it is expressive of the *antient* federal relation betwixt God and Israel of old, the church of the Jews under that dispensation. He became their God, and they were chosen of him to be his peculiar people, beyond all other people in the world; as you see, Deut. vii. 6. *For thou art a holy people to the Lord thy God: the Lord thy God hath chosen thee to be a special people to himself, above all people on the face of the earth.* He made

made known his mind with respect to the way of salvation to them, and they to others; *He shewed his word unto Jacob, and his statutes and judgments to Israel; he hath not dealt so with any nation,* Psalm cxlvii. 19, 20. And having taken them visibly into a covenant-relation, he establishes his covenant with them and their seed; *The Lord hath delight in thy fathers to love them, and he chose their seed after them,* Deut. x. 15. And thus he said to Abraham, Gen. xvii. 7. *I will establish my covenant between me and thee, and thy seed after thee, to be a God to thee and thy seed.* Hence says God to them, *You only have I known of all the families of the earth.* All this is said of them, even with respect to their church-state, abstract from the singular saving privileges of true believers among them, who, through grace, were enabled to improve these great advantages they enjoyed above other people. By virtue of this relation that he stood in to them, he engaged, as the Lord their God, to put out the nations of the Canaanites before them by *little and little.*

2. You may view it as expressive of the *present* federal relation that God stands in to the visible church under the New-Testament, even to us the Gentiles, as succeeding to the Jews in their church-privileges, together with superadded advantages, in so far as the New-Testament dispensation does excel that of the Old. As it was said to the Jewish church, *The promise is to you and to your children,* Acts ii. 39.; and that *to them belong the adoption, and the glory, the covenant, and the promise,* Rom. ix. 4.: so, in like manner, do they belong to the Christian church, we being *grafted in among them, to partake of the root and fatness of their olive-tree,* Rom. ix. 17. Hence flows a common interest that all the members of the visible church have in God, as their God; and Christ, as their Head: not only as a head of eminency, but as an head of influence and government. All the common influences shed among the members of the visible church come from this source; and from thence result also many excellent privileges, all which are sealed in baptism, which succeeds to the seal of circumcision among the Jews. Baptism seals to us, and

to all the visible church, a common general right to God's covenant, so as we may warrantably plead the promises, and that promise in particular, *I will be your God, and you shall be my people*; which is the fundamental promise. Great are the privileges that belong to the visible church, which do not belong to these that are without: God commits to them his ministry, his oracles, and ordinances; by the means of which, he brings forth children, and gathers his elect; so as out of the church "visible there is no ordinary possibility of "salvation," Acts ii. 47. As all the baptized members of the visible church have a sealed interest in the covenant of promise, such as lays them under a special obligation to believe in Christ; so they have a claim, beyond the rest of the world, to God as their God in Christ, and as their Saviour: yea, all the church visible are said to be *in Christ*, John xv. 2.; even these branches that bear not fruit, and that shall be taken away, and cast into the fire. Baptism seals our ingraftment into Christ; that is, an ingraftment common to all that are members of the visible church, besides the saving spiritual ingraftment of true believers. Now, that common relation that you all have to God, as church-members, though it be common to believers and unbelievers; yet it is, in itself, a special privilege, whereby you are exalted above the rest of the world that are without the church; and gives every one of you a right to plead this promise to be accomplished to you in a spiritual sense, *The Lord thy God will put out these nations before you, by little and little*, even such nations of spiritual enemies as were typified by the Canaanites that Israel had to deal with. But then,

3. You may view this relative designation, *Thy God*, as expressive of the *special* relation he stands in to the church invisible, militant here upon earth; I mean, to true believers, the living members of Christ, and true Israel of God, whom he makes so, by becoming their God, in a way of sovereign free grace, in and through Jesus Christ, in whom they have a peculiar interest in God as their God, and a special title to, all the promises of the new covenant as their charter; all the promises

mises being *Tea* and *Amen* in Christ Jesus. Now, it is in this sense especially that I consider this designation, *The Lord thy God*; because it is the spiritual intent of the text that I treat, namely, as it does typify and represent the spiritual deliverance of the true Israel of God from their spiritual enemies, in order to the possession of the heavenly Canaan; yet not excluding the great appearances the Lord makes for his church visible on earth, collectively considered. And here it is proper you observe, that though this title, *The Lord thy God*, be oftentimes in scripture spoken of with respect to a visible church, a mixt people of good and bad; as when he says to Israel, *I am the Lord thy God, that brought thee out of the land of Egypt, and house of bondage*; and whereas in many instances it is spoken collectively of the whole body of the church: yet this rule is to be noticed, that where the Lord is mentioned in relation thus to a mixt people, all the privileges that flow from such a relation of God to that people, are but common privileges; I mean, common to all that visible church. Thus the privilege of bringing out of the land of Egypt, was a common privilege, common to all that people, good and bad among them; and so was this privilege of cutting off the nations of the Canaanites before them in a literal sense, and possessing them of the earthly Canaan: and, therefore, though God be called the God of a church or people collectively, which infers many excellent privileges, though common to them all, as was shewed above; yet, he is not their God, in the same respect, as he is the God of the believer, or of the true Israel. As they are not all Israel that are of Israel, (for the whole visible church, God's professing people, are of Israel; but only true believers are Israelites indeed, and Jews inwardly, the true spiritual circumcision;) so these true Israelites have a course by common, having a special and peculiar propriety in God as their God; which infers special and peculiar privileges. And hence,

4. You may view this designation, *Thy God*, as expressive of all the *blessings* that are imported in this special relation that he stands in to this true Israel. And, indeed,

indeed, the privileges imported thus in the word, *Thy God*, are innumerable and unspeakable. His being their **God**, imports, that they have an interest in all that he is, and all that he hath, and all that he can do, and is wont to do for these whose God he is. Here is a field that would take a long eternity to travel through: *Happy is the people whose God is the Lord*. All happiness in time, and for ever, is imported in it: his being their **God**, imports all the relations that he can be in to them, for making them holy and happy for ever in himself; that he is, and will be, their *Sun*, to enlighten them; their *Portion*, to enrich them; their *Father*, to pity them; their *Righteousness*, to clothe them; their *Guide*, to conduct them; their *Glory*, to crown them; and their **ALL in all**. But the text confines me to these relations imported in this title, *Thy God*, which hath a respect to his destroying their enemies before them by little and little. I only mention two of these: 1. His being their **God**, imports, that he is their *Friend*, though their enemies be many. 2. His being their **God**, imports, that he is their *Shield*, though their enemies be mighty.

[1.] Amidst the multitude of enemies, their God is their *Friend*. And, indeed, no matter who be our enemies, if God be our friend: *If God be for us*, says the apostle, *who can be against us?* Rom. viii. 31. And he is a friend to all these to whom he is a God in a peculiar manner. And his being their friend, imports, the removal of feud and enmity; his anger being turned away, and reconciliation made up through Christ, whatever was the former difference. It imports the acceptance of their persons into favour, and the obligation he lies under, as a friend, by virtue of the new covenant of grace and promise, to help them in every time of need; and to *do all their works in them and for them*; and to fight all the battles. Therefore,

[2.] Though their enemies be mighty, his being their **God**, imports, that he is their *Shield*: *The Lord God is a sun and shield to them*, Psal. lxxxiv. 11. The shields of the earth are his; and his being their shield, is to be understood both in a *defensive* and *offensive* way.

(1.) He is the Lord their God and shield to defend them;

them; *My defence is of God, which saves the upright in heart*, Psal. vii. 10. Hence called a *strong tower*, and *rock of defence*, a *hiding-place*, a *covert*, a *shadow*, to shelter them from the assaults and attacks of the nations of enemies that are within them, and round about them; *A man shall be a hiding place from the wind, a covert from the tempest; as rivers of waters in a dry place, and as the shadow of a great rock in a weary land.* Isa. xxxii. 2.

(2.) He is the Lord their God and shield, for *offending* all their enemies: hence he is said to have a sword of power girded on his thigh, for executing judgment on their enemies; Deut. xxxii. 41, 42. *If I whet my glittering sword, and mine hand take hold of judgment; I will render vengeance to mine enemies, and a reward to them that hate me: I will make mine arrows drunk with blood.* Read also ver. 43. and compare it with Isa. lxiii. 1,—4. *The day of vengeance is in mine heart, for the year of my redeemed is come.* O! it is a happy vengeance to the Israel of God, when he, as their mighty Conqueror, subdues the nations under them, and takes vengeance on all their powerful lusts and spiritual enemies. A day of vengeance to the enemy, is a day of redemption to his friends. But this leads me to

V. The *fifth* thing proposed, namely, to speak of the *manner* of the conquest. We have heard of the Conqueror, here designed, *The Lord thy God*; and now the manner of the conquest is, *He will put out these nations before thee, by little and little.* And here three things may be noticed with reference to the manner of the conquest, 1. It is obtained *powerfully* and *effectually*; *He will put out these nations.* 2. *Visibly* and *remarkably*; *He will put them out before thee.* 3. *Gradually* and *piece-meal*; *by little and little.* To each of these I would speak a word.

First, The manner of the conquest is, that it is obtained *powerfully* and *effectually*: *The Lord thy God WILL PUT OUT these nations*; or, as it is rendered in the margin, *he will PLUCK OFF these nations.* And so it is further explained, ver. 23. of this chapter; *he will deliver them unto thee, and shall destroy them with a mighty de-*

struction, till they be destroyed utterly. And he will deliver their kings into thine hand, ver. 24. And, Exod. xxiii. 30. By little and little will I drive them out. Now, thus, in the spiritual conquest, the nations must be put out: and the Lord's putting them out, does import,

1. That these nations of lusts, and spiritual enemies have *strength* and *power* upon their side; so that it is no easy work to get them driven out; yea, utterly impossible, unless the Lord our God undertake it. If you ask, where the strength of these nations lies, and particularly the strength of sin? I answer in these four things.

(1.) The strength of the nation of *sin* and of *lusts* lies in their *root*; viz. the *body of sin and death*: as the strength of a tree lies in the root; so that the ax must be laid to the root, if you would destroy it; and as the strength of the water is in the fountain, so that if you would destroy it, the fountain must be stopt up: so the strength of sin is in the root and fountain of sin that is within. And hence,

(2.) The strength of these nations of *lusts* lies in the relation they have to *ourselves*: and hence, for a man to destroy his lusts, is to *deny himself*. These nations of lusts and sins are such a part of himself, that they seem to be the best part, and the most useful part of himself; his right-hand, his right-eye, his members; *Mortify therefore your members that are upon the earth, Col. iii. 5.*

(3.) The strength of these nations lies in the *commander* and *captain-general* that leads them forth; that is, the *DEVIL*; the great quarter-master that fills the heart, as it is said of Ananias, *Acts v. 3. Why hath Satan filled thine heart, to lye to the Holy Ghost, and keep back part of the price?* It is the devil that fills the heart of people to lye, and fills their heart to swear, and fills their heart to drink and debauch, and fills their heart to keep back what service is due to God. This commander is a strong man, and cannot be conquered but by a stronger. Yea,

(4.) The strength of these nations of sin lies in the *law of works*; 1 Cor. xv. 56. *The strength of sin is the law.*

law. Sin hath dominion over all that are *under the law*, and not *under grace*, Rom. vi. 14. and that on many accounts, that I cannot now insist upon; but particularly, among the rest, because, by reason of the original breach thereof, they are under the curse of it, of which curse the strength of sin is a great part; so that no less power than that which can pull up the root, a body of sin and death, and pull down self and all the members of it, and that can destroy the devil, the captain of hell, and, at the same time, give full satisfaction to the law of the God of heaven; no less power can destroy these nations, for here their strength lies*.—The Lord's putting them out, supposes and imports this strength and power that they have upon their side.

2. It imports, that these nations of lusts and spiritual enemies have the *possession*; which, indeed, is also a great part of their strength. There would be no need of driving them out, if they were not in: nay, they are in possession; they are in actual possession of the *understanding* of all men by nature, who are therefore *alienated from the life of God, through the ignorance that is in them*. They have actual possession of the *will*; hence men are not only unwilling to let these nations go out, and as unwilling as Pharaoh was to let Israel go, though plagued from heaven for his wilfulness: but also the will is filled with *enmity against God*, and rises up in arms and opposition against him, and in favours of these lusts. Yea, they have possession of all the powers and faculties of the soul; they are deeply rooted in the heart and nature, as the Jebusites were in the land of Canaan; and there they strongly fortify and deeply intrench themselves, so that it is no easy work to drive them out: yea, as they have no will to go out, so out they will never go, till they be driven by a superior power, as Christ drove the buyers and sellers out of the temple, who turned the temple of God to a den of thieves. Therefore,

* Wherein the *strength of sin* lies, is copiously opened up from these words, *The strength of sin is the law*, Vol. V. Serm. LXXIII. &c.

3. It imports, an *exerting of the divine power* in opposition to these nations, in order to their being put out and destroyed; and that is even the almighty power of God in Christ, by the Holy Ghost; *If you through the Spirit mortify the deeds of the body, you shall live*, Rom. viii. 13. It is not by the power of nature, or free-will; *Not by might, nor by power, but by my Spirit, says the Lord of hosts*, Zech. iv. 6. When the conquest is actually commenced in a soul, the Spirit of God comes and gives battle to the nations of the Canaanites; the lusts and old inhabitants of the heart, and takes possession. How he does so, may afterwards more appear: only, I say here, the Lord's putting out the nations, imports, that his almighty power is actually put forth for this end.

4. It imports, that this power is and shall be *effectual*; for it is said, *He will put them out*: he will drive them out of their old quarters, and destroy them; he will drive them out of the heart, out of the house, out of the will, out of the affections, out of all the forts where they strengthened themselves, and at last out of the world, when he completes his work of sanctification; for, *He that hath begun the good work, will perfect it*, Phil. i. 6. And sure there is no true-hearted Israelite here, but will say, AMEN; Lord, hasten the time when these nations of lusts shall be driven out of my heart, and driven out of the world; Lord, let them be driven to hell with the devil, their captain, and let me be quit of them for ever. Well, the day of their complete extirpation is a coming; *The Lord thy God will drive out these nations*. But then, *Secondly*, The manner of the conquest here expresseth, is *visible and remarkable*; he will drive them out *before thee*. I think this word may import the visible and remarkable manner of the conquest: and more particularly,

1. That the Israel of God get a *sight* of their enemies. These nations are in their view, while the Lord their God is driving them out, and while they, thro' grace, are led to the field of battle against them: he will drive them out *before them*. They that never got a view of their sins and lusts, nor of the strength of their arms; that

that never saw their own corrupt nature, nor experienced the power of corruption in their hearts; they are yet living at their ease, in the midst of these nations, and under the power thereof: they are *alive without the law*, Rom. vii. 9. The commandment hath not come, nor sin revived, to discover its strength to them: they are yet soldiers under the devil's banner: they have not taken on with Christ: the battle with the nations is not yet begun; for they never yet saw them, nor viewed and reconnoitered their strength.

2. His driving out the nations before them, imports, that, through grace, the Israel of God are made *active* herein. It is *before thee* they shall be driven out. Being acted by his grace, they act; being armed by his Spirit, they fight; and, through the Spirit, *mortify the deeds of the body*. It is true, sometimes the Israel of God have nothing ado at all, but just to stand still, as it were, to see how the waters will divide to let them through, and how they will return to drown and overwhelm their enemies: but, for ordinary, their work is to *go forward*, in the name and strength of the Lord their God, and give battle to their enemies, that they may be destroyed before them; and, under the banner of Christ Jesus, the glorious Captain of salvation, to *fight the good fight of faith*. Yea,

3. His driving out the nations before them, imports, that, even when they are called to act and fight, they shall have no *ground of boasting*, but rather of blushing, when they consider what part it is they act in this matter: for the Lord himself must be the agent; *The Lord thy God will put out the nations before thee*. Israel's Captain goes before them, and leads the van; the Lion of the tribe of Judah must go before them, and tear their enemies to pieces: it is he that subdues the nations under them. He hath gone before them already, and had a bloody battle with all the nations of hell upon mount Calvary; there he fought, and *overcame principalities and powers*; there he *condemned sin in the flesh*, and *destroyed the strength* of it, by *nailing the law to his cross*, Col. ii. 14. And however the nations may rally their forces again, and seem formidable and dreadful, yet
their

their strength being broken at this bloody engagement, the believer hath no more ado, in effect, but to hold up the red flag of the blood of Christ by faith, and then he *overcomes by the blood of the Lamb*, Rev. xii. 1. The great battle is already fought, and the great art of the believer, in all the lesser battles and skirmishes, lies in setting his Captain before him, saying, *I will go in the strength of the Lord; for in the Lord only have I righteousness and strength*; viewing him as before them in the field, according to his promise, *The Lord thy God will put out these nations before thee.*

4. It may import, that as the Lord their God will make their enemies to flee before their face, so they shall be *witnesses* to the wonders of his power in overthrowing the nations in their way. The true Israel of God dare hardly call themselves warriors against their enemies, but rather witnesses to the battle of the Lord, when he fights for them, and makes them overcome, and then gives them the name of *conquerors*; yea, *more than conquerors, through him that loved them.* He overcomes for them, and then crowns them as the overcomers, saying, *To him that overcomes, will I give to sit with me in my throne, even as I also overcame, and am set down with my Father in his throne.* They are witnesses to his grand achievements and valiant exploits against their enemies; for, his ordinary time of fighting remarkably for them, is, when their *strength is gone*, and when he *sees their power is gone*, and there is *none shut up or left*, by reason of the power of their enemies, Deut. xxxii. 36.; then he steps in, and takes vengeance on their enemies. And, indeed, the day of power is a day remarkable for victories over sin, Satan, the world, and the lusts thereof. Do you mind the day, believer, when you thought there was a legion of devils, a nation of lusts, an army of corruptions, a regiment of hell within you; but, behold, you got a view of the Captain of salvation ready to put out these nations before you; and you got grace to take hold of him, to believe in him, and so to *turn to flight the armies of the aliens*? Are there not some remarkable times, when you got your feet set upon the neck of your lust? *By thee I have run through a troop,*

says David, Pſal. xviii. 29.; *and by my God I overleap a wall.* It is true, the conquest is not always remarkable; for ſometimes the nations *compaſs them about like bees,* and ſting them, and torment them, and prevail againſt them; *Iniquities prevail againſt me,* ſays David: yet they never prevail ſo far, but that grace ſtill renews the fight, and at laſt obtains the victory; though yet, through many ups and downs, fallings and riſings, and viciffitudes and changes. Therefore,

Thirdly, The manner of the conquest here expreſt is *gradual, by little and little.* This is the main point here intended, with reference to the manner of the Lord's deſtroying the nations: Therefore I would here,

1. Show what may be *imported* in this his putting out the nations by *little and little.*
2. By what ſeveral *ſteps, ſtroaks,* or *degrees,* he puts out the nations in a ſpiritual ſenſe.

1ſt, As to the *import* of this phraſe, *by little and little.* It ſays,

1. That the Iſrael of God are not to expect that their ſpiritual enemies will be *all vanquiſhed at the firſt onſet.* Though the victory be begun, whenever the ſoul gets into Chriſt, and under his colours, who is the Captain of ſalvation; yet the commencement of the ſpiritual war is not the completement thereof; nay, there may be many a battle before the war be at a cloſe, and the victory complete: for, though the enemy hath got a dead ſtroak, and though the nations of luſts, like the beaſt mentioned, Dan. vii. 12. *have their dominion taken away; yet their lives are prolonged for a ſeaſon;* which occaſions the war to be prolonged. Alſo,

2. *By little and little,* it imports, that the viſible advantages over the nations of ſpiritual enemies may be *very ſmall;* Iſrael may be at a time but *holped with a little help,* Dan. xi. 34.; and get a *little reviving in their bondage,* Ezra ix. 8.; a little victory at a time; a ſmall advantage againſt the enemy: but though it be ſmall, yet the *day of ſmall things is not to be deſpiſed,* Zech. iv. 10.; for, as we ſay, Many ſmallſ make a great. Therefore,

3. The Lord's putting them out *by little and little,* imports,

imports, that though the several foils be small, yet they are *successful*; for, by little and little, the nations are thus put out and discomfited: every new battle tends to the ruin of the enemy more and more. Let not the believer say that nothing is done, because so little is done, and the enemy is yet alive. O be thankful, if, by *little and little*, the Lord be putting them out, and gradually diminishing their forces.

4. By *little and little*, it imports, the *continuation and progress of the war*, until there be a *total extirpation of the nations*. There may be an intermission of strokes, now a stroke and then a stroke given to the enemy; but no intermission of the war during the militant state; no cessation of arms; no proclamation of peace with the enemy; no league with any lust among the true Israel of God. Lusts may, indeed, rise and rage, and rally their forces again, even after they are routed, and a multitude of these nations may gather together; and the believer may be in great fears of the issue, lest he be swallowed up and destroyed before them; till, by faith, he get a new recruit of auxiliaries and reinforcement of strength from heaven, and then he will say, with the Psalmist, Psal. cxviii. 10, 11. *The nations compass me about, but in the name of the Lord will I destroy them; for then the right-hand of the Lord does valiantly*. Yet still it is by little and little; *here a little, and there a little*; here a little stroke given to Satan's kingdom, and there a little stroke; here a little dash given to the old man and his lusts, and there a little dash; a little at this duty, and a little at another; a little at this sermon, and a little at another sermon; a little at this sacrament, and the other sacrament, till the finishing stroke be given. But this leads to the other question here,

2dly, By what *steps and degrees* is the conquest over the nations advanced to a total extirpation of them? Here I might enquire, 1. By what degrees the conquest is advanced by Israel's Captain in his *own person*? 2. By what degrees it is advanced by him in *their persons*?

(1.) By what degrees the conquest is advanced and completed by the Captain of Israel, the Lord Jesus Christ.

Christ, in his *own person*? I will tell you four remarkable periods of his conquest, wherein you may see four remarkable degrees thereof.

1. The *first* period was the *commencement* of the war in paradise, immediately after the fall of Adam: there he proclaimed war between the seed of the woman and the seed of the serpent; and, after the proclamation, during that Old-Testament period, he kept all his soldiers in expectation of his appearing, according to that promise and proclamation, as their Head and General; so that, in the faith of this coming Messiah, they overcame.

2. The *second* period was in the remarkable *combat* that was betwixt the two heads of the two contending parties on mount Calvary, Christ on the one hand, and the serpent on the other; when, though the serpent bruised his heel unto blood, yet he brake the serpent's head with his bloody heel, while *by death he destroyed him that had the power of death, that is, the devil*; and vanquished the nations of hell, by destroying their commander's power.

3. The *third* period was in the *after-game* that followed upon this memorable combat; when, in his resurrection and ascension unto heaven, he dismantled all the garrisons of Satan, *divided the spoil with the strong, and led captivity captive*: which laid the foundation for a successful war to his Israel, carried on between Michael and his angels, and the dragon and his angels; where the dragon having got a deadly stroke, cannot prevail, Rev. xii. 7, 8.; though he continue thus to rally his forces against heaven, and all that bend heavenward to the end of the world. And then comes,

4. The *fourth* period, in that consummate stroke which the Captain of salvation will give to the devil and his armies at the *great day*, when *he will come in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory*: then death, and he that had the power of it, shall be utterly destroyed; for, *the last enemy to be destroyed is death*, 1 Cor. xv. 56. From the first to the last enemy, not one shall be spared from destruction: then sin, and death that was brought in by sin, shall be under an eternal banish-

ment, never more to appear among the Israel of God. — Thus you see by what steps and degrees the conquest is effectuated by the Lord Jesus in his own person.

(2.) By what degrees, say you, is it actually obtained by him in *his members* and *soldiers*, when he drives out the nations before them? Why, 1. By little and little, he *brings them to the field of battle* against the nations, in a *day of power*, when the spiritual war is begun. 2. By little and little, he *carries on the conquest*, till the *day of death*, when the warfare is concluded.

[1.] I say, by little and little, he brings them forth to the field against the nations of lusts that stand in their way to the heavenly Canaan, and that in a *day of power*, in a *day of conversion*, when the spiritual war is commenced in the man's person.

QUEST. *How does the Lord their God bring them forth against the enemy?*

I do not limit the Lord to this or that way; he is Sovereign: but I speak of the ordinary steps and degrees, by which he brings any poor sinner that was under the power of sin and Satan, mixed with, and under the power of the nations of hell; by which, I say, he brings them to the field. There are several fields that the Captain of salvation leads them through, before they be on the field of battle, where the nations are put out before them.

1. He leads them to the field of *consideration*, and makes them there bethink themselves what a sad state and condition they are in, while waging war against heaven, under the devil's banner. What am I doing? and, where am I going? and, what will be the end of these things, and of living in the service of these nations of lusts? And, oh! where will be my landing-place to eternity, if this be my course? Many never go so far towards the heavenly Canaan, as to step in to this field of consideration: *The ox knoweth his owner, and the ass his master's crib; but Israel doth not know, my people do not consider*, Isa. i. 3. But, ah! many never so much as turn their faces towards the field of battle against their lusts, so long as they do not enter on this field of consideration: therefore, when the Lord begins a good work,

work on his people, he brings them first to consider their ways; *I thought upon my ways, and turned my feet to thy testimonies.* May be he brings them to it by some rousing providence, whereby he stops their career in wickedness, and *hedges up their way with thorns*, as he stopped Manasses, and held him in the thorns of Babylon, till he began to consider and know that the Lord was God, and that he was fighting against God.

2. Another little advance, where by little and little he leads them forth to battle, is his bringing them next to the field of *concern*: this natively follows upon due consideration. The man is brought to see the hazard and danger he is compassed with, and to be afraid of the issue. Some may make a step into the field of *consideration* a little, but they presently step back again, without going forward to the field of *concern*: but, when the Lord hath a mind to bring on forward to the camp for war, he brings them in to the field of *great concern*, where they are filled with a greater concern about salvation than ever they had about any thing in the world, saying with the jaylor, *Oh! what shall I do to be saved?* And with Peter's hearers, *Men and brethren, what shall we do?* Is there any salvation for me, that have been fighting against God all my days?

3. Another little advance, is, his bringing them from the field of *concern* to the field of *restlessness*, even to a restless endeavour to come out of Satan's camp, and out of that sad condition they see themselves into: for this concern about salvation, and fear of everlasting damnation, makes them to fall about the means of relief; and so they read, and pray, and hear, and meditate, and mourn, and weep, and reform; and you would think they are by this time beginning to fight against the nations of their lusts: but, however these means be good in themselves, and a restlessness in the use of them may be wrought under the awakening influence of the Spirit of God; yet there is some other field the man must be taken through, before he be capable to lift arms against his lusts in an evangelical and acceptable manner: for, as yet, his legal heart leads him to nothing but a legal warfare, under which his spiritual lusts remain still

in their strength and dominion. The man is yet under the law, and so under the *dominion of sin*, Rom. vi. 14. And hence, while he is yet in this field, he is ready to be filled with vain imaginations, and legal dreams, like the young man in the gospel, that it is by doing some good thing or other he is to have eternal life. In this case, he may be doing a great deal of duties, and doing what he can with the greatest natural seriousness, and yet to no purpose; because he is doing upon the principle of the old covenant of works, *Do and live*. Therefore,

4. Another little advance, is the Lord's bringing them from that field of *reflexness* to the field of *despair*; so as to despair of help in themselves and in their endeavours; to despair of ever getting victory by their legal diligence; to despair of life by the law, and their own obedience thereto. When the soul is upon this field, it meets with the law, and sees the extent and spirituality of it, as exacting no less than perfection; internal perfection, in heart and nature; external perfection, in lip and life; eternal perfection, in point of continuance and duration: for, *Cursed is every one that continues not in all things written in the book of the law to do them*. And so all this perfection it requires upon pain of eternal death and damnation. Now, the *commandment comes*, Rom. vii. 9.; and though the man was *alive without the law once*, and reckoned he was right enough, and fairly bound for the heavenly Canaan, as well as his neighbours; yet the commandment thus coming, *sin revives, and he dies*; his hope and expectation by the law, or by his legal endeavours, give up the ghost. Now, till a man be brought to this field of *despair*, he is not brought half-way to the field of battle against the nations of enemies in his way to Canaan; but when the Lord brings a man to this despair in himself, and to despair of relief from creatures and means, then there begins to be *some hope in Israel concerning him*. Therefore,

5. Another little advance, while the Lord is bringing the man by little and little to the gospel-camp, is this: he brings him from the field of *despair* to the field

field of *hope*; I mean, to a distant sight of the cape of good-hope, in the hearing of the glad news of the gospel, concerning the Captain of salvation, in whom alone poor enslaved sinners may be made more than conquerors over sin, Satan, and the world; over death and hell, and all their spiritual enemies. The soul hears of this mighty Captain, that *he is able to save to the uttermost*; and so conceives hope, that perhaps he will shew mercy, and deliver a poor captive. I speak not here of the *new and lively hope*, that is the fruit and effect of faith; for, on this field of hope that I speak of, the man is yet between the hope and despair, as it were: this hope cannot be a *helmet* to him, while he yet wants the *shield of faith*; yet it is such a hope, wrought by the objective revelation of the gospel, as keeps him from sinking into utter discouragement; and excites, enables, and encourages him to go forward, because he sees a door of hope open, in the call of the gospel, wherein he hears Christ calling him to come to him freely, and receive his grace. O there is the door of a new covenant open, says the man within himself; I see it is open for the like of me, and I am particularly called to come in at this open door: and now, when the man is brought to this, he is truly not *far from the kingdom of heaven*; not far from the field of battle: he needs but be holpen with a little help further, and then this course is complete. Therefore,

6. Another little advance is, after the soul is brought over all these fields, by the good hand of God upon him, he is brought to the field of *saving faith*, getting such a discovery of Jesus Christ, the Captain of salvation, by the *Spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of him*, as powerfully determines him to take on with him, as a volunteer, being *made willing in the day of power*; and being charmed with the glory of his person, the freedom of his grace, the holiness of the standard, and ruddy ensign dyed with his own blood. Here the man sees him *girding his sword upon his thigh*, even his *glory and majesty*. By this sword of glorious grace, the sinner is made a willing subject, a willing soldier, to follow the glorious Captain, and employ him to fight all his battles, and

and drive out all the nations of his lusts before him. And now the man is a believer, and is come, indeed, to the field of battle, being joined to the Lord Jesus, and disjoined from his old general: now he is, by virtue of union to Christ, intitled to a complete victory over all the nations of enemies in his way, and intitled to all these new recruits and reinforcements from heaven, that are necessary for the gradual subduing of the nations before him, till he win to the possession of the heavenly Canaan.—Thus you see how, *by little and little*, the Lord brings them forth to the field of battle; and by what *various degrees* they are brought from slaves to the devil and their lusts, to be soldiers of Christ. But now, as by little and little he brings them to the field of battle against the nations in a day of power; so,

[2.] *By little and little* he carries on the conquest, till the *day of death*, when the warfare is accomplished. The text leads me to speak of the Captain's part; *The Lord thy God will put out these nations before thee, by little and little.* And indeed his part is the leading part in the All of this conquest; for, *without him we can do nothing.* To engage with the enemy alone, and encounter the nations in our own strength, were madness; every lust will laugh at the shaking of our spear. It is Christ alone, and his Spirit, that can destroy the nations before him. But now, the *gradual conquest*, till the day of death, by little and little, speaks out these two things: 1. That the Israel of God hath many *sad experiences* all their days, that their enemies, the nations, are not *utterly destroyed*; but are living and lively, strong and prevalent many times. 2. That they have also many *sweet experiences*, all their days, of some *little aid* and *auxiliaries* from heaven, whereby the enemy is driven out, and destroyed, by little and little, from time to time.

1. I say, this *gradual conquest*, taking place till death, and the warfare, speaks out many *sad experiences*, that the nations of their lusts, and corruptions, and spiritual enemies are not *utterly destroyed*; and that, notwithstanding their being got fairly under the colours of their glorious Captain, yet they will find, all their days, that their enemies

enemies are living, lively, strong, and prevalent: for, their destruction being but by *little and little*, the conquest may be many times undiscernable, while the power of the enemy appears great and formidable, notwithstanding any little advantage gained at a time, and while they find many dreadful fallies and successful excursions that the enemy makes upon them. Now, may I not ask the Israel of God here, if they have not too many sad experiences of the yet remaining life and strength of the enemy?—Does not your sad experience say, that there is a *law in your members, warring against the law of your mind, and bringing you into captivity to the law of sin, that is in your members*, Rom. vii. 23.; and that *you wrestle not against flesh and blood only, but against principalities and powers?* Eph. vi. 12.—Does not sad experience witness, how *violent your corruptions* are, and how impetuously they break through every hedge, notwithstanding of your being sure to be scratched with thorns; and how eagerly they follow the bait, even when the hook is most discernable?—Does not sad experience witness, that it is *within you* that troubles and assaults you most; and that your greatest adversaries are the *men of your own house*; and that in the worst of times, there is always more cause to complain of an *evil heart*, than of an *evil world*; and that it is this carnal heart especially, that clogs and incumbers your flight and motion towards God, and makes, many times, your choicest duties to be like a grievous task?—Does not sad experience witness, even since you was brought to the field of battle against your spiritual enemies, that there is more *wickedness in your heart*, siding with the enemy, than you could have believed, though it had been told you? When once a day you got your feet upon the necks of your enemies, you could never have thought they would ever so fearfully prevail again; or, if you had thought it, would it not have been a terror to you?—Does not sad experience witness such a *power of corruption*, that no sooner did you ever begin to parly with a temptation at a distance, and adventure to sport therewith, but it quickly hath turned to earnest, and carried all before it? So much fewel and gun-powder for the enemy

enemy do you carry about with you, that you take fire upon the smallest touch, and are ready to be blown up with the flame?—Does not sad experience witness, how soon the *strongest resolution*, even under the sweetest gales, will vanish; that you are not oft in the evening what you was in the morning, nor for many hours do you keep the ground you had attained; and how quickly you destroy that which grace hath built, insomuch, that if grace were not stronger to save and preserve, than you are to mar and destroy, you would be undone for ever? Is it not past reckoning, how oft your heart hath thus deceived you? And is it not plain that the word of God knows your heart better than you do, declaring it to be *deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked*?—Does not sad experience show you, that the *devil*, who heads and leads the nations of lusts and corruptions, hath the *advantage of the ground*? and knows how to correspond with your corruption, and suits his temptation to your natural temper, to your calling and company, and predominant inclination, and even to your retirement and solitude; and that he can even then most dangerously tempt, when the temptation is least seen and discovered; and that by his temptation he drives not only at the bringing sin to the thoughts, but to the act, for putting some blot upon your walk and conversation?—Does not sad experience shew you, that it is hard, difficult, and dangerous, to *dance about the fire*, and *not be burnt*; and that the temptation, which, at a distance, seemed small, upon a nearer approach you have found had more bands on your heart than you could have dreamed it would have had; and how impossible it is, many times, to stop the current to which, through unwatchfulness you have given a vent?—Does not sad experience witness, how the power and prevalence of corruption hath *consumed the vitals* of your spiritual life, and tumbled you down headlong into confusion; especially when you have given conscience a wramp, by doing violence to light, in siding with the enemies, and adventuring on the occasions of a temptation? When you have gone, with Peter, to the high-priest's hall, without a warrant or a call, hath it not cost you

you dear, insomuch, that you have found bold sinning hath made faint believing, and turned all your comfort to the door, leaving nothing behind but bitterness and death?—Do you not find your sins have a *weakening, captivating, vexing, and tormenting* power?—But many sad experiences of this sort, and thousands of them in their life-time, may even the true Israel of God have, whereby they find, to their sad cost, that the nations of corruptions are alive and powerful; as this gradual conquest, *by little and little*, declares.

2. It shows also, that they have many *sweet experiences*, on the other hand, of some little succours and auxiliaries, some small aids and supplies from heaven, whereby the enemy is driven out, and destroyed, from time to time; and this all the days of their life also, till the warfare be accomplished at death. I am speaking of these that have been brought to the field of battle, as I shewed before; and how the Lord, by little and little, makes the nations of lusts sometimes to flee before them. But by how many *littles*, in the believer's life-time, this warfare is carried on, who can tell? And how many little recoveries, little revivings, little supplies, little supports, little strengthening meals, little sin-killing antidotes, little soul-restoring cordials; how many of these little sweet things, or sweet little things, the Lord their God allows them, from time to time, that by little and little they may gain the day, is not possible to tell, they are so many. The poor fighting believer may get a thousand of them in a year; and ten thousands of them in his life-time; and, perhaps, more than half a score of them at one communion.—Sometimes he gets a *little new discovery* of the *glorious Captain*, after he hath been long out of sight, and hiding himself: and a new sight of the glory of the Lord fills the Israelite's heart with new life and courage, and hope of prevailing; for then he sees Christ to be a full magazine of all military provision, and an open magazine to give out armour for the war; and so he becomes *strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might*. Indeed, so many little glances of the glory of Christ that the believer gets, so many little victories does he get over the enemy.—Again, some-

times he gets a *little out-pouring of the Spirit of prayer*, and of the *Spirit of adoption*, crying, *ABBA, Father*: O Father, may he say, pity a poor child, harrassed with the devil, and captivate by the power of indwelling lusts and corruptions. O! but this gives the believer a little ease and relief, when he can get his heart poured out into the bosom of his best and most glorious friend, complaining of the tyranny of the tempter, and the prevailing of the nations. Here is a little victory, when he gets a little grace to put the enemies of his soul into the hands of his Captain, saying, *Vengeance, Lord*; vengeance be executed upon these enemies, that dishonour thy name, and disturb the peace of my soul.—Again, sometimes he gets a *little discovery of the enemy's power and policy*, and *strongest holds*; so as, knowing the *depths of Satan*, and not being ignorant of his devices, the believer is thereby put in case to be upon his guard: and especially he is made to see and observe the old man of sin, that deadly cut-throat, that lies within his bosom: and while he is *bemoaning himself*, with Ephraim: and crying out with Paul, *Oh wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from this body of death?* The enemy is losing ground.—Again, sometimes he gets a *little communication of life*, after a deadness of spirit that seized him; and a little recovery, after a fit of the falling-sickness and backsliding: and the new communication of life and health to the soul, makes him start up to his feet again, renew the assault, and pursue the enemy with more vigour and resolution than ever; like a man that grows stronger than before. Indeed, that spiritual sickness of the believer is *not unto death, but unto the glory of God*; which his being recovered from, makes him fight more courageously, and watch more carefully against the enemy than ever he did.—Again, sometimes he gets a *little grip of a promise*, such as that, *I will subdue thine iniquity; sin shall not have dominion over thee; fear not, for I am with thee; the God of peace shall bruise Satan under your feet shortly*: and having these promises, he is encouraged to the holy war, namely, to *cleanse himself from all filthiness of the flesh and of the spirit, and to perfect holiness in the fear of the Lord*. Why, the promise

promise takes hold of his heart, and his heart takes hold of the promise, and therein he sees that the strength of Israel is engaged to carry him through the host of his enemies. And thus, every little grip of a promise by faith, is a little victory; there needs no more to give a chase to the enemy, than a little upstirring of faith, on a promising God in Christ, and dependence on him under the conduct of his Spirit.—Again, sometimes he gets a *little grace to wait upon the Lord*, while the promise is not yet accomplished, until he *bring forth judgment unto victory*; and *the Lord is a God of judgment, blessed are all they that wait for him: he that believes, shall not make haste*; knowing *the race is not to the swift, nor the battle to the strong*: and hence the believer will find that his *strength is to sit still, and quietly to wait for the salvation of the Lord*.—Again, sometimes he gets a *little godly sorrow*, that works *repentance unto life*: gospel-repentance, issuing from a sight of crucified Christ, brings along with it a train of artillery for subduing the enemy; *What carefulness does it work*, says the apostle; *yea, what clearing of ourselves*; *yea, what indignation*; *yea, what fear*; *yea, what vehement desire*; *yea, what zeal*; *yea, what revenge?* 2 Cor. vii. 11. When the heart is melting before the Lord in godly sorrow, O what revenge is it meditating against the nations of lusts and corruptions! O how glad would the believer be then to wash his hands in the blood of all his spiritual enemies! For, at the same time, he gets a little resentment of his own ingratitude, saying, *O do I thus requite the Lord, O foolish and unwise?* A little holy shame and blushing before the Lord, at the thoughts of his own brutishness, saying, *Behold I am vile*; and a little soul-debasement, casting indignity upon himself, and giving glory to the Lord, saying, *Truth, Lord, I am a dog, I am a beast, I am a devil*; but yet I come to thee, to cast out the devil, and get glory to thy name.—Further, sometimes he gets a *little intimation of peace and pardon*, a *little sprinkling of the blood of Christ upon the conscience*, to purge it from dead works; and a *little application of that blood* by the hand of the Spirit, shewing him that

the *blood of Christ cleanseth from all sin*. And this bloody banner of the Lamb, being displayed, makes the nations to flee before him; *They overcome by the blood of the Lamb*.—Sometimes they get a *little opening of the heart*, like Lydia, at the hearing of the word; inasmuch, that their hearts, that were dead within them like a stone, or ever they are aware take life and need-fire, with a word of grace, a word of power; and the more the heart opens to let in the King of glory, the more is the enemy shut out.—Sometimes they get a *little freedom and boldness at the throne of grace*, when they come thither to *obtain mercy and find grace to help in time of need*: and when there they get a little strength to wrestle with the Lord for a blessing, saying, *Lord I will not let thee go, till thou blest me*; they get even *power with God himself*, as it is said of Jacob, Hos. xii. 4. *He had power over the angel, and prevailed*. And when a man is an overcomer in this sense, to have power with God; much more will he have power over the nations of enemies; *To him that overcometh, will I give power over the nations*, Rev. ii. 26.—Sometimes they get a *little anointing of the oil of gladness* wherewith Christ is anointed above his fellows; and when *the joy of the Lord is their strength*; and a little shower of the sanctifying and comforting influences of the Spirit of Christ, for watering their graces, and drowning their corruptions.—Sometimes they get a *little look and glance of the kind and compassionate eye of Christ*, even after a denial, as he gave to Peter; and when they find him thus graciously looking to them, and kindly rebuking them, they *go out and weep bitterly*: and while they are shedding the tears of faith, they are shedding the blood of their enemies.—Sometimes they get a *little back-look upon an old experience of the Lord's putting the enemy to flight before them*, saying, *I will remember thee from the land of Jordan, and of the Hermonites, and from the hill Mizar*; or a little back-look upon an old promise that the Lord gave them with power: and when they are helped to plead it, saying, *Lord, remember the word on which thou hast caused me to hope*; the enemy gets a new dash.—Sometimes they get a *little opening of the door of hope in the valley*

valley of Achor, the lively hope of the heavenly Canaan through the resurrection of Christ: and this hope is the finews of the holy war; for as *hope makes not ashamed, so he that hath this hope purifies himself*; and, according to the measure of this hope, is the measure of victory.— Sometimes they get a *little pull of the cord of love*, so as to get the *love of God shed abroad upon their heart*, and then the *love of Christ constrains them*; the love of the Captain draws them to the field, where love is the signal for war; Christ's love, I mean: *His banner over me was love*, says the church. His love both leads the van, and fences the rear; and when the flame of his love to them kindles a flame of love in their hearts to him, then a flaming sword is drawn in the face of the enemy, the banner of love beats down the nations.— Again, they sometimes get a *little spiritual sense* to carry on the spiritual war; for instance, sometimes a little hearing of the voice of Christ, so as to know the powerful sound of it among a thousand voices; and then their heart leaps within them, saying, *It is the voice of my Beloved; behold, he cometh skipping upon the mountains, and leaping upon the hills*.— Sometimes they get a *little sight of God in Christ*, and then they can *endure hardship, as good soldiers of Christ*: thus they *endure, as seeing him that is invisible, counting the reproach of Christ greater riches than all the treasures of Egypt*.— Sometimes they get a *little touch of the hem of Christ's garment by faith*; a little touch of his *name, his offices, his blood, his righteousness*, or whatever hem it be; virtue comes from him to stop the bloody issue, and stop the enemies motion.— Sometimes they get a *little taste that the Lord is gracious*; and it is like the taste of Jonathan's honey-comb: the more they taste of the honey of free-grace, the greater is the slaughter they make among the Philistines.— Sometimes they get a *little smell of the rose of Sharon, and the Lily of the valley*, and it restores their fainting soul: all Christ's garments are said to *smell of aloes, myrrh, and cassia*: and the believer may be said to get a smell of the raiment, a smell of the rose, when Christ is precious to him above all things. And when all these spiritual senses are exercised, then they may be said to be

exercising their arms, making havock among their enemies, and successfully gaining ground upon them.— In a word, he gives them sometimes a *little breathing in the air of spiritual meditation*; *My meditation of him shall be sweet*: and when Christ is sweet, sin is bitter, and the battle against it a bitter battle. He gives them *here a little, and there a little*; and, *by little and little, puts out the nations before them.*

I have mentioned many particulars; but yet there is no speaking of all the littles that believers will experience, during the time of their warfare: only, thus you see how, by little and little, their Captain brings them to the field of battle; and how, by little and little, he carries on the conquest in their hand: it is the Lord their God alone that does it; it is he that conquered their enemies; it is he that helps them to chase the conquered, for it is he that bought their armour; he bought their shield, and sword, and breast-plate, and helmet; and it is he, that as he bought them with his blood, so he puts on their weapons, and girds them with strength for war. It is he that rubs off the rust off their arms, when at any time they are out of use, by blowing up their graces, and giving them strength to exercise grace: and it is he that carries on the victory to perfection, by *giving power to the faint; and to him that hath no might, he increaseth strength*, from time to time, till in death he end the warfare, by driving out all the nations, so as never to be seen again. *The Lord thy God, will put out these nations, before thee, by little and little.*

VI. The *sixth* thing proposed, was, to give the *reasons* of the doctrine. It might here be asked,

1st, Why the Lord their God, and he alone, does put out the nations before them? The reason is, because he alone can do it, for he is the *Lord*; they would never be put out, if he did it not: and he alone will do it, because he is *their God*; and thus stands engaged by promise and covenant so to do: *The Lord thy God will put out these nations before thee.* But,

2^{dly}, Why will he do it so *gradually*, by *little and little*? Why does he let enemies without and within live

to annoy his people, seeing it is easy for him to destroy them all instantly? Why will he destroy them gradually, by little and little? There is much of infinite wisdom to be observed in this disposure; and therefore I would offer some particulars for representing the beauty of this method.

1. It is by *little and little* he puts them out, without destroying them at once, that by them he may *prove his people*, Judges ii. 22. Some Canaanites were still left remaining, to *prove whether they will keep the way of the Lord*: these Canaanites were enemies to their peace, enemies to their profession, that sought their bodies overthrow, and their souls ruin; and they are left to prove whether they will cleave still to God's command, or whether they will follow the abominations of the wicked. Observe it then, Sirs, we must look to find enemies; outward enemies to the peace of the church, and to the truth of the gospel; inward enemies to the graces and comforts of the soul: and this combat, thus continued in Israel, serves to prove whether our graces be counterfeit or not; for they only are true Israelites, that are still taking up arms against the devil, the world, and the flesh, and all the nations of the Canaanites. By this then it is evidenced who are true Israelites, and who not.

2. It is by *little and little* that he will put out the nations before Israel, that thus they may be *still learning to exercise their arms*; I mean, that their graces may be exercised, and particularly their militant graces. There are some graces would be for little or no use, if no Canaanites and corruptions were left: the special use of *faith, hope, and patience*, is for helping the believer to surmount the difficulties that are now in his way. Many other graces there are, that there would be no use for, if all our enemies and corruptions were destroyed at once: triumphant graces, such as *love and joy* in their perfection, would make a perfect heaven. But there are militant graces, that must be exercised also, while we are on earth, and which there are no use for in heaven: for example, if all *wants were supplied fully*, there would be no need of *poverty of spirit*; if all *sins were wholly*

wholly destroyed, there would be no need of godly sorrow; if death were already swallowed up in victory, there would be no need of the desire of death, nor longing for heaven; if vision were already come, there would be no need of faith, as it is a militant grace, fighting its way many times through doubts and fears, and want of sight and sense; if fruition were come, there would be no need of hope; if all trouble were at an end, there would be no need of patience. But this shield of faith, and helmet of hope, and other parts of the Christian armour, must be exercised: therefore the nations are not wholly destroyed, but by little and little. Again,

3. It is by *little and little* they are put out, for the advantage of the *militant saints* in many respects: as it is fit they should fight, before they triumph; and that they war as soldiers on earth, before they reign as kings in heaven; since *no man is crowned, except he strive lawfully*, 2 Tim. ii. 5. So it tends to enhance heaven, and make them prize and value it more, when it is attained through many difficulties, troubles, and oppositions: and by this means they come to have sweet conformity to their blessed Captain of salvation, who was *made perfect through suffering*; and it is their honour to tread his steps, who *endured the contradiction of sinners* against himself, and fought his way.—This contributes also to the believer's *comfort* at the issue of every conflict, as a safe haven is very comfortable to a mariner that hath been tost at sea.—This method serves not only for the believer's *comfort*, but for his *instruction* and *correction*: for his *instruction*, because thus he learns more and more to be humble and dependent; all boasting is excluded by this means, while he finds his enemies still living, and lively, and strong; for he looks with a humble eye upon himself, knowing his own utter insufficiency for grappling with these enemies, and difficulties, and oppositions in his way; and with a dependent eye upon Christ, that his *grace may be sufficient for him*, and his *strength perfected in weakness*: thus he *glories in his infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon him*. And as it is advantageous for their necessary instruction, so for their necessary *correction*, when they are sparing
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and remiss in using the means, and improving the advantages for driving out the Canaanites, indulging the flesh and the corruptions thereof; as it is said of Israel, Numb. xxxiii. 55. *If they would not drive out the inhabitants of the lands, then it should come to pass, that these which they let remain should be pricks in their eyes, and thorns in their sides, to vex them.* This is one of the severest ways of chastising them, when, to reprove them for one sin and lust, he lets them fall into the hands of another; and yet, in mercy to the true Israel of God, curing their disease in the issue: as he let Peter fall into a threefold pit among his enemies hands, for curing his self-confidence. One would think, the cure was worse than the disease; but our Lord hath sometimes very fearful ways of correcting and curing the souls of his own people.

4. It is by *little and little* that the Lord puts out the nations before them, to *commend the excellency of the deliverance we have by Christ.* Though there be *no condemnation to them that are in Christ*; yet, for their humiliation, God suffers their enemies to live among them, and sin to live in them, and oftentimes to afflict them, that they may know the benefit they have by grace, while they make continual recourse to him for help. It is but little we can take up at once, by reason of our want of capacity; therefore he gives one deliverance at this time, and another deliverance at that time, and a third deliverance at another time; and so on from time to time, that we may know how much we are obliged to him.

5. He delivers them by *little and little*, to shew the *greatness of his glory*, as the Captain of salvation. He shews the glory of his power, in keeping us, notwithstanding the great danger we are continually in, while the enemy is alive within us, without us, and round about us. How greatly does his power appear, in preserving the tossed ark amidst all the waves and billows of adversity that dash against it, and in keeping the burning bush from being consumed? He shews the glory of his triumphant arms, like some famous conquerors in

battle, who, though they may, yet will not put all their enemies to the edge of the sword, but will take some captives, and others they will keep alive against their day of triumph, and then to suffer death, to the greater shame of the conquered, and the greater glory of the conqueror. When Joshua had discomfited these five kings that fought against Gibeon, chap. x. he would not slay them instantly, but shut them up in a cave closely, intending, when the battle was fully ended, to put them to death openly: so our great General and Captain, the Lord Jesus Christ, *He strikes through kings in the day of his wrath; he leads captivity captive; he shuts up some of the kings and commanders of the hellish nations, into the cave of the heart, where they may rage, yet they cannot rule any more; and at last crowns the solemnity of his triumph, by making a shew of them openly, and destroying them utterly.*

6. He destroys them by *little and little*, that he may *counterplot the enemies in their own plot, and fight them with their own weapons.* It is the plot of hell, by little and little, to destroy sinners; yea, and to *wear out the saints of the most High*, Dan. vii. 25. by one temptation on the back of another; therefore, by little and little the Lord will defeat the design of the devil, and *take the wise in their own craftiness.* The wisdom of heaven can easily counterplot the policy of hell: yea, thus he fights the enemy, and beats him with his own weapons. The tempter comes sometimes, and bruises the believer's heel, as he did Christ's; upon which the believer is stirred up to look again to him that was bruised for his iniquity, and then the devil is sure to get as good as he gave; for the bruised heel, he gets a broken head. Perhaps, some temptation gives the believer a trip, and down he falls; but the wise Captain makes use of that very fall, for giving the devil, and his hosts, a greater foil than ever; for, after that fall, the believer goes alone, with Peter, and weeps it out; and watches, and prays, and fights better than he did before.

7. It is by *little and little* that the Lord conquers the nations of enemies in the way to the heavenly Canaan, because, by little and little, his people must be made
ready

ready for it; *By little and little I will drive them out from before thee, till thou be increased, and inherit the land,* Exod. xxiii. 30. As the Canaanites had kept possession till Israel was grown into a people; so there were to be some remains of them, till Israel should grow so numerous, as to replenish the whole. The land of Canaan had room enough to receive Israel, but Israel was not yet numerous enough to possess Canaan: even so here, the true Israel of God must be made ready for the heavenly Canaan, before they come there. They are not always in actual readiness, therefore there is some service they have to do for their Captain, some battle they have to fight with the enemy: they must have some more experience, and learn some more lessons; therefore their possession of Canaan is delayed till they be ready for it.

8. It is by *little and little* that the Lord drives out the nations before them, lest the *beasts of the field increase upon them*; to allude to that word which immediately follows the text, which we have also, Exod. xxiii. 9. *I will not drive them out before thee in one year, lest the land become desolate, and the beasts of the field multiply against thee.* And thus it is with the children of God; if they had not enemies without and within, and oppositions in their way, there are some dangerous beasts that would be ready to increase upon them: For instance, there is a beast they call *pride*, that might grow upon you, if you had no enemies to fight with; and while yet you are not ready for heaven, and sanctification is incomplete. Hence a *thorn in the flesh* was given to Paul, *that he might not be exalted above measure.* Is not the thorn in the flesh well ordered, that prevents *confidence in the flesh*?—There is a beast, they call *security*, might grow upon you; but now enemies are on all hands of you, to prevent your falling asleep, and to keep you both watching and waking, and constantly on your guard.—There is a beast they call *presumption*, that might grow upon you, and make you think you were able to go forward to heaven upon your own legs, and in your own strength, if you found no such enemy in the way.—There is another beast, they call *worldly-mindedness*,

mindedness, that might grow upon you; if you got no adversaries and adversities to vex you, and wean you from the world; you would be in danger of saying, *It is good to be here*: but now the wars and battles, in your way to heaven, make you say with your heart, O it is better to be there.—There is a beast, a filthy brute beast, that they call *sensuality*, that might grow upon you, believer, that might make you lukewarm and formal in all your duties, as well as carnal, and light, and vain in the intervals of duties: but the sight of your spiritual enemies on the field will make you see a need to be spiritual, zealous, earnest, and *fervent in spirit, serving the Lord*.—There is also a filthy dumb beast, that they call *forgetfulness*, that would certainly grow upon your hand, and be very dangerous to your soul and spiritual welfare, if your enemies were all destroyed; therefore God says, Psa. lix. 11. *Slay them not, lest my people forget*. If the execution were quick and hasty, the impressions of it would not be deep and durable. Swift destructions startle men for the present, but they are soon forgotten; therefore, when we think that God's judgments upon the nations of our spiritual enemies come on but very slowly, we must conclude that God hath wise and holy ends in that gradual procedure; *Slay them not, lest my people forget*. They would forget to pray, if they had not enemies to pray against: they would forget to praise, if they had not still new deliverances to praise him for: they would forget to pity these that are afflicted and tossed with tempests like themselves: they would forget their Captain, and their duty of living by faith and dependence on him: they would forget to take with their proper name, saying, *Truth, Lord, I am a dog*: they would forget to mourn for sin, and repent: they would forget their own weakness, and their deliverer's power; and, like Jeshurun, in prosperity would *wax fat, and forget God that made them, and lightly esteem the rock of their salvation*: they would forget to sing the song of Moses and the Lamb at the side of the Red-sea of the Lamb's blood, where their enemies are always drowned; even to sing, saying, *The Lord hath triumphed gloriously, the horse and his rider hath he thrown into the*

the sea ; the Lord is a man of war, the Lord is his name, Exod. xv. 1, 2, 3, &c. : they would forget to speak of the wonders of his mercy from time to time, and to give him the glory due unto his name : they would forget to employ him upon every new attack of the enemy, saying, Lord, thou hast delivered ; and in thee we trust that thou wilt deliver. Better the enemy live and rage, and be not utterly destroyed, than that Christ want employment at your hand, and get not the glory of executing his saving office in your time of need. You would hardly think that so much advantage should accrue to the Israel of God, by the nations of their enemies not being destroyed at once, but by little and little.— You see some of the filthy beasts that would increase upon you, if the Lord did not spare some of your spiritual enemies, devils, and lusts ; which, though they may be called all beasts together, yet herein shines infinite wisdom in sparing one beast to destroy another : he may let *carnality* live in a believer sometimes, to kill his *pride* ; much *ignorance* remain, to kill his *self-wisdom* ; much *wandering* in, and *indisposition* for duty, to kill his *self-righteousness*.

Now, as it is with believers in particular, so with the church in general ; why does God suffer tyrants, and atheists, and hypocrites, and heretics to live among them, and vex them, but for reaching many, if not all, of these ends that I have been naming. When the church was in adversity under the primitive ten persecutions, then religion flourished ; the life of the tyrants tended to the life of religion in the persecuted church : but when the Roman emperors became Christian, and friendly to the church, then pride and security crept in with their prosperous state ; the beasts of the field increased so much, that, by degrees, a blasphemous beast assumed the very name and office of being the *head of the church*, even a *beast with seven heads and ten horns*, mentioned, Rev. xiii. 1. ; I mean, the Roman Antichrist. And then, why hath a nation of heretics, with erroneous principles and doctrines, been spared and continued in the church from time to time, but that the friends of truth might have occasion to clear and vindicate it,

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and to contend earnestly for the faith once delivered to the saints? There must be heresies, says the apostle, that they that are approved may be made manifest; there must be errors, that truth may be more clearly discovered and maintained. Some precious truths had never been fet into such a clear light, if opposite errors had not been vented for darkening the same. Thus our Covenant-obligations in Scotland are denied by some, that their obligation may be the more asserted by others: thus also there is an ungodly nation left alive, that the godly may be distinguished from them, and exercised the more unto godliness; and a hypocritical nation, that true Israelites, that are so indeed, may try themselves, and become the more sincere and upright.

VII. The *application* now remains to be spoken to. Is it so, that as the true Israel of God have nations in their way to the possession of the heavenly Canaan, so the Lord their God will conquer these nations by little and little?

1st, It may be applied in a word of *dehortation* and *caution*, in these four particulars;

1. Beware of thinking that you may *safely neglect the means*, because this work of putting out the nations belongs wholly to the Lord. This were a lazy Antinomian conclusion, drawn from such promises, as rather bear the greatest encouragement in the world to make a diligent use of the means. If it be a good reason of *working out our salvation with fear and trembling*, that the *Lord works in us both to will and to do*, which is the apostle's argument, Phil. ii. 12, 13.; then it is as good a reason for warring, and using all the means necessary for accomplishing this spiritual warfare, that it is the Lord our God that conquers the enemy for us by little and little. Yea, this is such a necessary consideration, that, take away this argument, and there remains no encouragement to use the means at all: and hence it is only believers that are capable of this spiritual warfare; and only believers in Christ that are capable of the right and diligent use of the means that relate thereunto: for they cannot be used duly, but in the faith of this encouragement,

couragement, *The Lord thy God will go before thee*, to conquer the nations of enemies in your way. Unbelievers, indeed, ought to use the means, because the Lord commands the use thereof; and therefore, for the Lord's sake, neglect no commanded duty and ordinance wherein the Lord uses to be found. But yet I say again, never will any soul use the means aright, and acceptably, till something of the real true faith of this encouragement excite him: therefore, O believer, neglect not to read, and hear, and pray, and meditate, and use all commanded duties and ordinances; for there you must expect to meet with your Captain, that hath engaged to put out the nations before thee.

2. Beware of thinking that the *strength of the warfare lies upon you*, because you are obliged to use the means; and that it is your using the means that will do the business. As the former is a lazy, so this is a legal thought, and as pernicious and destructive as the other: for, if you lean upon the means, and think that your reading, praying, hearing, and the like, will drive out the nations, bring down the body of death, or subdue one corruption, that were a beating your enemies with a sword of straw: such a fleshly weapon will never draw blood of your spiritual enemies; and, instead, of getting victory over your sins by such legal weapons, you are brought under greater bondage; *For as many as are of the works of the law, are under the curse*: and to be under the law, is to be under the dominion of sin; for, *the strength of sin is the law*. This legal method then were to be opening a fore-door to let out the enemy, and, at the same time, opening a back-door to let them in, and that with more advantage against you than ever. As it is a dangerous extreme to neglect means, upon pretext that Christ must do all, since his doing all is the greatest encouragement thereunto; so it is as dangerous on the other hand to use means, upon a notion that you must do all, or that the weight of the warfare depends upon you, and your duties: for your entertaining that notion, is the greatest discouragement in the world to the use of the means, and gives your enemies the greatest

est advantage against you, even in that wherein you think to defeat them.

3. Beware of thinking that you may *lawfully enter into a league with any of your enemies*, because they are not to be destroyed but *by little and little*. See what God says to Israel, with respect to the Canaanites, verse 2. of this chapter where the text lies, and elsewhere; *Thou shalt make no covenant with them, nor shew mercy to them*. While we are showing that sanctification and mortification is not perfected in the saints while they are here, and that the nations of lusts even in their heart, are not all to be destroyed in this world; some carnal heart may be ready to think, My blessing on the minister, who, by this doctrine, makes me think I may get to heaven though my lusts be not all destroyed, and though I indulge myself in some of the pleasures of the flesh; and, I hope, *I may have peace, though I walk in the imagination of my heart, adding drunkenness to thirst*, and one sin to another. Say you so, man, woman? I must tell you, that your speech bewrays you, that you are not an Israelite bound for the heavenly Canaan; for, cursed is that piece that is consistent with a standing league and covenant with any lust whatsoever. Such are *in covenant with death, and at agreement with hell*; and, *There is no peace, saith my God, to the wicked*. The children of God dare not maintain a league with any lust, nor will they shew mercy on their most darling lusts: nay, as it is said of some, that their *tender mercies are cruelty*; so I may say of the believer, in this case, that his most tender mercy toward his most beloved lust is cruelty: when he acts like himself, he is so cruel-hearted, he would cut the throat of it, if he could, and even of all his lusts.

4. Beware of thinking that believers have *no advantage against the nations of their enemies, sins and lusts*, more than others, because they are not utterly destroyed: nor let believers themselves think, that because their deliverance is not effected presently, therefore it will never be effected; for the Lord their God is upon the destroying work, only he will take his own time and his own way to his own work, and his time and

way both is the best: *The Lord thy God will do it by little and little.* Hence a believer may be getting advantage, and gaining ground upon corruptions and lusts, even when he feels them stirring and raging most violently: it may be they have got a dead stroke for all that; as a beast that hath got a death's blow, may break off from those that are holding it, and turn more mad than ever, and yet will die at length of the same blow. The devil may rage most, when he knows that his time is short, and that he will be soon cast out, and bruised under feet. Corruption is not always strongest, when its motions are most felt; it may be strongest, when the strength of it is not seen.

Use 2. The *second* use may be for *information.* Many things might be here inferred; as,

1. Hence we may see the *privilege even of a visible church*, whom the Lord hath not *utterly forsaken*, tho' *filled with sin*, as it is said, Jer. li. 5. As they have the Lord for their God, in the sense that I explained before, and as Israel here was privileged; so, by virtue of that relation to God as their God, they may have manifold mercies in common among them, as a mixed visible church, beyond the rest of the world: the Lord may appear for them against the heathen nations that are about them, and that are among them; and he may do great things for them, by virtue of that relation that he stands in to them as their God, and they his professing people. As this text relates to Israel of old literally, it represents a privilege common to all that people, namely, the Lord's driving out the nations of the Canaanites before them; and may we not say, The Lord hath in like manner dealt with us, particularly in the church of Scotland, several times?—As the Lord *planted a church here very early*, not many years after Christ's ascension; so by little and little he drove out the heathen nations before us: when our own forefathers were a race of blind Pagans here, the Lord destroyed that idolatry, and gradually enlarged his church, till, in process of time, Popery entering in, we were over-run with Antichristian nations. But lo, when the time to favour Zion was come; I

mean, the time of the Reformation from Popery, the Lord was pleased to drive out these other nations before us by little and little, and gradually carried on the Reformation-work, and that by the method of solemn covenanting with him; and this covenanting work was carried on by little and little, again and again, till the whole nation came under solemn obligations this way.—As Israel *avouched the Lord to be their God*, by solemn covenants, that were binding and obligatory upon them and their posterity after them; so, in this duty of *vowing to the Lord*, which is a moral duty, and consequently incumbent on the church of God under the new, as well as old dispensation, and not like the types and shadows that were to be done away: in this moral duty, I say, we in our forefathers followed the example of the church of God in scripture, by entering into solemn covenant with him; which work the Lord, in many signal ways, countenanced with his presence, in the remarkable effusion and out-pouring of the Spirit, to the conversion of multitudes. It is the glory of a church, when God avouches them for his people, by the external dispensation of the covenant of grace; and it is also the glory of a church, when they avouch God to be their God, in a most solemn Covenant of duty and service. This was a part of Scotland's glory, attended with internal displays of the power and glory of God in the sanctuary.—To prove the obligation of these Covenants upon posterity to all generations, were, I suppose, needless in this auditory; neither would time allow me to insist here: but I think, to disparage these Covenants, and to deny the obligation thereof, is to cast dung upon our glory, and to tread our honour in the dust; yea, I think it worse than the breaking, burning, and burying of them: for a broken covenant may be mended again; a burnt covenant may come forth out of the furnace again; yea, a buried Covenant may rise again, when God raises up a Reformation spirit: but to bespatter the reputation of them, and impugn the obligation of them, is, I think, to render them odious to all generations, instead of binding upon them.—But now, as our Reformation was carried on
by

by little and little ; so, when it is under a decay in many respects, let us look to the Lord our God, that, by little and little, it may be revived again, in the Lord's own time and way.

2. As we see hence the privileges of a visible church ; so the special and peculiar privilege of the *true Israel of God*, the church *spiritual and invisible*, though militant on earth : the Lord their God will cast out the nations before them in a spiritual sense, and that by little and little. May it not be said of them, as it is, Deut. xxxiii. 29. *Happy art thou, O Israel ; who is like unto thee, O people saved by the Lord, who is the shield of thy help, and the sword of thine excellency ?* And verse 27. *The eternal God is thy refuge, underneath are his everlasting arms ; He shall thrust out the enemy before thee, and shall say, Destroy them.* What though all the nations of the world were against them, outward and inward ; the nations of earth and hell both ? Yet he, who is the King of nations, is for them ; and if God be for them, who can be against them ? He can destroy nations for their sake ; *I gave Egypt for thy ransom ; Ethiopia and Seba for thee.* The nations may fight, but cannot prevail ; nay, the *gates of hell can never prevail against them.* Why ? they have the Lord for their God ; and their God is their guard. And as the common relation that God stands in to a mixed visible church, intitles them to many privileges while that relation stands ; so the special relation, that the true Israel of God stand in to him, as their God in Christ, by a spiritual, indissoluble union, intitles them to all spiritual blessings and deliverances. However difficult and dangerous their way to the heavenly Canaan is, by reason of the numerous opposing nations, which they can never destroy of themselves ; yet their God and Captain leads the van, and drives out the nations before them.

3. See here the *miserable case of the nations that know not God*, and are *enemies to the people of God*. Why, like the cursed Canaanites, they are *devoted to destruction* ; they vex themselves in vain, when they fight against the *Lord and his anointed*. The Lord God of Israel is to drive them out ; yea, he will drive them to hell, that

continue in their enmity against God and his people: *The wicked shall be turned into hell, and all the nations that forget God.* Yea, the greatest misery of all the wicked, that remain in a Christless state, lies in this, though they do not see it to be their misery, namely, that they are under the power of all the nations of hell, under the power of the devil and their lusts, and in league with the nations that oppose the true Israel of God in their way to the heavenly Canaan.

4. Hence we may see the reason of the *multiplied experiences of the believer*, both sad and sweet; because the nations are cast out before him by little and little, and not utterly destroyed while he is here. Hence many sad tales he hath to tell of the *nations compassing him about; iniquities prevailing against him*; and lusts again and again, and a thousand times, stirring, and working, and warring, and overthrowing him, and treading upon him. And, on the other hand, notwithstanding all this, he hath many sweet tidings to narrate of the Lord's humbling and healing, convincing and converting him: many convictions, many conversions does he get from time to time; and the next conviction more deep than the former, and the next conversion more sweet than the former; and one conversion on the back of another, because of one defection on the back of another, through the power of the nations of hell within and without him. As a dying faint that was asked, when he was converted? said, *He had been converted a hundred times*: so, in this sense, it is possible some believers, of long standing, may be converted a hundred times, and a hundred too. That saints may need conversion, is plain from what Christ said to Peter who was a saint, *When thou art converted, strengthen thy brethren.* Yea, every new conversion of the believer, may be more remarkable than another, while the Lord is thus, by little and little destroying the enemy; because every touch of the nations power and policy in drawing him aside from the Lord, and the recurring power of corruption, is so horrible and monstrous to him, that he thinks with himself, Oh! will ever the Lord return again to the like of me? And, when the Lord returns, he wonders more than ever.

5. Hence

5. Hence we may see, why there is no *justification by the deeds of the law*, nor *mortification by the means of the law*: no justification by legal works, nor sanctification and mortification by legal means. How does this follow, say you? Indeed it is plain, there can be no justification by the *deeds* of the law; for the best believer on earth must own, that at best he hath *two nations in his womb, and the company of two armies*; an army of lusts, and an army of graces; the *flesh lusting against the Spirit*, as well as the *Spirit against the flesh*: and when he finds nations of lusts and corruptions in his womb, in his heart, can he expect to be justified by the deeds of the law, by a legal righteousness of his own? No; he is made content to be obliged to grace, free grace, through the righteousness of Christ, for justification.—And as there is no justification by legal works, so there is no mortification by legal *means*; they never saw the power of corruption, that are not convinced of this, that nothing in the world but the power of God can destroy it: *The Lord thy God will put out these nations before thee, by little and little.* O Sirs, pity ignorant Papists, that think their whipping, and scourging, and beating themselves, will do it: pity ignorant professors, that think their fasting, and praying, and legal endeavours, will do it. It is true, our Lord speaks of some devils that go not out but by *fasting and prayer*: not that these means of themselves do it; nay, let our Lord explain his own word; *The Lord thy God will put out these nations*, he will subdue your iniquities: such *things go not forth but by fasting and prayer*; that is, by Christ Jesus, fought and found in these means. Neglect not the means then; but, for the Lord's sake, remember, that if you go forth against lusts in the strength of means, or only with a verbal mention of the strength of Christ, without ever having taken on with this glorious Captain, or being joined to him in order to draw strength from him, your leviathan lusts will but laugh at the shaking of your spear. Therefore,

6. Hence we may see where the *believer's strength lies*. You heard before where the strength of the enemy lies; but now, where lies the strength of the Israel of God?

Even

Even in the GOD of Israel, the KING of Israel: *The Lord thy God will put out these nations before thee.* Psal. lxxiii. 25. *My flesh and heart jangleth; but God is the strength of my heart, and my portion for ever.* My outward advantages, inward vigour, and all fail me; but my God will not fail me. More particularly, Israel's strength lies in God, as manifesting himself in Christ. There are two things in Christ that strength lies in, for the believer's safety and deliverance from the power of sin, and victory over the nations of lusts and devil's: one is the blood of Christ; we *overcome by the blood of the Lamb*: the death of Christ was the death of sin, for he nailed sin to the cross, and destroyed the devil's power. Another is the Spirit of Christ, who being in the believer, *greater is he that is in them, than he that is in the world*; and the Spirit mortifies sin. Here lies the believer's great strength, for actual mortification of sin, and victory over it; *If ye through the Spirit mortify the deeds of the body, ye shall live,* Rom. viii. 13. And the Spirit carries on this work,

(1.) By the *application of the death of Christ* to the soul; for, it is the virtue flowing forth from the death of Christ, that destroys sin; and the Spirit applies that virtue, and implants the soul into Christ, that being ingrafted in him, and unite to him, the sin-killing, soul-quickening virtue of Christ may flow in to the believer.

(2.) By the *implantation of grace*, and of grace contrary to corruption: in opposition to *unbelief*, he implants *faith*; in opposition to *enmity*, he implants *love*; in opposition to *Jewish fear*, he implants *fortitude* and *spiritual courage*.

(3.) By the *excitation of the grace he hath implanted*; which, though it be active in itself, yet, by reason of our indispotion, needs to be whetted and actuated: when the Spirit lets grace alone, sin revives, and gathers strength.

(4.) By *drawing forth faith*, especially to a lively exercise; and then *this is the victory whereby we overcome the world, even our faith*; while the Spirit of faith draws forth the grace of faith: for faith carries up the soul to
him

him in whom strength lies; and then says, *I can do all things through Christ strengthening me*: and faith employs the strength of Christ against the strength of the enemy, and so triumphs in its noble General, being *strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might*. Faith begets, in the soul, an antipathy against all sins and lusts, purifying the heart, and setting it directly against sin. Tell a carnal heart, sin lies at the door; why, let it come in, it is a friend of mine: but, acquaint a believer, exercising faith, that there is sin in such a thing; oh! it is an abomination. Faith discovers the danger the soul is in by the nations of lusts that encompass it, and excites all the faculties of the soul to rise up against it, saying, *Rise, Samson, for the Philistines are upon thee*; canst thou sleep in the midst of troops and armies of lusts? And so it rouses the soul to sigh, and groan, and pant, and pray, and cry, and wrestle; and so to overcome, under the standard of the glorious Captain.

Use 3. The *third* use is for *examination*. Hence we may see matter for *trying our state by*: what is the mark of a candidate for heaven, a traveller to Canaan? Why, *The Lord his God is driving out the nations before him, by little and little*. Is the battle with the nations commenced, and fairly begun? And, is the Lord gradually carrying it on?

QUEST. *How shall I know if the war is commenced, and progressively going forward?*

ANSW. For a solution of this inquiry, you may take a mark or two out of the bosom of the text.

1. Have you got a *view of the nations*, that are in your way? I mean, a view and discovery of your corruption, your original and actual sin, and your natural bondage and slavery by reason thereof? Have you seen nations of lusts within you? and have you seen them to be such powerful nations, that nothing but the power of omnipotence can drive out? And consequently, have you seen your own utter impotency to drive them out of yourself? Have you seen them to be such politic nations, and so fraudulent, that nothing but the infinite wisdom of God could counteract this policy of hell;
know-

knowing your *heart* to be *deceitful above all things*, as well as *desperately wicked*? Have you seen them to be such spiritual nations, *spiritual wickednesses in high places*, that no carnal weapon could avail in this warfare, but only such *spiritual weapons as are mighty, through God, to the pulling down of the strong holds*? Have you seen them to be such numerous nations, that your name is **LEGION**; a legion of lusts, a legion of devils, that nothing but a word from Jesus can put out?—Now, this mark excludes all that never *saw themselves*, and their own *natural bondage and thralldom*; they are yet serving the nations, which they ought to be driving out. They who know the plagues of their own heart, and have experienced the power of these nations in their way, look more like the travellers to Canaan. But take this mark in conjunction with what follows.

2. Have you got a discovery of a *God in Christ*, the glorious Captain of salvation, in whom alone your help and salvation lies, and who alone can put out these nations before you? Hath the *Spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of Christ* been given to you, so as to *reveal Christ in you*, and so as you have sometime or other got *Christ in you the hope of glory*, Christ in you the hope of victory? Have you seen Christ, as a victorious Conqueror, triumphing over all the nations of spiritual enemies, *Travelling in the greatness of his strength, trampling the wine-press alone, when of the people there was none with him, staining all his raiment with the blood of the enemy, and trampling them in his fury*; as this is elegantly represented, Isa. lxiii. 1, 2, 3. Have you seen *help laid upon One that is mighty*, one whose name is **JESUS** and **JEHOVAH** both? **JEHOVAH** is his name, in the first word of our text; and *his name is called JESUS, because he saves his people from their sins*. As many discoveries as you have got of the glory of Christ as the Captain of salvation, so many marks of victory begun have you.—But this mark excludes all that never get their *eyes opened* to see any *form or comeliness in Christ*, or any *beauty wherefore they should desire him*: and hence the beauty and glory of a present world bulks more in their eyes.

3. Hath the discovery of the glory of the Conqueror
traced

loosed your heart from all other lords and lovers, and joined your heart unto him as the Lord your God, the Lord your captain, the Lord your righteousness, the Lord your strength, the Lord your salvation? The Lord thy God will put out the nations before thee. Now, the heart-drawing discovery of Christ, uniting the soul to him, is a great matter; for thus the believer is unite to Christ by faith, and the relation constitute, so as he is the Lord thy God, thy Head. Indeed a saving discovery of God in Christ, natively brings this along with it: if you see not God in Christ, thou cannot see him to be thy God, but rather thy enemy; but to see him in Christ, is to see him thy God, and thy friend: for they that see him in Christ, they see him in whom he is well-pleased; and to see God well-pleased in him, is to see God as thy God. This appropriation, then, is imported in the very nature of faith, according to the measure of it; and the ground of this believing appropriation is the word of promise, *I will be thy God*, which is the great fundamental promise; and the proper echo of faith is, AMEN; I will take it on thy word, that thou wilt be my God, Zech. xiii. 9. *I will say, It is my people; and they shall say, The Lord is my God.* There the Spirit of God declares what shall be the language of faith, when it acts like faith indeed, *The Lord is my God.* But, say you, can every believer say, *The Lord is my God?* My friends, I never thought that every believer could say so, nor that any believer in the world could always say so: but as every believer is not always believing; so I speak of what faith says when it is acting, and what the believer says when he is believing, not when he is doubting and misbelieving. Neither do I think that every act of faith is a saying expressly, *He is my God*; but every appropriating act of faith says this upon the matter, and every heart-engaging view of a God in Christ hath a *my God* wrapt up in the bosom of it, whether it dare say it expressly or not; for, in Christ, they see him to be a well-pleased God, and a friend. You know, saving faith is thy “receiving and resting on Christ for salvation, as he is offered to thee, to thee in the gospel promise;” and this receiving is no

other thing than believing, John i. 12.; and so it is a taking him on his word for salvation *to thee*, as a Captain *to thee*. Take away this particular application, and it is no faith at all, and constitutes no union to him, no relation to him as *the Lord thy God*. I ask then, if the discovery of the glory of Christ hath joined your heart to him as the glorious Captain of salvation, so as you have been taken on with him? Then thou art intitled to the complete victory; *The Lord thy God will put out these nations before thee*.—This mark excludes all these that *never closed with Christ by a peculiar believing*, but satisfy themselves with a general faith, and may be called but general believers; they have no particular words on which they have been caused to hope, and no particular faith applying Christ to themselves. Such seem not yet to have entered the field of battle, nor closed with the Captain.

4. Hath the Lord *begun to put out these nations before you*? Hath he begun to exert his power, by subduing your lusts? Did you never know the day wherein Satan fell like lightening, as it were, from heaven; when the strong man and his goods, that were at ease, were cast out of his habitation? How was it with you in the day of believing, in the day when the Lord your God manifested himself, and appeared as a mighty Conqueror to you? Got you not all your lusts and corruptions, as it were, drowned in the blood of the Lamb, so as you thought you should never see them again? You know, believer, that was a false thought, but yet it was a glad thought to you, to think ye would never be under the feet of your corruptions again, and you would never dishonour the Lord as you had done, however some time or other you have found the Lord pulling down the strong holds of unbelief, atheism, and enmity, and giving you the necks of your enemies. This looks like a good work begun, a battle begun, and a breach made upon the rule and dominion of sin. — This mark excludes all these, in whom *sin still reigns*, and in whom the glorious Captain hath never so much as begun to give a blow to the enemy.

5. If you be a soldier on your march to the heavenly Canaan,

Canaan, then I ask you, If you be of any considerable *standing in the Lord's way*? Have you not had many a bloody battle with the nations, and many a fearful onset by the enemy, attacking you with main force, and may be taking you captive; yea, and bringing you into *captivity to the law of sin that is in your members*? Rom. vii. 23. Have you not found your enemies returning with such power and prevalency, that you was ready to think that you had lost all ground that ever you had got, and lost all the victories that ever you had gained, the Canaanites prevailing against you? *Iniquities prevail against me*, says David. You would think this an odd mark; for, says the believer, it is the prevalency of sin that makes me fear I am not a true Israelite bound for Canaan. But stay a little till I further clear it.—This mark excludes all these, in whom sin and lusts have not the power of *prevalency* only, but the power of *dominion*.

QUEST. *What is the difference between the power of PREVALENCY, and the power of DOMINION?*

ANSW. The power of *dominion* is a *regal* power; there sin is king: but the power of *prevalency* is a *tyrannical* power; there it is only a tyrant, whose authority is rejected. The power of *dominion* is a *monarchical* power, where sin rules alone; but the power of *prevalency* only is where another power is also; there are two armies on the field. The power of *dominion* is *uncontroulable*, the man sins without controul; but the power of *prevalency* is a *resisted* power, where it meets with resistance unto blood. The power of *dominion* is an *absolute* power; but the power of *prevalency* is a *limited* one, with respect to some particulars only. The power of *dominion* is a *habitual* power; but the power of *prevalency* is *occasional* only. And, in a word, the power of *dominion* is an *intire* power; but the power of *prevalency* is a *broken* power, the head of it is broken, and the back of it is broken, though it prevail.—Now, to find the prevalency of the enemy, is not inconsistent with the believer's militant state, which supposes manifold inroads and incursions of the Canaanites upon him. And, indeed, they are not capable to find the joy of the victory, who

never feel the strength of the battle: sin reigns in the wicked, and hath too peacable dominion with them; iniquity cannot be said to prevail against them, but rather it prevails with them; it goes well enough with them, before and after their sinning. But, Oh! says David and the believer, *Iniquity prevails against me*; it is against my heart, against my will, against my desire, against my design, against my resolution, against my hope, against my faith, against my tears, against my prayers.

6. If you be soldiers on your march to the heavenly Canaan, then I would ask, Whether or not you find the *power* of the glorious Captain as necessary for your deliverance, upon every new assault of the enemy, as ever you found it before? For true Israelites, fighting their way to heaven, find more and more evidences of their own utter insufficiency, and more and more need of grace's all-sufficiency. Oh! the nations are as strong as ever, and the need of powerful succours and auxiliaries from heaven as great as ever. This is plain also from the text; it is the *Lord thy God* that begins the battle; and the *Lord thy God* that carries on the extirpation of the Canaanites. Do you find, then, as much need of his power to excite grace, as to work it at first; as much need of his fencing the rear, as of his leading the van?—This mark excludes all these that have a *power in their own hand*, and never came out of themselves, both for righteousness and strength, in to the Lord Jesus Christ: but it is encouraging to these who are saying, in the exercise of faith, *I will go in the strength of the Lord, making mention of his righteousness, and his only*. O to be clothed with his righteousness, and girded with his strength, is the great desire of all true Israelites!

7. If you be soldiers on march to the heavenly Canaan, you may try it by this, you will not only be perfectly at a point in this matter, that the battle is the Lord's, and that without him you cannot give *one fair stroak to the enemy*; but also you will find to your experience, that, by little and little, the conquest is carried on, and the Canaanites driven out; and that help and assist-

assistance comes from heaven by degrees, as the sovereign General is pleased to order: though you get not all the great things you would be at, yet by little things you are carried through. Can you not say, believer, that such a place was a little BOCHIM, where you got leave to weep out your heart before the Lord, because of the prevalency of sin; and such a place was a little BETHEL, a house of God, where you had such a measure of divine presence, as strengthened you against the enemy; such another place was a little PENIEL, where you saw God face to face, as it were, and a fight of the Captain of salvation gave the nations of hell a dash? And though, in the interval, your enemies and lusts rise up again in fury, and rage against you, like to devour your soul, to devour your graces, to devour your comforts, and to devour your peace; yet there comes another little recruit from heaven, that gives you a new occasion to set up an EBENEZER, saying, *Hitherto the Lord hath helped*; and to sing with the church, Psal. cxxix. 1, 2. *Many a time have they afflicted me from my youth, may Israel now say; many a time have they afflicted me from my youth, yet have they not prevailed against me.* Many a time have these Canaanites vexed me, and foiled me, yet they have not prevailed to my utter overthrow; for still, when I was brought to an extremity, the Lord was a little sanctuary to me, and communicated his grace by little and little to me, in a suitability to my need; allowing me here a little crumb of comfort, when I was like to faint in battle; and there a little crumb of courage, when I was like to yield; and at another time a little crumb of wonderful deliverance out of the hands of mine enemies, after I was led captive by them. Why, what is the meaning of all this? It is *the Lord thy God driving out these nations before thee, by little and little.*

Use 4. The *fourth* and last use shall be in a short *address* to two sorts of persons here. 1. To these that are *at peace* with the nations that stand betwixt them and the possession of the heavenly Canaan, and so are at *war* with heaven. 2. To these that are *making war* with the nations,

nations, and before whom the Lord hath begun to drive out the nations by little and little.

1/2. To you that are *at peace* with the nations of hell, at peace with the devil, at peace with your lusts; I would speak a word to you, 1. By way of *conviction*. 2. By way of *counsel*.

1. For your *conviction*. Is it not evident, that the most part are at peace with hell, being ignorant of the sin-mortifying principles of the gospel, being slights of the means of conversion, living in security under all the calls of heaven by the word and the rod, and living in enmity against the power of godliness, indulging themselves in many known sins, and knowing no restraint from sinning, taken from its nature, but from its consequents only. Are there not many here, that have nations of lusts swarming in their heart, yet were never convinced of, or made to know the plagues of their own heart? Some will say they have a good heart to God, even though their mouth be filled either with cursing, lying, swearing, and slandering; or else with nothing but vain, frothy, carnal, worldly discourse. What! shall we think you have a clean heart, when you have such a foul mouth? Does not Christ say, *Out of the abundance of the heart, the mouth speaketh?* When a man sees abundance of smoke coming out at the top of a chimney, he may say, for certain, that is a sign of much fire in the hearth: so, when there is nothing but vain, worldly words in the mouth; we may say, there is much vanity and corruption in the heart. Carnal lips that are not shaped for any spiritual discourse, except in hypocrisy and deceit, discover a carnal heart. Oh! how many here are willing slaves to the nations, the Canaanites, the lusts of the flesh! Of all slaves, they are in the worst case that are sold; of these that are sold, they are in the worst case that are put in prison; of these that are in prison, they are in the worst case that are bound and chained in prison: yet such slaves to sin and lusts are all here by nature, shut up in clofs prison, bound and chained there; shut up under unbelief: and unbelief is such a cruel jailor, that, while you are shut up under it, it will not so much as suffer you to lift up
your

your head, or to look up to heaven for deliverance. Oh! how miserable is this thralldom that you are under! For these nations that rule in you, and over you, and under which you are bearing arms against the God of heaven, will, at last, destroy you for ever, if they be not destroyed in time; if they be not put out of your heart, they will keep you out of heaven; yea, if they be not driven out of your heart, they will drive you to hell. If that legion of lusts, that you are in league with, be not cast out of your heart, by the power of that glorious Captain of salvation, that cast out a legion of devils out of one man; then you must lay your account with it, that, like the swine possessed of the devil, you will be driven down to the sea of God's everlasting wrath, and drowned in perdition. But then,

2. I would offer you a word of *counsel*. O will you break league with these cursed Canaanites, and come and take on with our glorious Captain of salvation, that can drive them out before you? O sinner! man, woman; young and old; you that have been a slave to the devil all your days, a slave to the numerous nations of lusts, that, as sure as God lives, will keep you out of heaven, and drive you to hell, if they be not driven out; will you come and take on with our glorious Lord Jesus, whose office and work, as a Redeemer, is to force out the nations before you? Our Captain-general hath sent us, as officers under him, to cry in the public meetings and assemblies of this sort, saying, *Whosoever will, let him come*, and take on to be a soldier under the KING of kings, and LORD of lords, against the king of hell and the nations of lusts, that would keep you out of heaven: and as we are warranted to declare them cursed with bitter curses, that will not join in this war, according to what is said of Meroz, Judges v. 23. *Curse ye Meroz; curse ye bitterly the inhabitants thereof, because they came not to the help of the Lord, to the help of the Lord against the mighty*: so we are warranted to declare to sinners, that there are here the greatest encouragements that ever were offered to soldiers, to excite you to take on with him. Why, he offers you money to bear all your charges; *I counsel you to buy of me gold,*
tried

tried gold: he offers to *take off your filthy garments, and to clothe you with change of raiment*, the king's livery: yea, he offers you a coat of mail, that will defend you against the shot of death, and the shot of devils; the robe of his own righteousness, a garment of salvation: he offers you further, that, if you be wounded in the war, he will give you a balm to heal your wound, the balm of his own blood: yea, if you take on with him, he offers to do all your works in you and for you; yea, to fight all your battles, to drive out all the nations before you, and then to crown you as a conqueror; yea, and more than a conqueror, even though you have done nothing of yourself. He offers to give you all the armour you need for the war: do you need the *sword*, the *breast-plate*, the *helmet*, the *shield*, mentioned, Eph. vi. He himself is the great magazine of all the military provision; and therefore, if you take on with him, you shall want for nothing that is necessary for carrying on the war to a complete victory. O come and take on with him for *wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, and redemption*; take on with him for armour, and strength, and victory, and all.

But, say you, what mean you by taking on with him? I know not how to take on with him. Why, Sirs, to take on with him, is to *believe in him*. But what am I to believe, say you, that I may take on with him?

(1.) You are to believe, that he is *speaking* to you, and *inviting* you to take on with him; even you man, you woman. Let none here say that there was not a word spoken to them at Carnock: nay, I take you all to witness, that have ears to hear, that the Lord is, by the poor mortal that is here preaching, speaking to every one of you, and saying, *To you, O man, do I call, and my voice is to the sons of men*; and he is entreating you to take on with him. Believe that he is speaking to you, and that this gospel-offer is to you.

(2.) You are to believe that you *cannot believe*. This were one good step towards faith, to believe that you are an unbeliever, and shut up in unbelief as in a prison,
which

which none can open but the Captain of salvation. And therefore,

(3.) You are to believe in him for *grace* to believe in him, or to come to him for grace to come to him, and to take on with him for faith, as well as for other things, because he alone is the *Author of faith*. He never called any to bear the expence of one jot, from the beginning to the end of the war, out of their own pocket; and much less the expence of this great thing we call *believing*, which is the effect of the *exceeding greatness of his almighty power*. And then, having believed these things,

(4.) You are to believe his word, that he will not *fail you* in a jot of what he is offering to you. Take his word for it that he will do as he hath said unto you; and trust him that speaks to you by us. To take on with him by faith, is to take his word, who is *truth itself*, for your security; and lay the stress of the whole war upon him, saying, Lord, art thou calling me, even me, that have been a slave to the devil and nations of lusts? Art thou calling me to take on with thee? Content, Lord; *Come thou and reign over us*, as the trees said, in Jotham's parable, Judges ix. 10. Come thou and reign over me, and be thou my glorious Captain, to fight for me, and to slay all the nations of lusts in my heart. And if you, indeed, take on with him in this manner, he will do as he hath said; he will put out the nations before you by *little and little*.—May the Lord back his call with power.

2dly, To you that are *believers*, on the field of battle, *making war* with the nations, the spiritual Canaanites; and before whom the Lord hath begun to drive them out by little and little: I should offer you, 1. A word of *comfort*. 2. Of *counsel*.

[1.] For *comfort*. O believer though the nations be greater and mightier than you, yet the Lord hath engaged to drive them out; there is a power in Christ, the believer's Head and Husband, that will, in process of time, bring every power contrary to him in subjection; it is in Christ that believers shall be *more than conquerors*. It is very grievous to the believer to feel the assaults of

fin, such as that of pride, filthiness, covetousness, unbelief, atheism, and enmity: but it is the privilege of the believer, that he hath such things that he may be humbled, not that he may be conquered and destroyed thereby. You know, a snake may be so handled, by taking out his sting and teeth, that it cannot hurt us, though it touch us; yet we abhor it for the nature of it, and are afraid to have it come near us: even so, sin is in such a manner handled by our Lord Jesus Christ, that it cannot hurt the believer in Christ; hence the believer is many times more afraid than hurt: yet it is very becoming the true believer to hate sin from the very nature of it, and stand at a distance from it. Mean time, you have the greatest encouragement in the world to fight against the nations of enemies, the nations of lusts; for the battle is the Lord's, he stands engaged to put out the nations, Deut. vii. 17, 18. Were there an uncertainty of the victory, you might be discouraged and loath to undertake such a warfare. But now, when the Lord hath assured you of the victory, and that you have his blood, his Spirit, his faithful promise for it, there is no more ground of discouragement.

OBJECT. Oh! what comfort can I take, when I find the nations of enemies and lusts still living and lively; yea, strong, mighty, and prevalent, and even growing stronger and stronger upon my hand, instead of being subdued and destroyed?

ANSW. Perhaps it is so between battles, or single combats, that you have with your corruptions; but do you not find your Captain coming sometimes in to your assistance, and making up all that you lost, by his gracious, powerful, sanctifying, and comforting presence? And thus, do you not find even after sin's victory over you, which makes you judge the nations are increasing on your hand; do you not find, I say, your hatred of sin increased, your self-abhorrence increased, your dependence on the Lord for strength increased, your desire to be rid of sin increased, and your heart-longing for the final victory over the nations, and the full possession of Canaan? Why, what is this but the Lord your God putting out the nations before you by little and

and little? Mean time, during these battles, is it not ground of comfort,

(1.) That there is a *sentence past in your favours* against the nations, even a sentence of condemnation and destruction? and accordingly, *sin is condemned in the flesh*, Rom. viii. 3. And Satan is condemned to destruction; *The God of peace will bruise Satan under your feet.*

(2.) Is it not ground of comfort, that the sentence past against sin and Satan is *executed in part*? Your old man is crucified; the head of the serpent is bruised: *For this cause was the Son of God manifested, to destroy the works of the devil; and, by death he hath destroyed him that had the power of death.*

(3.) Is it not ground of comfort, that the *day of full and final execution is at hand*, wherein he will take vengeance on the nations? *For the day of vengeance is in mine heart; the year of my redeemed is come*, Isa. lxiii. 4.: *the day of the Lord is at hand*, wherein he will bring forth judgment into victory, and death shall be swallowed up in victory: *Christ will reign till all his enemies become his footstool; to him every knee shall bow.*

[4.] Is it not ground of comfort, that the *remaining power* of the nations in the interim shall never be able to *break the relation* that is betwixt your Captain-general and you, nor to cast you out of his covenant, out of his heart, nor out of his love? *My covenant will I not break*, says he; *my loving-kindness will I not take away*, Psal. lxxxix. 33, 34. He is still *the Lord thy God*; and, therefore, *he will put out the nations before thee by little and little.* I offer you,

[2.] A word of *counsel.* O believer, are you indeed engaged in battle against the nations? And has the Lord begun to drive them out before you? Then *pursue thy victory*, and *fight out the good fight of faith*, for the Lord thy God is he that does fight for thee; as the apostle says in a like case, Phil. ii. 12, 13. *Work out the work of your salvation with fear and trembling; for it is God that worketh in you both to will and to do of his good pleasure:* Even so, fight out the battle against the nations;

for, *the Lord thy God will put them out before thee, by little and little.* And, since the battle is the Lord's, and your Captain goes before you to divide the spoil with the strong, go on courageously: and, that you may do so the more successfully, I shall branch forth this word of counsel in these particulars.

1. *Put on the whole armour of God*; and go not forth against the nations in your own strength, otherwise you will find them too hard for you; but, *Go on in the strength of the Lord, making mention of his righteousness, and his only*; being strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might; and strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus; having no confidence in the flesh, but always your confidence in, and dependence upon the Lord Jesus Christ, the Captain of salvation.

2. *Search out the nations that are most invisible and hidden*; for your greatest danger is from your most secret enemies: you wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities and powers, and spiritual wickednesses. And there are spiritual lusts not easily discerned: if these be neglected, and more open enemies only noticed, it is as if one should gaze upon the smoke, and neglect the fire that is within; or, as if one should gaze upon the ulcer, but never consider the corrupt humour within.

3. Having found out the enemy, and discerned where the strength of the nations lie, then *set upon them*, and endeavour, through grace, to bring them into a consumption, and that both by *starving* and *storming* of them.

(1.) By *starving* them. O starve them, and keep them from their food; *Make no provision for the flesh, to fulfil the lusts thereof.* Beware of every thing that may contribute to strengthen the nations. *Say not, A confederacy with them*: do not spare them, nor let their strong holds stand: draw not up a league with them, nor border too near to them. It is said of Israel, *The people shall dwell alone, and shall not be reckoned among the nations.* Keep not company with the wicked: be not too much conversant with the world; many bury themselves, by digging too deep there.

(2.) As

(2.) As by *starving*, so by *storming* the nations. You are to consume them; and you ought to storm them, by bringing them under the battering engines of the gospel, under the stroke of God's word, which is the *sword of the Spirit*; under the stroke of the blood of Christ; for, we *overcome by the blood of the Lamb*; and under the stroke of the Spirit of Christ; for, *If you, through the Spirit, mortify the deeds of the body, you shall live.*

4. Take all the *advantages you can against the nations.* Take advantage of the times and seasons, even when you are like to be overpowered with inward corruption, and under fear of falling one day by the hand of some strong lust; then get to the mighty power of Christ, and reinforce yourself and resist; and, in resisting, believe you shall overcome: remembering, for your encouragement, that the almighty Captain stands within sight, when you are fighting in the valley; and he waits but a call from you, when distressed in the battle; and he will come for your rescue. Jehoshaphat cried in the midst of the battle, and was helped: how much more may you expect his aid in your spiritual combat?

5. *Watch against the nations, and resist the first onset of the enemy.* Corruptions are the natives, and they are not wholly destroyed: if therefore you do not watch, nature will turn to her old bias. Native and natural inclinations are very forcible: as, bend the bough of a tree downward, if you let it go, it will start up by and by; so, if you give up your watch, the nations will return, and resume their power. Particularly watch against, and resist the first motions of sin: if you stop not the current of a wicked motion, it will soon land in a wicked action; for, *When lust hath conceived, it brings forth sin*, James i. 15. Great evils arise from small beginnings: one spoonful of water will quench that fire, which afterwards whole buckets cannot abate; therefore it is a good rule, *Principiis obsta*, "Resist the beginnings of sin."

6. *Put the nations in the hand of the Captain*, that he may destroy them; and endeavour so to do, in the daily exercise of faith and prayer. O seek to the Lord Jesus, that

that he would avenge you of these Philistines; as in the parable of the unjust judge, Luke xviii. 1,—8. The *parable* was put forth *for this end, that men ought always to pray, and not to faint.* The judge there mentioned was one that *feared not God, nor regarded man*: a widow comes to him saying, *Avenge me of mine adversary*; and through her importunity she prevailed with him: *And shall not God avenge his elect, that cry day and night to him; though he bear long, yet he will avenge them speedily.* Therefore, go to a God in Christ, and cry, Lord, avenge me of my lusts, avenge me of my pride, avenge me of my unbelief, avenge me of my carnality, avenge me of mine enemies.

7. After all, *rest not satisfied with any small victory obtained over the nations*: sit not down, as if you had no more ado; for the nations are not all dead and destroyed at once; you will have them to fight with, as long as you are on this side of heaven: enemies will up again; and, therefore, you must up again, and press forward to a complete victory. As the body of sin and death remains while you are here; so, whatever particular lust you have been troubled with, you cannot expect a full and final victory while here, even though it hath been a mortified lust, a subdued lust. No doubt, Peter got his feet upon the neck of his sin of *denying his Master*, when he *went out and wept bitterly* after Christ looked to him; yet even that same corruption afterwards did stir in him, by a partial denying of his Master, though not in the same degree; as when Paul *withstood him to the face*, Gal. ii. 12. A particular corruption may, through grace, be subdued, and it may cease to stir so violently for a time; yet you cannot say that it is wholly killed; yea, it may afterwards rise up as violently as ever. A lust, that lay long dead, may revive again; and therefore you little need to be secure, but much need to be sober and watchful, and still going on in the warfare, still depending on the Lord for new supplies of strength against new assaults. After one victory obtained, make ready for battle immediately; when something is done, look to the Lord to do more: after one stroke, seek another to be given; for it is by *little and*

and little the victory is obtained. Think not strange, therefore, though the nations rally their forces again and again, and be not discouraged thereupon, but learn a daily, momentary, close, and constant dependence upon the Captain of salvation, the Lord Jesus Christ, that *through him you may do valiantly. It is he that girdeth you with strength, and subdues the nations under you.*

8. In order to pursue the nations to death, *pursue the claim you have to the victory over them,* in the use of all appointed means, with an entire dependence upon the Lord Jesus Christ; not depending upon means; nay, nor yet depending upon sensible manifestations, nor relying even upon the graces of the Spirit, but upon the God of all grace; pleading your right and claim, by virtue of the divine promise, saying, Lord, hast thou not interposed thy faithfulness, thy word, thy oath? and is not thy promise sealed; sealed by the blood of Christ, sealed in the sacrament of the supper? Hast thou not said, *Solomon shall reign?* though now, *behold, Adonijah usurps the throne:* Hast thou not said, *Grace shall reign, and sin shall not have the dominion?* Behold how it usurps. Well, put him to his word, and pursue your claim. Surely the Lord will not deny himself; nay, JEHOVAH-JIREH, *In the mount of the Lord it shall be seen:* though you have no strength, *no might against this great multitude;* yet, let your eyes be toward him, who is mightier than the noise of many waters, and who hath wrapt in your interest with his own glory, his own faithfulness, and truth. Let your difficulties be never so great, your enemies never so many, and their power never so invincible; it is not you they have to do with, but Christ: and, can any thing be too hard for him? *Wait on thy God continually,* who hath here promised to accomplish the warfare gradually: *The Lord thy God will put out these nations, before thee, by little and little.*



S E R M O N LIV.

The FEMALE PREACHER; or, the Woman of *Samaria's* Sermon to the Men of the City: or, the *Self-humbling and Christ-exalting Influences of Divine Discoveries.* *

JOHN iv. 27.

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

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

In the preceding part of this chapter, there stands recorded a very notable conversation betwixt Christ and this woman, the particulars whereof are too many to be considered at this time, though some of them may fall in our way when we speak of the circumstances of her conversion: only, in the general, our Lord Jesus, as a

* This subject was handled in one sermon, preached July 13th, 1729. immediately after the celebration of the sacrament of the Lord's supper at Dunfermline. It hath undergone six editions.

wearied traveller sitting down by Jacob's well, and this woman coming to draw water, he seeks a drink from her, both to quench his thirst, and to take occasion of conferring with her, with a design of mercy to her soul. She apprehending him to be a Jew, refuses to give him a drink, upon an old quarrel that was between the Jews and the Samaritans; whereupon Christ shews her how she mistook her own mercy, and that he had better water to give her than that which she refused to give him, ver 10.; and that if she knew what a valuable mercy were at her hand, she would have turned a supplicant to him, and not suffer him to be so to her. But she still reasoning against his offer, he points out further the excellency of what he offered, ver. 13, 14.; this raised some natural desire in her: but our Lord resolving to take hold of her heart, and knowing that the richest offer of his grace in the world, will work no desire in the heart of sinners, further than what is natural and carnal, unless he effectively convince them of their sin and misery, and savingly manifest himself to them; therefore he takes this method with her.

1st, He *convinc*es her of her sin and misery, and lets her understand that he knew all the lewdness and wickedness she was guilty of, by shewing her how many adulteries she was chargeable with, ver. 18. Whereupon she begins to conceive some high opinion of him as a Prophet, and to seek further light from him with reference to the right way of worshipping God, there being controversies about religious matters, and particularly about the place of public worship, betwixt the Jews and the Samaritans: and, indeed, the woman's discourse here shews, that though she was a profane Samaritan, yet she was no *Ignoramus*. She had knowledge of the controversy of the day she lived in, and the grounds thereof; and knew that the Messias was to come: yet her knowledge was no sanctified knowledge. But now her conscience being awakened with a sense of sin, she is solicitous to have her mind informed; and accordingly is instructed at large by our blessed Lord Jesus, both concerning the *place* and the *right manner* of worshipping

God. And thus from one thing to another, he leads her on, until,

2dly, He *manifests* himself to her, ver. 26. Christ's discourse about the change of religion that was to take place, brought the woman to mind of the Messiah's coming; *I know*, says she, *that Messiah cometh, which is called Christ; when he is come, he will tell us all things.* And while she is expressing her high estimation of, and great desire after this coming Messiah, Jesus saith unto her, *I that speak unto thee, am he.* Christ may be present with people, and speaking to them, and yet they cannot know, or take him up till he reveals himself, as here he did to this woman; *I that speak unto thee, am he.*

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

But now, how she was affected with this discovery is evident from two things.

1. She *forgets her errand* that she came upon; *She left her water-pot, and went her way*: having got a taste of the excellency of Christ, and a drink of the living water which he gave her, she minds no other water now; nay, she forgets all other things that before were in great esteem with her.

2. She *spreads the name and fame of Christ* in the place where she dwelt; *Come see a man*, says she, *that told me all things that ever I did: is not this the Christ?* Wherein we may notice,

(1.) An *invitation*; *Come see a man*: having got a taste of his goodness, she would have the men in the city to taste and see with her.

(2.) A *commendation*; a man *that told me ALL THINGS that ever I did*; a man that hath discovered himself to be God as well as man, in that he hath ript up and ransacked

sacked my heart and life. He had discovered her lewdness to her, and thereby represented all other things to her as seen by him. There is here implied a humble sense she had of her sinfulness, which Christ had given her a discovery and conviction of; and by his searching word she understood that he was the searcher of hearts and so commends him as *a man that told her all things that ever she did.*

(3.) *A conclusion*, by way of interrogation and expostulation, *Is not this the Christ?* importing no manner of doubt about it in her own breast, but a strong affirmation, pointing at him unto them. He had told her what she was, and in this glass she saw her own vileness; and he had told her what he was, and in this glass she saw his glory: and by both these means he discovered himself to be the true Messias, the God-man, the promised *Immanuel, God with us*; and her heart being full of Christ, and overflowing with the living water of the Spirit that he had given her, it vented itself and ran over in his praise and commendation unto others; *Come see a man that told me all things that ever I did; is not this the Christ?*—I shall endeavour some further explication of this text, upon a note of doctrine, passing over many others. What I mainly fixt upon is,

OBSERV. *That those saving discoveries of Christ, that make persons to condemn and abase themselves to the lowest, lead them, at the same time, to commend and exalt Christ to the highest.*

Self-searching, soul-humbling, and sin-discovering manifestations, issue in Christ-exalting commendations. I think it is remarkable in this woman, that kindly humiliation did not take place in her, till after that Christ had clearly manifested himself to her, saying, *I that speak unto thee, am he.* It is true, when Christ first discovered her wickedness and lewdness to her, she appeared to be self-condemned and convicted, saying, *I perceive that thou art a Prophet*; and a true Prophet indeed, that can tell me how many acts of lewdness I have been guilty of: her conscience flying in her face, and subscribing to the truth of what he had told her; but yet, as

her first conviction appeared to be very partial and weak, in that, as some think, she seemed to shift any discourse about her own vileness, and started a question relative to a national difference betwixt the Jews and the Samaritans, to divert that subject concerning her baseness; so, I think, we may conclude, that her convictions before were very legal, driving her rather to her works and duties than to Christ; for, instantly she falls a questioning him about the means of worshipping God, as if when now she was convinced of her sin against God, her only way of obtaining his favour, was by endeavouring to please him by her duties of worship, whom she had displeased by her wickedness and lewdness. And, indeed, the first airt that an awakened conscience looks to, is the law, *the first Husband*. But now, when once Christ discovers and manifests himself to her, she is kindly humbled under a sense of her vileness; yea, and of all her heart and life-wickedness represented to her under that; and in the light wherein Christ discovered himself, she saw all her abominations; *He told me all things that ever I did*. She is now humbled and abased to the lowest; why? her sense of sin is not now partial, but full; *He told me all things that ever I did*. Neither is it now legal but evangelical; for it was now in the glass of a saving manifestation, in the glass wherein Christ discovered his glory and excellency that she saw all her own filthiness and deformity.—And while she is thus debased and humbled by the discovery of Christ, how does she commend and exalt him to the highest? She commends him to her neighbour-citizens, and puts the greatest honour upon him, both as he is the true God incarnate, that by his omniscient eye could see, and so declare to her, *All that ever she did*; and as he is the true Messias, the anointed of God; *Is not this the Christ?*

The truth of this doctrine might be cleared from many scripture passages, *That saving discoveries of Christ tend to make persons condemn and debase themselves, and to commend and exalt Christ*, as it was with Job, chap. xl. ver. 4, 5. God having manifested his glory, he cried out, *Beheld I am vile; what shall I answer thee? I will*
 lay

lay my hand upon my mouth; as being unworthy to speak in the presence of such a great and glorious one: therefore he adds, *Once have I spoken, but I will not answer; yea, twice, but I will proceed no further.* And chap. xlii. 5, 6. *I have heard of thee by the hearing of the ear; but now mine eyes seeth thee: wherefore, I abhor myself, and repent in dust and ashes.* See how the discovery of Christ makes the prophet Isaiah to condemn and abase himself to the lowest, and to commend and exalt Christ to the highest, chap. vi. 1, 5. *He saw the Lord sitting upon a throne high and lifted up, and his train filling the temple; then says he, Wo is me, for I am undone! because I am a man of unclean lips, and I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips; for mine eyes have seen the King, the Lord of hosts.* To this purpose we may see Isa. xlv. 22,—25. *Look unto me and be saved, all ye ends of the earth; for I am God, and there is none else.* Well, what will issue upon that saving sight of Christ? Both the abasing of himself, ver. 23. *To him every knee shall bow;* and the high commendation and exaltation of Christ, *Surely shall one say, In the Lord have I righteousness and strength: in him shall all the seed of Israel be justified, and shall glory,* ver. 24, 25.—But passing many other proofs, I suppose it will be found evident in the experience of all the saints, that every manifestation and discovery of Christ tends to work both these effects at the same time, even to make them condemn and debase themselves to the lowest, and to commend and exalt Christ to the highest.

This subject is very large, but I design, for shortening the work, to confine myself especially to the circumstances and effects of the discovery that Christ here gives of himself to the woman of Samaria, in the following method.

- I. I shall show what we are to understand by Christ manifesting or discovering himself to a person.
- II. What are these *sin-discovering* and *soul-debasing* effects of Christ manifesting himself; or, when may one be in case to say, that Christ hath *told him all things that ever he did?*

III. What

III. What are these *Christ-exalting commendations*, wherein such discoveries of Christ vent themselves; and so notice the particular *import* in what the woman here says, *Come see a man that told me all things that ever I did; Is not this the Christ?*

IV. I will shew the *reasons* of the doctrine, whence it is that saving discoveries of Christ have such a self-debasing and Christ-exalting influence. And then,

V. Make *application* of the whole subject.

I. I will speak a little of *Christ's discovering and manifesting* himself to sinners. And here I would confine myself to the circumstances of the discovery that he makes of himself to this woman, which wrought this effect in her, and which, in most particulars, will be found to agree with all the saving manifestations that our Lord makes of himself to his people, either at first conversion, or any renewed visit he makes to them. And here we may notice, 1. Some things relating to the *means* of the discovery that Christ makes of himself to this woman. 2. Some things relating the *manner* of it.

1st, There are some things in the context relating to the *means* of this discovery.

1. One of the more *remote* means was his taking occasion to *come to a place where she was also to come*, and so casting himself in her way, as it were. This is noticed very remarkably, ver. 4th of this chapter, where it is said, *He must needs go through Samaria*: Whatever other reasons there were for his going this way, here was a special one; he must needs meet this woman, and with those Samaritans, whom, on this occasion, he converted to the faith. If there be but one soul that Christ hath an errand to, the world will not keep him away from the place where that soul is. He must needs go through that place: there is a sweet necessity he lies under; he must needs bring a gospel-ministry there; he must needs bring gospel-ordinances where he has any souls to meet with, and discover himself savingly unto. They to whom Christ hath discovered himself will find

a merciful providence exercised about them, in his ordering there lot so, that either they are brought to the place where Christ and his ordinances are, or Christ and his ordinances come to the place where they are.

2. A *second* more remote means of this discovery is our Lord ordering matters so as her *secular errand* is made the occasion of her *spiritual good* and advantage, ver. 7. *There comes this woman of Samaria to draw water.* Providence may be intending much mercy to those who are both very unworthy of it, and very unconcerned about it. Little was this sinful woman minding any other thing but to draw water; yet a happy providence made her to meet with the Saviour of sinners. Some have come to ordinances, as this woman did to Jacob's well, with no other view, save upon some secular and carnal errand; may be to draw the water of damnation to themselves, or to draw in some applause to themselves amongst their neighbours, or merely from custom and curiosity, little minding any saving good, which yet the Lord hath prevented them with.

3. A *third* mean of this discovery is, Christ falls a *discoursing with her*, and upon occasion of his seeking, and her refusing him a drink of water, he shews his pity and compassion on her, as an ignorant and unsensible sinner, having no knowledge of her real want and necessity, with respect to that *better water which he had to give*; and particularly he lets her know, that the *well of living water* was in his hand to dispense as he pleased; and that as he offers his grace before we ask it, so he will not refuse it to them who ask it upon his offer and promise: *If thou hadst known thou wouldst have asked, and I would have given thee living water.* And, besides, in his discourse, he commends his wares to her, ver. 14.; his gifts, his graces, his Spirit, as a well above all wells, *a well of water springing up to everlasting life*; and all to be freely dispensed by way of gift and donation. And this is the way he deals still with sinners in the free dispensation of the gospel.

4. A *fourth* mean of this discovery, is his working a *work of conviction* upon her conscience, by shewing her transgressions to her, and setting her sin in order before her,

her, ver. 18. ; and thereby discovering his prophetic office to her, and raising some esteem of him as a *Prophet*, ver. 19. The freest offers do not prevail with sinners, till they be convinced of their sinfulness and misery. Indeed, it is not every sight of sin that will convince the sinner ; but Christ must set it home upon the conscience, and discover sin to them marked by his all-seeing eye, his all-searching eye ; for the woman knew pretty well, how matters were with her, and yet, without any due sense, till he ript up and laid open her bosom, and made her see and understand that all her sins were *naked and open unto the eye of him with whom she had now to do* ; and though she did not know him to be the Christ, yet she begins to have some high thought of him as a Prophet that had the mind of God, and by whom God was discovering her sinfulness to her. But it does not appear, as yet, that she perceived any thing in him above ordinary prophets ; so gradually, by little and little, did he manifest himself to her. Only it is evident here, that in God's order and method of working effectually on the hearts of sinners, as there is a discovery of sin that goes before a discovery of Christ, without which persons do not see their need of Christ ; so the more that Christ discovers sin, and touches the sinner's heart therewith, it breeds the more respect and estimation of him, though it may be very weak and low at first.

5. A *fifth* mean of this discovery, is his opening up to her the nature of *true spiritual and acceptable worship*, ver. 21,—24. Here he gives her such instruction as might tend to let her see that he was a Prophet above all prophets, that knew what changes were quickly to fall out with reference to the place of religious worship, and what sort of worship God would have, what a Spirit he is, and what service he requires. *As faith comes by hearing*, so discoveries of Christ, the glorious object of faith, come by the means of instruction and divine teaching, such as the Lord Jesus here gives this woman. And this paves way to

6. A *sixth* mean of this discovery, namely, his working in her heart a *kindly remembrance of and high esteem*
for

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

2dly, Notice the *manner* of the discovery that Christ makes of himself, *I that speak unto thee, am he*. Here is a clear manifestation and revelation that Christ himself gives of himself, *I that speak unto thee, am he*. It is not ordinary for Christ to give such testimony of himself; there must be some rare thing here: for, when John's disciples came to ask him, *Art thou he that should come, or may we look for another?* He does not say, *I that speak unto thee, am he*; nay, but, *Go tell John what ye hear and see; the blind receive their sight, the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed, the deaf hear, the dead are raised up, and the poor have the gospel preached to them*, Matth. xi. 5.; let him draw the conclusion from these premises whether I am he or not: but here he gives as clear a discovery of himself as in all the book of God,

out of his own mouth. We know Peter gave a clear testimony, *Thou art Christ, the Son of the living God*; the Father gave a great testimony to him, *This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well-pleas'd*: but that Christ gave as clear a testimony of himself, is rarely to be found in all the New Testament: yea, this discovery of himself is more remarkable, because he forbid his disciples, at that time, to tell expressly who he was; and when Pilate and Herod, and others, ask him, *Who art thou?* he either gave them a very dark answer, or none at all. Christ is not lavish of his commendations in this manner; therefore, there is some speciality here: and yet there is something in the manner of Christ manifesting himself to her that is common to all the children of God, to whom he savingly manifests himself.

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

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

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

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

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

6. It was a *sensible* discovery that he gave of himself to this woman; her *time was a time of love*. After he had let her see that she was lying in her blood, and in

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

7. It was a wonderful discovery he made of himself to this woman; there were many wonders in it: and, indeed, whenever Christ manifests himself to any soul, it will see some such like wonders as she saw. O wonderful, might she say! is he speaking to me, such a poor woman as I am, and such a base woman as I have been! Why, as there was no sibness, or relation, betwixt him and her, but on the contrary a stated enmity and alienation; for, *the Jews had no dealing with the Samaritans*; yea, but he must deal with her, though she was no good woman; nay, a common whore, lying in whoredom. O wonderful! Though ye were never such a great sinner, yet Christ is content to speak with you, for your everlasting good; and it is an ill tale that may not be heard. Will ye allow Christ to speak to you? Was it not wonderful that Christ should speak to this woman, in such a manner as he did? How kindly does he speak to her that he might gain her heart with his love, and kill her with kindness? One might have thought he would call her a base filthy devil, as it was said to himself most blasphemously; *Say we not well, thou art a Samaritan, and hast a devil?* It was true of this woman of Samaria, she was a Samaritan that had a filthy devil; yea, the Jews took all the Samaritans for incarnate devils. But does Christ call her so? Nay; and it adds to the wonder of his discovering himself to her, that she was a sligher of Christ, he was undervalued by her; *Art thou greater than our father Jacob?* says she, ver. 12.; yea, she refused him a drink of cold water; yet he bears with all these affronts, and manifests

fefts himself to her, even to her: O wonderful! Do not several such wonders take place, when the Lord comes to speak and manifest himself to you, O believers, O sinners? Are there not wonders enough to be observed concerning this glorious person shewing himself? He might dwell in heaven to all eternity, as he dwelt in heaven from all eternity, and be for ever happy: the Father was good company to him, and he needed none of your company; he had infinite delight in himself more than in all his creatures: yet for all this, that he should speak and shew himself to you, how wonderful is it! His discoveries are wonderful, in that he seeks nothing of us: it is true, he made the fashion of seeking a drink of water from this woman, but that was only by the bye; he got meat and drink enough when he got the woman to himself; the great thing he was seeking was to get the woman divorced from all her base husbands, and married to himself; yea, betrothed to him for ever: yea, Christ's visits to some may be wonderful, not only to the sinner, that gets them; but to the saints and disciples, that see or hear tell of them. We are told here, ver. 27. that *the disciples, when they came, marvelled that he talked with that woman*: though they durst not challenge him, yet it was matter of offence to them that he so freely conversed with her. Christ can demean himself, and stoop so low to a poor sinner as is marvellous to flesh and blood: there is more kindness and humility in him alone, than in all his friends; they being advanced, by grace, are apt to forget themselves, and to become so proud as to despise others, though they themselves were once lifted out of the dungeon, and chosen out of the dust. But then,

8. It was a *powerful* discovery that he made of himself to this woman, as appears by the gracious *effects* thereof. Now her heart goes off all things else, she *forgets her water-pot*; her mind is set upon some greater things; she ran away to the city, that she might invite others to follow him, who had so wonderfully manifested himself to her; and, indeed, all saving manifestations have a power attending them. The gospel comes not in *word only, but in power*: Christ's word has a drawing power.

power. He draws with loving-kindness, while grace and love is poured from his lips. This word, wherein he visits the soul, has a gaining power, that wins the heart from all things, and makes Christ *all in all*. And his manifestations have a sanctifying, transforming power; *beholding his glory, we are changed into the same image*; and especially they lead to a self-debasing and Christ-exalting exercise. Which brings me to

II. The *second* general head proposed, namely, *What are these sin-discovering and soul-debasing effects of Christ's manifesting himself?* or, when may one be in case to say, *He told me all things that ever I did?* It is true, this is a part of what the woman spake to Christ's commendation, as an all-knowing God; as well as to her own condemnation, as a vile sinner, brought under a kindly self-abasement, by the discovery she had of Christ, both as a kindly reprove, and a merciful Redeemer, a Christ, a Saviour.—To give light to this particular, I shall only touch at this, *how all things are told, when only some things seem to be told?* How can this woman say, *He told me ALL THINGS that ever I did*, when yet it was only her *whoredom* and *adultery* that he discovered? Or, when may the discovery that Christ makes of himself be so humbling and abasing, that when but a *small part* is mentioned, yet *ALL that ever we did* is discovered?

I answer; 1. It may be said *consequentially*: *He told me all things that ever I did*; that is, by plain consequence. As we may see what the conclusion is, when the premises are related; what the root is, when the fruit is discovered; and what the fountain is, when the streams are discovered: even so, when Christ tells a person what evil fruit he hath brought forth, that person may easily infer, that he hath told him that he is an evil tree; and by the streams of wickedness in the life, he leads people thus to the fountain of wickedness in the heart and nature. When he tells one of the black smoke that comes out of the chimney of his heart; he tells also, by plain consequence, that there is a fire of corruption within; and then is one abased to self-abhorrence,

rence, when, by the discovery of one sin, in the light of a gracious manifestation, he is led, in a spiritually argumentive way, to infer his total deprivation, both in nature and practice; he may say, consequently, at least, *He told me all things that ever I did.*

2. It may be said *inclusively* and *virtually*; *He told me all things that ever I did.* As he that offends in one point of the law, is guilty of all, James ii. 10. in counteracting the authority that enjoins all; so he that is humbled deeply for any one sin, may see therein, that he hath broken all the commands of God, and may be said, in a part, to have seen the whole. In transgressing of one command he may see his being a transgressor of all the commands of God, and a continual transgressor thereof in thought, word, and deed; because, as *every imagination of the heart is evil, and only evil continually*; so, *out of the heart*, as out of a bitter fountain, *proceed evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, fornications, thefts, false witnessing, blasphemy*, and all other pollutions beside. All the sins of people are included, inclosed, connected together as links in a chain; so that when one link is seen, the whole chain may be said to be seen. Suppose a chain whereof some links are above the ground, and all the rest of it hanging down into a dark and deep pit; when the upper links are seen, in their connection with the whole, then one may be said to have seen all, because all are included and inclosed in what he saw.

3. It may be said *potentially*, *He told me all things that ever I did*; because, by that one instance he gave a proof of his ability so to do. He that could tell me this, could tell me all; he that could observe this, hath observed all that ever I did, and can as easily tell me all as tell me a part; for none but the *Searcher of hearts*, that sees all my goings, could have told me this. He that can save to the utmost, can see to the uttermost.

4. It may be said *representatively*, *He told me all things that ever I did*; for this discovery represented all other things, all my other sins. This representation is like that which is made in a mirror; if one set a looking-glass

glafs before you to fee a spot in your face, when you fee that, at the fame time you fee all the spots there: fo, when Chrift fets the glafs of his word before you to fee fuch a particular spot and blot; in the fame glafs you have a view and representation of all the spots, and all the blemifhes of your heart and way. For, we may conceive this representation like that which is made in a map; if one fhew you, for example, a particular city in the map of the world, why, at the fame time, he preſents to you all the terraqueous globe; the whole world at one glance: fo here, when, in the light of the Spirit, Chrift discovers to you one fin, in the fame map you fee the whole world of wickednefs, a world of atheifm, enmity, unbelief, pride, ſelf, and other plagues innumerable.

Thus in the day of gracious manifeftation, wherein Chrift, the Sun of righteousnefs, discovers himſelf, the finner, that is privileged with it, cannot but fee a black fight of himſelf, which makes him ſay, in effect, *He told me all the ills that ever I did*: he told me what I have been, and what I have done; that I have been a finner in Adam, and a tranſgreſſor from the womb: that I have done evil as I could; and given innumerable inſtances of a *carnal mind*, which is *enmity againſt God*; and of an *unbelieving heart*, which is *enmity againſt Chriſt*; and of *reſiſtance to the motions of heaven*, which is *enmity againſt the Holy Ghoſt*. When the ſun ſhines into a dark houſe, by a ſmall window, the beams diſcover innumerable motes and hovering particles of duſt in that part of the houſe where the light is ſhining, by which we are made to ſee and underſtand that the whole houſe is full of motes and duſt: even ſo here, when Chriſt, the Sun of righteousnefs, appears and ſhines in upon the dark dungeon of a finner's heart, and diſcovers any motes and blotches that are there, then it appears that the whole houſe, the whole heart and nature is full of the duſt and ſmoke of hell; which makes the ſoul cry out with Job, *Behold I am vile*: and hence the more precious that Chriſt appears in any man's eye, the more vile does he appear in his own eye, and debaſe himſelf to the loweſt; he thinks himſelf the moſt lothſome

some sinner that ever was seen, when Christ tells him all that ever he did.—So much shall suffice concerning the soul-debasing effects of Christ's manifesting himself, imported in that expression, *He told me all things that ever I did*: at one glance he gave me a view of all the sins that ever I was guilty of.

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

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

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

† That Arianism was much upon the increase, about this time, both in Scotland and England, was formerly noticed, Vol. II. p. 466, 467.

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

2. In his *offices* he is here commended and exalted; *Is not this the Christ?* that is, Is not this the true Messias promised, prophesied of in the Old Testament? This is her *Εἰσὶν*, like that, John i. 45. *We have found him, of whom Moses in the law and the prophets did write:* even so, I have found him, might she say; he hath been with me, and I have been with him. He hath spoken to me, and I have spoken to him. He hath not only told me what I am, and what I have been, and what I have done. but told me what he is; and I have found him to be God as well as man. And who is he then,
but

but the promised IMMANUEL, *God with us.*—*Is not this the Christ?* that is, the *Anointed of God*, to the saving offices of Prophet, Priest, and King; this the word *Christ* especially imports, and has a particular reference to. He is *anointed*, as a Prophet, to declare the mind of God; *anointed*, as a Priest, to make reconciliation with God; and *anointed*, as a King, to subdue sinners to God; and make them friends that are enemies to God: *He is anointed with the Spirit above measure*, John iii. 34. To render him a fit Prophet, he hath the *Spirit of wisdom and understanding* above measure; to make him a fit Priest, he hath the Spirit of love and compassion above measure; and that he may be a fit King, he hath the Spirit of power and of government.—*Is not this the Christ?* that is, *the Sealed and Sent of God*, clothed with a commission from God to seek and save lost sinners, John vi. 27. *Him bath God the Father sealed*; that is, authorized unto this work, according as himself declares, Isa. lxi. 1. compared with Luke vi. 18. *Is not this the Christ?* namely, he that is anointed that he may anoint; *anointed with the oil of gladness above his fellows.* Believers are said to *receive the anointing*: but there is a vast odds betwixt the anointing of Christ, and the anointing of believers; for, Christ is the fountain, from whom all the streams flow; the sun, from whom all the beams of grace shine: grace, in believers, is like water in a brook; but grace, in Christ, is like water in the ocean: grace, in the believer, is like broken beams; but, in Christ, it is like the bright centre of all light. He received the Spirit of all grace, for this very end to be bestowed upon others. The first Adam brought an emptiness on the whole creation; but the second Adam came to fill all things and persons, to fill Jew and Gentile, that *of his fulness we might receive grace for grace.* The oil of grace and gladness was poured out upon our IMMANUEL, of purpose that he might pour it down upon the barren mountains.—Thus we see in what respects he is here recommended, or the matter of the commendation. Let us view,

2dly, The *manner* of the commendation; or in what

way she does it. We may read, in the bosom of the text, several *properties* of this exercise of commending and exalting Christ, which saving discoveries of him lead unto. And,

1. It is an *open* and *public* commendation of Christ; for, she went away to the *city*, and says, O people, *Come see a man that told me all things that ever I did; Is not this the Christ?* She being formerly a lewd woman, had given open offence, and open scandal to the *citizens*, and now, upon the discovery of her sin, and the discovery of the Saviour, she gave as open and ready evidence of her repentance and conversion, by inviting them all to *come and see* him that had given her a *conviction* of her sin and vileness, and a manifestation of his glory and grace. Saving discoveries of Christ will lead people as openly to glory and honour him, as they have before dishonoured him.

2. It is an *experimental* commendation of him; she commends him from her own experience and feeling; *Come see a man that told me all things that ever I did: I have seen his face, and heard his voice, and felt his power; he has convinced and converted me; therefore, from my own feeling and experience, I commend his grace unto you.* It is like that, 1 John i. 3. *That which we have seen and heard, declare we unto you, that ye may have fellowship with us.* It was something like that of David, Psalm lxxvi. 16. *Come and hear all ye that fear God, and I will tell what he hath done for my soul.* Yea, he commends Christ not only to believers, but to others, as you see his resolution is, Psa. li. 13. Upon his getting a new visit, and the Lord's restoring to him the joy of his salvation, and upholding him with his free Spirit, *Then, says he, will I teach transgressors thy ways, and sinners shall be converted unto thee.* Thus Paul set forth the abundant grace of God from his own experience, *I was a blasphemer, a persecutor, and injurious; but I obtained mercy,—and the grace of God was exceeding abundant, &c.* 1 Tim. i. 13, 14. They that have experience of the things of Christ themselves, will be most zealous in manifesting the things of Christ to others, and in pressing them to come to Christ, as having proof
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and experience of his grace; and, indeed, they can best speak of Christ, to whom Christ hath spoken, and *who believe, and therefore speak.*

3. It is a *charitative* commendation of Christ; she is now filled with such Christian love to others, and particularly to those she was most concerned with, and interested in, that she would have them all drawn to Christ. She said to the men, *Come see a man that told me all things that ever I did.* Perhaps there were some of them she had tempted to sin and wickedness before, she now would have them turned to Christ; a great change. They that have seen Christ cannot but desire that others may see him too, they would have all to come and see. O that all the world would come and see, come and wonder, come and admire him: as Abraham commanded his children and servants *to seek and serve the Lord*; so, if one that had got the discovery of Christ could do it, it would command thousands to come and see him, and serve him. When Christ discovers himself, and speaks into the heart of a man, it makes the man speak good of Christ.—Again, a sight of Christ's face smites the soul with a likeness to him in love; and hence the sinner, immediately upon the revelation of Christ, is filled with a strange love; a love of complacency to the saints, and a love of benevolence to the souls of others.

4. It is a *judicious* commendation of Christ, that issues from the discovery of Christ. And here several things point out the judgment and wisdom by which she commends Christ unto them. It is evident from the *method* she takes, or would have them to take; she is not content that they rest upon her report only, but would have them *taste* and *see* themselves: she knew that their love would not terminate savingly upon her testimony; and therefore would have them coming to Christ himself.—Again, it is evident how judicious it was, from her endeavour to draw them to Christ, with the very same *hook* that caught herself. Christ spake many good words to her; but the first thing that took hold of her heart, and caught her was this, *He told me all things that ever I did.* His heart-searching and discovering word was the means of her conversion; and she would have

have them drawn to Christ by the same means: *Come see a man that told me all things that ever I did; Is not this the Christ?*—It is evident also how judicious it was by the *gradation* of her words, or the gradually rising steps of her commendation: she begins somewhat low, *Come see a man*; she goes on to a higher not, *He told me all things that ever I did*; and she concludes with the highest commendation of him, *Is not this the Christ?* Not only God, but God appearing in all his glorious robes of grace, even *IMMANUEL, God with us.*—In a word, it is evident how judicious it is from the *manner* of her arguing: she argues from his telling part of her secret wickedness, *That he told her all*; q. d. He could as easily have told me all things that ever I said, and all things that ever I designed, and all things that ever I thought, as he told me what I did: yea, I got such a broad look of all my sins in that one glass of a discovery that he gave me, that I cannot but own *he told me all things that ever I did.*—Again, she argues from the *dignity* that the law joined with his *humanity*, that he was the true Messiah; and hence judiciously infers, *Is not this the Christ?* She was never at a college to learn, how to frame an argument; but having been at Christ's school for a little pleasant while, she there learned some heavenly logic; can such a man as this be any other but the Christ? The more clear discovery that any gets of Christ, the more skillful and expert they will be in commending him to others; as we see in our apostle Paul, after Christ was revealed in him, what clear discoveries did he make of Christ to others, as appears in the Acts of the apostles, and in all his epistles.

5. It is a *pathetic* commendation of Christ that issues from the discoveries of him. Her heart is full of Christ, and full of desire to praise, and exalt, and commend him to others; and her heart vents itself in several *pathetical* expressions: hence she spake first in a *hortatory* manner, *Come and see*, says she; O citizens, slip not this opportunity, when such a glorious sight is to be seen.—Next she spake in an *assertory* manner; she asserts some strange things concerning him, he is a man *that told me all things that ever I did*; he is a seer and revealer of the secrets
of

of men, and therefore must be a Prophet, and more than a prophet, a revealer of the counsel of God. — And finally, she spake in a *questionary* and *expostulatory* manner, *Is not this the Christ?* He can be none else but the Messias, the Christ of God. She is not content to commend him in one particular, but she must go on and insist in his praise and commendation, and cannot think she can commend him enough; *Is not this the Christ?* She makes no question of it herself. And the design of her interrogation is to put it out of doubt with them. Who can this be but the Christ? How can it be any other but the Christ? They that have met with Christ, and got the heart touched by his grace, it is in a hearty cordial way they speak of him, and commend him to others. The sinner that hath met with a Saviour, O how gladly would he trumpet forth his praise if he could.— There is something further here that points out the pathetic manner of the commendation, and that is an *appeal* to them as it were in the bosom of this question, *Is not this the Christ?* I appeal to you, might she say, if it be not so, that he is CHRIST, the *Anointed of God*. I cannot think but you must judge of him as I do; and, who will not think highly of him as I do? Indeed, the enlightened soul is ready to think all the world should be of his mind, the light and evidence is so clear to him; and hence, they that have got a discovery of Christ, wonder that any would esteem otherwise of Christ than they. O be astonished that all the world is not wondering at his glory. Oh! what can blind them! What can bewitch them at this rate, that they are not of the same mind concerning Christ, and that they are not admirers of him as well as I am! Surely there is nothing appears with such evidence and demonstration as this glory and excellency of a God-man. Who can be so stupid and senseless as to reckon otherwise? *Is not this the Christ?* The proof is so plain to me, says the soul, and the light and power so great by which Christ is discovered to me, that it is truly irresistible, and who, in all the world, can possibly resist the evidence of it? *Is not this the Christ?* — O how pathetic is the commendation!

6. It is a *practical* commendation that issues from a saving

saving discovery of Christ, and such is that of the woman of Samaria here; and hence, she says not, *Go see him*; but, *Come see him*. They that truly invite others to come to Christ, will not be content to send them to him, but they would share themselves of more and more of Christ. Their language is not, *Go, see*; but, *Come, see*. It would have argued no great esteem of Christ, nor high commendation of him, should the woman have said, I have seen him already, go ye and see him next; they might have thought she had enough of him: but, *Come see him*, says she; q. d. Come along with me, and I will go upon your head, like a captain, and lead the van myself. I have seen him to my heart's content, and am desirous to get another sight, a new sight of him; and I would have all the people in Samaria, the whole town to go along with me. I have been an ill woman, a base woman, that have led some of you to sin; and may I now be the happy instrument of bringing you to the Saviour. I have led some of you to the gates of hell; O let me now lead you to the gate of heaven! If I have tempted any of you to wickedness, O let me now be instrumental in turning you to righteousness; yea, to the Lord my righteousness, whom I have got a saving sight of; and, therefore, let me give you a good example, for all the ill example I have given you. Here was a change indeed, and a practical commendation. Surely they commend Christ most effectually, who do it not only by their profession, but by their practice; not merely by their counsel, but by their example; and who can say not only, *Go see*; but, *Come see a man that told me all things that ever I did*. It is a *come see* that makes others to go also; Zech. viii. 21. *Let us go speedily to pray before the Lord, and to seek the Lord of hosts, I will go also*; there is one: ver. 23. you find more following, *We will go with you, for we have heard that God is with you*. Thus it was the church's not only commending of Christ, but diligently seeking after him whom she commended, that made the daughters of Jerusalem say, Song vi. 1. *Whither is thy beloved gone, that we may seek him with thee?* And we see how effectual this practical commendation of Christ was, that the woman gave to

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the Samaritans, as you may read verses 30, 39,—42. She was the blessed instrument of drawing many there to the Lord Jesus.

IV. The *fourth* general head proposed, was, To give the *reasons* of the doctrine, whence it is that *saving discoveries of Christ* makes persons to *condemn* and *debase themselves* to the lowest, and *commend* and *exalt* Christ to the highest; or, what influence a saving discovery of Christ hath upon this self-debasing and Christ-exalting exercise? I shall consider the reasons of this two-fold effect jointly, because they necessarily go together, and are influenced by the same means: they are like the two scales of a balance, that which makes the one scale fall and go down, makes the other rise and go up; so that discovery of Christ which brings down self to the dust, does at the same time set up Christ upon the throne. When the *haughtiness of man is brought low, then the Lord alone is exalted*, Isa. ii. 11.

1. The *first* reason then, why the saving discoveries of Christ do humble self to the lowest, and exalt Christ to the highest, is from the *special light* wherein Christ is seen. They that see the glory of Christ with the one eye, they see, at the same time, their own unworthiness with the other. The same light that discovers the holiness of God, discovers the vileness of man. The same light that discovers the fulness of Christ, discovers the emptiness of the creature. That light that discovers his infinite merit, discovers the infinite guilt and demerit of sin. When the righteousness of Christ is seen, the unrighteousness of the sinner is seen at the same time, and in the same light; and hence, no wonder then, while the poor soul is astonished with the view of God's glory in the face of Christ, he is also astonished with the view and apprehension of his own baseness and brutishness; and has the meanest thoughts of himself when he has the highest thoughts of Christ. The more a man converses with Christ, the more he converses with himself; and the light that discovers Christ, discovers the soul to itself: and therefore the discoveries of Christ cannot but tend to debase self, and exalt Christ.

2. When Christ is discovered, then the *love of God* to the soul is discovered, and this fills it with humble wonder. O! how astonishing a thing is it, that God's love is manifested to one so full of sin and wickedness! This debases the soul in its own sight, because it knows itself to be so unworthy of his love; this works humility: but yet unworthy as it is, the love of God is manifested to it; this quickens love in the soul, and love excites praise. O! how shall I manifest love to him that hath manifested love to the like of me! Thus the love of Christ constrains both to the debasing of self and exalting of Christ.

3. The *third* reason is, from the *special work of the Spirit*: there is a speciality in the work of the Spirit upon the soul to whom Christ is savingly discovered; *Lord*, says Judas, not Iscariot, *how is it that thou wilt manifest thyself to us, and not to the world?* John xiv. 22. God manifests his love to the world, in outward respects; but to his own, in his privy-chamber. It is the work and office of the Spirit to set home the love of God upon the hearts of his people; and to every one of them alone, as it were: he takes them aside, that they may have some private conversation with Christ; such as this woman had, when Christ was the only preacher, and she was the only hearer. O but the view of this distinguished grace raises in the soul both David's note, *It hat am I, and what is my father's house, that thou hast brought me hitherto?* And Mary's note at the same time, *My soul doth magnify the Lord.*

4. The influence that the discovery of Christ hath upon the self-debasing and Christ-exalting exercise, flows from the *spiritual end and design* of these saving discoveries and manifestations of Christ; this is God's great end in discovering Christ, 1 Cor. i. 29, 30, 31. *Of God, he is made unto us wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, and redemption.* For what end? *That no flesh should glory in his sight; but that he that glorieth might glory in the Lord:* that is, that self may be condemned and debased, and Christ alone may be commended and exalted. And this is the great end of the Spirit's work: when he comes to testify of Christ, what is his design? Why, says Christ, John xvi. 9, 14. *He will convince the world of sin, and he shall*

shall glorify me; that is, he will humble the sinner, on the one hand, and exalt the Saviour, on the other; and so lead the sinner to condemn himself and to commend Christ.

5. It arises from the *special power and efficacy* that is in saving discoveries of Christ, for working all saving effects; why, *beholding his glory, we are changed into the same image*, 2 Cor. iii. 18.; and changed, as in other respects, so in this particular, that self is pulled down, and Christ set up: we are changed from pride, to humility; from self-love, to self-loathing; from self-indulgence, to self-abhorrence; and from self-seeking and self-exalting, to a Christ-exalting disposition and exercise. All the graces of the Spirit issue from a saving discovery of Christ, and come in that way to a lively exercise; *We beholding his glory, as the glory of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth: of his fulness have we all received, and grace for grace*, John i. 14, 16. We cannot see his fulness, without sharing of his fulness; yea, to see his fulness is to share of it: this is the strength of that *for* which we have in John iii. 2. *We shall be like him, FOR we shall see him as he is*; so here, *beholding his glory, his fulness of grace and truth, we receive out of his fulness*. Now, the more of Christ's fulness and Spirit that one hath, the more will he have of Christ's ends before him; which is a debasing of the creature, and a glorifying of God, that he may be *all in all*.

6. This exercise doth arise from the *divine splendor* of the discovery; for, when Christ discovers his face, then the *glory of God, in the face of Jesus Christ*, is discovered, 2 Cor. iv. 6. When Christ is seen, then the glory of God's perfections, and the splendor of his attributes, is seen. Now, every thing in God dashes the sinful man that sees it, and makes him nothing in his own eyes; and, at the same time, makes Christ, in whom that divine glory shines, to be *all in all* to the man; so that he cannot but set Christ above all, and give him, *in all things, the pre-eminence*.—Thus you see the reasons whence it is, that saving discoveries of Christ make the subjects thereof to condemn and debase themselves to the lowest, and to commend and exalt

Christ to the highest, as the woman of Samaria here does; *Come see a man that told me all things that ever I did; Is not this the Christ?*

V. The *fifth* thing proposed, was, To make some *application* of the whole. And this we shall essay in an use of information, examination, and exhortation.

1st, We shall improve this subject in an use of *information*, by deducing the following *inferences*. Is it so then, that *saving discoveries of Christ* have this effect, to make one, at the same time, to *condemn and debase himself*, and to *commend and exalt Christ*, saying, *Come see a man that told me all things that ever I did; Is not this the Christ?* From this text and doctrine we may see and learn the following lessons.

1. Hence see why *pride* and *self-conceit*, *self-righteousness* and *self-justification* prevail so much in the world, and in the visible church; and what makes people, notwithstanding all that ever they did, yet to be vainly puffed up, instead of condemning and debasing themselves: why, because they have never got a *saving discovery of Christ*; Christ hath never touched their heart, and told them all that ever they did: they are strangers to the power of the word. It is very strange how wicked men will justify themselves, as those, John viii. 48. *Say we not well, that thou art a Samaritan, and hast a devil?* Here was the greatest blasphemy imaginable, to say this of Christ; yet they justify it, *Say we not well in this?* Christless men will justify their ill words, and base works, and evil actions.—What say you, *Sabbath-breaker?* Why, was it not well done, say you? it is but a work of necessity, a needful business.—What say you, *drunkard?* Why, it was but a hearty bottle with my friends; and was it not well done?—What say you, *whoremonger?* Why, it was but a trick of youth; and what is the matter of that?—What say you, *swearer?* Why, it was neither banning nor swearing that I intended; it was but a single word, and a word in passion.—What say you, *scold and railer?* Why, say you, I think they deserved all that I said to them; I am sure I loosed my tongue upon such a man, and gave him his holy-day's name; and

and was it not well done, and well said?—Indeed, you will hardly get a sinner at all; if you will take every person's excuse, and every body's judgment of themselves, they will justify all that ever they did; or, at least, make it but a matter of moon-shine. A common strumpet, such as this woman was formerly, may think nothing of all her base and lewd behaviour. The most notorious sinner goes lightly under the burden of his sin, without any self-condemnation or self-debasement, till Christ and thy meet together; and until he show them, by one glance, all things that ever they did.

2. Hence see, the *greatest of sinners* may conceive *hope of mercy* at the hand of our merciful Lord Jesus, from such instances as this; yet, let not wicked sinners indulge themselves in sin, and presume that God will not notice their lewdness, and secret as well as open wickedness; for the time is coming, wherein Christ will, either in a way of mercy or judgment, *tell you all things that ever you did.* Psalm l. 21. *Those things thou hast done, and I kept silence: thou thoughtst that I was altogether such an one as thyself; but I will reprove thee, and set them in order before thine eyes. Consider this, ye that forget God, lest he tear you in pieces, when there is none to deliver.* If this remarkable instance of grace, to such a base woman, be abused by you to licentiousness, and your opening a door of presumption to yourself, expecting mercy in a continued course of wickedness, you are under a terrible delusion; for, *God will wound the head of his enemies, and the hairy scalp of him that goes on in his trespasses.* But, if you would enter in at the door of hope that is opened to you, in such examples as this, O seek, that, in a merciful way, he may discover your sins to you, so as to make you know, at the same time, that he is *the Christ, the anointed of God,* to save you from your sin.

3. Hence see, that the *word preached* doth then only do saving good, when it comes *close home to the heart,* and when *Christ is seen* there; for here, see how the word of Christ came home with power upon this woman's heart, *He told me; he told me all things that ever*

I did.

I did. The word was the searcher and discernor of the thoughts and intent of the heart: and the searching word was the strong hook that caught her; and she saw Christ therein: *Is not this the Christ?* Then the word is effectual, and prevails when Christ himself is seen: Christ is the best preacher himself; the only powerful preacher, who, by his word, can open the eyes; and by a sanctified sight of one sin, discovers all to the man; and in that discovery shews himself to be the Christ.

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

5. Hence see, that *persuasion, with application*, is in the *nature of saving faith*, both objective and subjective. Persuasion *objective*, assuring the man that this is *the Christ*;

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

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

7. Hence see, that *saving discoveries* of Christ are *very rare in our day*; for, very few are thus exercised, either

ther in condemning and debasing themselves, under a sense of all that ever they did; or in commending and exalting Christ, and dealing with others to come and see him. Oh! how few humble walkers, and hearty commenders of Christ are to be observed! Few taking kindly with their sin, and few breaking forth into the praising commendations of Christ! When this woman got a discovery of Christ, she kindly takes with her whoredoms, and all her sins that ever she did, and zealously breaks forth into the praises and commendation of Christ. But whence is it, that the land we live in, the church of Scotland, is not taking with, and kindly acknowledging all that ever she did, and taking with all her whoredoms and adulteries, and treacherous breaking covenant with her God to whom she solemnly gave her hand? Whence is it that there is so little zeal in commending and exalting Christ in his supreme Deity, in a day wherein Arian * blasphemers open their mouth against him? Whence is there so little zeal for the reviving of our broken covenants, national and solemn league, even in a day wherein the obligation thereof is denied? Why are we neither humbly condemning ourselves, and taking with our national sins, nor highly commending Christ, and exalting him in his injured honours, truths, and prerogatives, but rather conniving with, and winking at all the dishonours done to him? Why, what is the matter? The reason is, *facings discoveries of Christ*, which should work the contrary effect, are *very rare*. When the Lord hath a mind to build up Zion, *he appears in his glory*, as he did in the days of our Reformation: but now he hath justly hid himself from the God-provoking, Christ-despising, gospel-slighting generation. But, O Sirs, if he would yet appear and discover his glory in the sanctuary, then we might expect Reformation times: but, as matters stand, we look as if a stroke

* That Arianism was gaining ground in Scotland, at this time, was formerly noticed, Vol. II. p. 466, 467. And the process, before the supreme ecclesiastical court, relative to this affair, was this year terminated, with no very adequate sentence against the propagator of it; as any one may see who consults the printed process relative to that affair.

and judgment, that hath been so long threatened, were suddenly to fall upon us with a terrible vengeance. There were little hazard of the present rumour of war †, if the Lord, who is a man of war, were not against us; and if the Lord carry on his controversy, it will be little wonder, though we should see the land turned into a field of blood and desolation, before we see another communion-solemnity here. God hath borne long with us; but how much longer he will do so, who can tell? Forty years peace in the church is a wonder, &c. But,

8. Hence see, that a *meeting with Christ*, makes a *marvellous change* upon a person or people that are so privileged. Before this woman met with Christ, or rather before he met with her, she was nothing but a common strumpet; but now she is humbled to the dust for the sins she had formerly indulged herself in, and commends and exalts that Lord whom she had dishonoured. She is brought *from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God*; from being exercised in corrupting and debauching her neighbours, to a kindly concern for their soul's everlasting welfare, to get them brought to Christ. Saving illumination and acquaintance with Christ creates, in the heart, a sympathy with the case of poor Christless sinners: *Come see a man that told me all things that ever I did: Is not this the Christ?* This leads me to

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

1st, What *self-humbling disposition* and *abasement* hath

† About this time the nation was mightily alarmed about a rupture with Spain; who, as was affirmed, had entered into a formidable alliance with different powers, in order to recover Gibraltar and Portmahon, and place the Pretender on the throne of Britain.

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

QUEST. *May not one who hath not the Spirit of God,*
nor

nor a renewed conscience, be able to discern his own vileness?

ANSW. There is a double knowledge or understanding that men may have of themselves, *viz.* speculative and practical. As to the general *speculative* knowledge, a man may have this; common sense and reason may tell him his sin, and he may know himself to be a sinner, as being guilty of gross sins, such as, drunkenness, whoredom, swearing, and the like. But there is a particular *practical* knowledge and understanding, which is twofold, *viz.* either from the Spirit of God without us, or from the Spirit of God within us. That practical understanding which is from the Spirit of God *without* us, is what also the unregenerate may have. The Spirit of God, not yet received, but without a man, may come and make such discoveries of his sin, and guilt, and wickedness, as may make him cry out, That he is *undone, undone.* Such a knowledge had Nebuchadnezzar of the God of Shadrach, Mefech, and Abednego. Such a knowledge also, it seems, Cain and Judas had. But the Spirit of God *within* us gives spiritual light and sense upon the conscience, and rectifies the judgment; whereas the Spirit of God, *without* a man, discovers sin mainly in order to hell and wrath, making him say, *undone, undone.* The Spirit of God within a man makes him see the vileness of sin, and lament and mourn for that, saying, *Unclean, unclean. O wretched man that I am! Behold I am vile!* This affects him more than the wrath of God; yea, even when he sees the wrath of God is turned away, and that the shower is over his head, and hath lighted on the head of the Cautioner, even then he abhors himself for his own wickedness more than ever. This is from the Spirit of God within, and a gospel-light. The Spirit of God *without* a man, and the Spirit of God within him differs as much as day-light differs from lightening. A flash of lightening from Sinai, or the fiery law, terrifies and astonishes the man, and makes him tremble and quake under a sense of sin; but the day-light of a saving discovery of Christ makes one see himself the chief of sinners, and yet fills him with holy triumph in the Lord the Saviour. A lightening

ing confounds and surprizes; but the day-light gives a clear, distinct, and sedate view of things as they are, with quiet and composure.—Now, try if you have got a humbling view and discovery of Christ, or a word from him that hath filled you with self-abasement, so as you reckon you cannot have vile enough thoughts of yourself, because he hath, in effect, *told you all things that ever you did.*

2dly, Try what *Christ-exalting* and *commending exercise* you have been brought under; or what disposition is wrought in you to commend and exalt Christ to the highest. If Christ and you have met together, as he did with this woman of Samaria, then the meeting hath wrought in you the same effect, the same disposition to commend and exalt Christ; which you may try by these particulars.

1. If you have met with Christ in this manner, then you have seen him to be the CHRIST indeed, the *God-man*, the *Anointed* of the Father, the true *Messias*. Hath he told you, in effect, *I that speak unto thee, am he?* I that speak unto you by this gospel am he? Hath he borne home this upon your heart with convincing light and evidence, so as you have been brought to the apostle's faith, John vi. 69. *We believe and are sure, that thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God?* The faith of this is of such importance, that Christ hath said, *If ye believe not that I am he, ye shall die in your sins.* Now, hath he so spoken to you, as you were made, in effect, to think and say, I believe and am sure, that he that spoke unto me was he. It was not the minister only that I heard, but the word came with such light, life, and power, that, I think, no minister on earth, nor angel in heaven, could make the word to go through my heart as it did. It was like the sound of the voice of the Son of God.

2. If you have met with Christ in this manner, then he hath made such a *gradual approach* and *discovery of himself* to you as to raise in you gradually more and more a *high esteem* of him as a Prophet, sent of God to teach you, and to *tell you all things*, as it was with this woman: and though he himself, and all his words are precious to you, yet there are some particular words, among many,

many, that have taken more impressiſion, and ſtick more faſt than others. Though Chriſt ſpoke many good words to this woman for her inſtruction, yet the word that made the firſt and deepeſt impreſſion, is what ſhe eſpecially kept in heart, *He told me all things that ever I did;* and what ſhe ſaw in this more clearly at firſt, ſhe ſaw more clearly after Chriſt gave her a clearer manifeſtation of himſelf. If the ſaving diſcovery of Chriſt commenced and began, when he gave her the firſt diſcovery of her lewdneſs and whoredom, and conveyed light, at the ſame time, into her mind to perceive that he was a prophet, yet ſhe was much in the dark, and took not up all that was intended by this diſcovery, till after he clearly diſcovered himſelf; and then the former leſſon is clearly taken up in all the parts of it. Therefore now, ſays ſhe, *He told me all things that ever I did.* Some may have ſuch obſcure and cloudy diſcoveries of Chriſt at firſt, that though they raiſe a high eſteem of Chriſt, yet the ſoul may be at a great loſs to know, what the full meaning of ſuch a word is that Chriſt ſpoke to their ſoul, till after they get a brighter diſcovery of him; and then they may come to be more perfectly inſtructed in the ſame leſſon, which, at firſt, they did not ſo well apprehend: and in this his dealing with them may be like that, John xiii. 7. *What I do, thou knoweſt not now, but thou ſhalt know hereafter.*

3. If you have met with Chriſt in this manner, then your mind is ſet *above the world*, and you have left it behind you, as the woman here left her water-pot and ran to the city. O Sirs, when Chriſt appears to a man, he thinks no more of the world than a potſherd; he counts all *but loſs and dung for the excellency of the knowledge of Chriſt*; yea, the moſt valuable things in the world are undervalued when Chriſt is diſcovered. As naturaliſts tells us, the loadſtone will not draw in the preſence of the diamond; neither does the world in all its glory and gallantry draw the heart of any to it in the preſence of Chriſt. The reaſon of this is, the Sun of righteouſneſs darkens all the ſtars of creature-enjoyments, and makes them diſappear and evaniſh. A drink out of the fountain of living waters

waters makes all worldly comforts to be nothing but *broken cisterns that can hold no water*. They whose hearts were never weaned from the world, never met with Christ. Again,

4. If you have met with Christ, then your hearts will be set upon the work of *commending him to others*, and particularly to your *neighbours and friends*, that they may become acquaint with him also. Thus the discovery of Christ vents itself in the woman here, *Come see a man who told me all things that ever I did; Is not this the Christ?* A manifestation of Christ gives men such a fill of the fulness of God, that they must have a vent: and as, in every saving manifestation, there is something of the nature of Christ communicate, who loves to communicate of his fulness; so they to whom Christ dispenses of his grace and fulness, love to communicate also of what they have: not that the saints are to make a blaze of their religion to every one they meet with, or to cast pearls before swine; but the love of Christ discovered to them fills them with such ardent love to him, as obliges them, in all proper ways, to trumpet forth his glory and honour. They see such a glory in him, that they think all should wonder at him, and own him; *Is not this the Christ?* They reckon none so obliged to free-grace as they, and therefore they think it well becomes them to spread the favour of his name. They know also, by remembering what they themselves were before they met with Christ, they know what a sad state they are into who want acquaintance with Christ; therefore, both out of love and regard to the glory and honour of Christ, and out of love, pity, and compassion to the perishing souls of others, they desire and endeavour to commend Christ to them both by their words and actions; both by their talk and walk, as the woman of Samaria did. What heart then and disposition have you got to commend Christ to your neighbours and friends, to your children and servants? If you have no heart nor disposition to such exercise as this, surely you cannot make it out that you have met with Christ.

5. If you have met with Christ, then it will be your hearty

heartly desire not only to commend Christ, and speak of him to others, making him the great subject of your conversation, but also to have them *taste* what you have tasted, and *see* what you have seen, without resting merely on your report; *Come see a man that told me all things that ever I did; Is not this the Christ?* Rest not on my report, might she say; but, O come and see him!—My friends, spiritual converse about Christ is much out of fashion in our degenerate age; yea, to enter on spiritual discourse in some companies, would be to expose a man to scorn and ridicule; a sad instance of estrangement from Christ and religion. But are there not some professors, whose speech of Christ, and of the things of God, betrays them and bewrays them; for, either it is but the outside of religion they talk of; for example, How well such a man preached, and how long such a man preached, and how many tables, or how many strangers were at such a communion, and all such little worth questions, no better than idleness; treating of the shell and not the kernel of ordinances: or, if they enter upon any substantial conversation, either they soon weary of that, or give evidence of such a selfish spirit, as bespeaks an inclination to commend themselves rather than to commend Christ. The import of their language is rather, come and here me, than come and see Christ. But, O Sirs, a meeting with Christ will fill the soul with a desire that others may share of what they share, and see what they have seen, with a desire to make the most effectual method that may be for drawing them to Christ. Hence, as this woman speaks out her very heart, so she attempts to draw them to Christ with the very same hook with which she was drawn ashore herself: *He told me all things that ever I did; Is not this the Christ?* Therefore, come see him.

6. If you have met with Christ, and conversed with him, you will think long for *another meeting with him*, another sight of him; for this was the woman's disposition here; *Come see the man*: she spake as if she desired to be the foremost in returning again to see him. If you think you have got enough of Christ, it is a sign you have

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

matter of your religious talk, signifying only *go see him*, but the import of your exemplary walk; *Come see a man that told me all things that ever I did; Is not this the Christ?*

Use 3. Another *use* should be by way of *exhortation*. And our exhortation shall be tendered, 1. To *believers*, who have got a discovery of Christ. 2. To *unbelievers*, who are yet strangers to him.

1st, To you, *believers*, who have got a *saving discovery* of Christ working these effects upon you, leading you to condemn and debase yourselves to the lowest, and to commend and exalt Christ to the highest. O let me exhort you to a walk suitable to such a meeting with Christ; that is, 1. To a *humble* walk, like one to whom Christ hath told all things that ever you did. 2. To a *holy* walk, like one that would commend and exalt a holy Jesus, saying, *Come see a man* that hath so and so spoken to me; *Is not this the Christ?*

[1.] I would exhort you to a *humble* walk. O believer, hath he given you a sight of yourself, and of your own vileness and baseness, *Walk humbly with thy God*: and, in order to this, still keep the glass before your eye, wherein he hath discovered you to yourself. There are several glasses wherein the saints behold themselves which makes them have low thoughts of themselves.

1. The looking-glass of the *law of God*, which discovers to them the vileness of their nature, thoughts, desires, and affections; *When the law comes, sin revives*. The law is a light by which *all things are reprov'd and made manifest*, Eph. v. 13. Keep this glass before your eye, even you that are wholly delivered from the law as a covenant of works, yet make constant use of it as a light; both a light to your head, to inform and convince you of your sin and wickedness; and a light to your feet, to direct you in the paths of righteousness.

2. There is the glass of a *renewed understanding* and a *rectified judgment* that the saints see their vileness in; when they have an impartial rule, and eye-salve with it, then they see themselves as they are. If a man be blind,

he cannot see himself, though he have never so clear a glass before him: *Take heed that the light that is in you be not darkness*, Luke xi. 35. Wherever spiritual light and wisdom is, there is a clear light people have of themselves.

3. There is the glass of *conscience*, sprinkled with the blood of Christ; this every true believer carries about with him. Whatever the understanding sees, the conscience comes and lays it at his door; and the conscience being renewed and reconciled to God, it is then God's messenger to inform, to rouse, to arraign, and condemn. Conscience brings in all our unworthiness and charges us with it; and then, what base and low thoughts have we ourselves! Oh! I deserve to be in hell, says the soul! I deserve no mercy at the hand of God!

4. There is the glass of *experience*, in which every saint looks on himself, and beholds he is vile. Why, the sad experience he hath of a treacherous backsliding heart, notwithstanding of all the love of God and Christ manifested in him; the sad experience of the *law of the members*, *swarring against the law of the mind*, and *bringing him into captivity to the law of sin and death*, and making him cry many times, *O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from this body of sin and death?* The sad experiences of many inward luttings, fightings, and reigning corruptions, and desperate departings from the Lord. Alas! how vile does the saint see himself in this glass.

5. There is the glass of the *holiness* of God, the glass of his infinite pure *glory*; Rev. iv. 8, 10. *When they cried, Holy, holy, holy, Lord God almighty, which was, and is, and is to come; then the twenty-four elders fell down before the throne.* What made Isaiah cry out of his uncleanness, but a view of this holy and infinitely pure glory of God. It was a view of the glorious holiness of Christ that made John the Baptist say, *O! I am not worthy to stoop down and unloose the latchets of his shoes*; and yet he hath Christ's testimony, that there was not a greater prophet than he. Oh! how vile is a man in his own eyes when he looks to himself in this glass.

6. There is the glass of the *love* of God, and of his *grace*

grace and mercy in Christ: we may appeal to you that have experience of it, if any thing in the world hath a greater power to humble the soul, and lay it in the dust, than this, even the consideration of the infinite love of God; *I was a blasphemer, and a persecutor; yet I obtained mercy.* O such a monster of sin and wickedness as I am, and yet I have obtained mercy! O such a dog, such a devil, and yet I obtained mercy! O Sirs, when a child of God sees the grace of God in the glass of a manifestation, O how low does he sink in his own esteem! All the storms and blustering winds will not melt a rock of ice; but when the sun-beams arise upon it, how is it then melted and thawed? Thus nothing in the world melts and thaws the hard heart so much, as the hope and sense of divine love. When a child of God sees the grace of God in the glass of a commendation, as when Christ says to the soul a word like that, Song iv. 7. *Thou art all fair, my love, and there is no spot in thee.* What! O what is this that a God is saying to the like of me, the blackest, the basest of all sinners! O! how low does self sink before the love and grace of God!

7. There is the glass of the *Spirit* of God shining upon the word of God into the understanding and the conscience, and giving light to see into these other glasses. As he is the *Spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of Christ*, and giving the knowledge of the law of God, the holiness of God, the love and grace of God in Christ; for the clearest eye, and the clearest glass both, will show nothing without light; so it is the Spirit of light that sets all these things home upon the soul, and makes it apply all to itself, and so it becomes *yet more vile* in its own eyes. I shall add,

8. There is the glass of the *example* of God, of God's humility, his stupendous humility and condescension. God the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, humbling themselves for our good.—See how God the *Father* humbles himself, Psal. cxiii. 5, 6. *Who is like unto the Lord our God, who dwelleth on high? who humbleth himself to behold the things that are in heaven, and in the earth?* It is a step of great condescension, that he should apply himself in his providence to our wants and necessities; and

especially, that he should concern himself so far with sinners, as to send the Son of his love out of his bosom to redeem them.—See how God the *Son* humbled himself when he stepped out of his Father's bosom, out of the ivory palaces, where he was made glad from eternity; yea, though *he was in the form of God, and thought it no robbery to be equal with God, yet he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross.* The glass of his suffering and humiliation, wherein he stepped as far down as hell to quench the flames of infinite wrath, is a glass, indeed, wherein we may see sin to be infinitely evil, and ourselves to be ineffably vile.—See also how the *Holy Ghost* humbles himself; what a vast condescension is it for God, the Holy Ghost, to undertake to teach such indocible creatures as we, to wash such lepers as we, to purge such polluted souls, and to dwell in our hearts and bosoms, so full of unfavoury stems of hell? —Hath a God, Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, given us such examples of humility, and shall not this move us to step a little down the hill? O proud sinner, does God humble himself in your sight, and will not you humble yourself before him? Can a man look into the glass of God's humility, and yet be proud?

O believers, keep these glasses in your eye, and walk humbly before him, who hath set the glass before you, wherein you have seen your vileness, and hath *told you all things that ever you did.* O maintain a deep and humble sense of your own vileness and baseness; and the rather, that such a fountain of sin and wickedness remains yet within you, as endangers you of doing all the same evils again that ever you did, even after he hath *told you all things that ever you did.* The body of sin and death that remains in you, will incline you to sins of all sorts and sizes: surely, then, you cannot walk too humbly and circumspectly. I know no extreme of self-abasement you can run into, but will deserve the name of pride, rather than humility.—It will be pride, and not humility, in you to *deny any thing* that God hath done for you in the way of grace, because you are so vile in yourself; that smells as if you were not pleased that God should get all the glory, but incline that you should have had
some

some of it. O proud blasphemer, come down from your altitude, and be content frankly to own and acknowledge that grace hath done much even for you.—Again, It will be pride, and not humility, for you to deny and refuse to *take Christ* by the hand, when you are down in the dust; or to take what help he offers you, even when you are lying in the mire. It was Peter's pride to say, *Lord, thou shalt never wash my feet*; and yet no doubt he took it for humility.—Again, it is pride, and not humility to refuse the *consolations* of the Spirit, because you are conscious of your own vileness and abomination: do not lay upon yourself a load of self-censuring more than God himself does; *I said in my haste*, says David, *I am cast off from before thine eyes*, Psal. xxxi. 22. David was in haste when he said it, and so may you say, Will God allow any favour or comfort to such as I am? It is pride and arrogancy to measure God by your thoughts, and to limit his mercy.—Again, it is pride, and not humility, for you to deny him the *praise* and *commendation* due to him from you, least you be not a fit hand for doing it. Why, says one, I think I would desire to commend Christ to others, and speak to his praise, but I am afraid I prove a hypocrite, and prove a scandal to religion. Why, man, woman, whatever come of you, let not Christ want his due, and it shall not fare the worse with you; therefore, *Walk humbly with thy God*; or, as the word may be read, *Humble thyself to walk with thy God*. It is best humility to be found in the *way of duty*; and it is pride to withdraw from it, upon any consideration of self-unworthiness.

[2.] I would exhort you to a *holy* walk, and thereby to commend and exalt Christ, as the woman of Samaria here did, saying, both with your lip and life, *Come see a man that told me all things that ever I did; Is not this the Christ?* Where she both takes shame to herself, and gives glory to God in Christ: and as our chief happiness lies in the enjoyment of God, and our holiness lies in glorifying him, which is our chief end; so the way to glorify him, is to commend and exalt Christ with our heart, lips, and lives. The text leads me to direct you particularly to this part of holiness, namely, to commend him

him to all that you have opportunity to converse with, and to converse with before the world. Hath he met with you as he did with this woman? O then commend him, and preach forth his excellency. Here is a way how every private Christian may be a preacher of Christ. This belongs not to ministers only, but even you who are followers of Christ, among the female sex, that cannot regularly be preachers of Christ in a ministerial way; yet, O poor woman, it is comfortable that you may be a successful teacher and preacher of Christ in a Christian charitable way, by your spiritual communion and conversation. O *woman*, commend Christ to your *husband*: O *man*, commend Christ to your *wife*. O *parents* and *masters*, commend him to your *children* and *servants*. O *believer*, commend Christ to your *neighbours* and *friends*, and all that you have regular access to.

1. Commend him *humbly* as this woman did; he *told me all things that ever I did*: she kept her eye upon her own baseness, and vileness, and unworthiness, which he had discovered to her. Saints have a double eye, *viz.* a carnal eye, and a spiritual eye; or the eye of sense, and the eye of faith. When they look upon themselves with the carnal eye of sense, then they forget all that ever they did, and what Christ told them and convinced them of, and are apt to gaze upon their own parts and gifts; and then self creeps in and spoils their pleasant exercise. But when they look upon themselves with the spiritual eye of faith, then they loath themselves, and commend Christ to purpose, and set him up to the highest, when self is sinking to the lowest in remembrance of all that ever they did, as he told them.

2. Commend him *highly* also, as this woman did commend him as the great God, the searcher of hearts, the glorious JEHOVAH; when Arians and Atheists at this day are pulling him down from his throne, if it were possible. O set you him up, and commend him from your own experience, as the God-man that *told you all things that ever you did*. Commend him in his *offices*, saying, *Is not this the Christ?* the sealed and consecrated of the Father to be the Prophet, Priest, and King of Zion? Is not this JEHOVAH-TSIDKENU, *The Lord our righ-*

righteousness? Is not this JEHOVAH-ROPHI, *The Lord our physician?* Is not this JEHOVAH-SHAMMA, the IMMANUEL, *God with us?* Is not this the promised MESSIAS, in whom all the promises of God are *Yea and Amen?* Is not this the only Saviour, in whom all our salvation lies, being made of God to us *wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, and redemption?* O there is more to say to his commendation than the tongues of angels can trumpet forth to eternity. Again,

3. Commend him *zealously* as this woman did. *Come and see HIM*; it is not come and hear what I have to say of him; but, *Come see himself*. Let these whom you commend him to understand, that what you would be at, is, that they should never rest till they *see, and taste, and handle this word of life*; and know, to their experience, what you know. And thus also,

4. Commend him *feelingly* as this woman did, *Come see a man that told me all things that ever I did*. You should let strangers to Christ, know that what you speak of Christ, you have felt and experienced. If you know *the terrors of the Lord*, you will *persuade men*, with an aking heart, and with holy fear and trembling; and if you know the consolations of God, you will speak of them with holy triumph, and as if your heart were leaping within you. Experiences is the mother of affection; commend him *feelingly* and affectionately. And yet,

5. Commend him *cautiously* as you also find this woman did. I think it is also remarkable, in this short account that she gives of her converse with Christ, that she hid, in her own bosom, that special part of Christ's discourse to her that made most for her own consolation, particularly, that glorious word, wherein he clearly manifested himself to her, saying, *I that speak unto thee, am he*. No, she relates nothing of this; but tells them of that part of the conference which made most to her shame, as well as to his honour: *He told me all things that ever I did*. As if she was content, that Christ should be exalted on the ruins of her reputation; to let her name be debased, that his name might be exalted. Indeed, it tends most to her praise, that she commends Christ

to them in that particular that made most to her shame; and she tells them no more of what he said. Here is wisdom and caution: and, indeed, there are some precious things that Christ speaks to his people when they are alone, that is not fit to be blazed abroad to every one, especially to these that are yet strangers to Christ, but, in commending Christ to them, it is safest to treat of these particulars that make most for the debasing of ourselves, and for the exalting of Christ.

6. And *lastly*, O commend him *practically*, as you see this woman did, while she says not, *Go see*; but, *Come see a man that told me all things that ever I did*. O believer, after a communion, if you have met with Christ, either now, or formerly, commend him, not only verbally, with your mouth; but practically, with your life, saying, in effect, *Come see him*. The life of commendation, is the commendation of the life; not of the lip, that says, *Go see*; but of the life, that says, *Come see*: your *Go see* will not convince any that you are in earnest; but a *Come see* may make them follow your example. When you say, *Go*, and pray; go, and praise; go, and worship; go, and do this and that excellent service; they only hear you: but when you go before them, and say, *Come*, and praise; come, and worship; come, and let us seek after Christ; then they both hear and see you; and are the more apt to come and see with you.

O believer, give evidence that you have met with Christ, by living *to* him as your end, and *on* him as your all; he *died that you should not live to yourself, but to him*; and now he lives, that you may live upon him: *Because I live*, says he, *ye shall live also*. O Sirs, let it be seen that you are three story high; and that there is a new addition made to your spiritual stature by the light of a new discovery of Christ. The light of reason may make people good moral men; the light of gifts, good scholars; but the light of grace and experience, good and holy Christians. O believer, beware of such a practice and conversation, as will give occasion to the world to say, *Take up your communicants*; they can tittle and drink, swear and debauch, as well as their neighbours.

hours. Oh! will you give occasion to Christ to say, *He that sat at table with me, and ate of my bread, hath lift up his heel against me? These are the wounds that I have got in the house of my friends?* O see that your conversation be a practical saying, *Come and see the man that hath told me all things that ever I did; Is not this the Christ?* And let the leading part of your practice ly in this, a going again to see Christ, and attending and depending upon him, in all the duties of religion, in order to your getting more and more acquaintance with him. For, as it is a saving discovery of Christ that works this self-debasing, Christ-exalting effect; so the more of this you get, it will fit you still the more for commending of him humbly and practically.

Let your walk then appear to be a gospel-walk, a walking in Christ, and a going still again and again to seek him and see him, that you may be the more like unto him; and that *beholding as in a glass his glory*, you may be *changed into the same image from glory to glory*. It is but a dunghill on which the sun shines, and yet reflects no beams; but the sun shining on a ball of silver, or upon a bright glass, or a still water, it will make another sun by reflecting the beams of it. Thus the broken beams of the glory of God, shining on Moses in the mount, made him come down full of glory. And, O Sirs, the more of the glory of Christ you see, the more of the glory of God's holiness will appear about you, and the more of heaven; of which it is said, *they shall be like him, for they shall see him as he is*. The more frequently you return to see Christ, the more fit will you be for resisting the snares and temptations you meet with; for your heart is a magazine of hell where corruption lies, like a barrel of gun-powder, ready to take fire with the least spark of a temptation, and to blow you up in the flames; but the more you come to see and converse with Christ, the more you will get of the *living water*, which Christ gave to this woman; *the Spirit as a well of water, springing up to everlasting life*: and if you can get that barrel of powder sunk into the bottom of this well, or the flood of the Spirit to drown

and overflow it, will you not then be more proof against all the sparks of hell, and fiery darts of the devil? O believer, is not the Spirit promised as *floods upon the dry ground*, to drench the dry powder? And does not your profession oblige you to this attendance and dependance upon Christ for more and more of the Spirit? For what mean you when you say, *Is not this the Christ?* Do you not mean, is not this the Anointed of God; anointed with the Spirit, to give the Spirit? Therefore, let your constant recourse be to him on this errand, taking as many along with you as you can, by the influence of your advice and example, saying, *Come see a man that told me all things that ever I did; Is not this the Christ?*

2dly, I would close with a word to these that are yet *strangers* to Christ, that never met with him, nor got such a discovery of him as leads to this self-abasing and Christ-exalting exercise. And may I be allowed by you, O you that are believers in Christ in this house, to personate you in a few words, and speak to these that are strangers to Christ in your name. O Christless sinner, *Come see a man that hath told us all things that ever we did; Is not this the Christ?* The hearts of all that are acquaint with Christ, join with me in saying to you, *Come see him, come see him: That which we have heard and seen, declare we unto you, that you may have fellowship with us, in our fellowship with the Father and the Son, by the Spirit.* There are some here that can say, we have heard his voice telling us all things that ever we did; and we have seen his glory as the glory of the *only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth*; and, *is not this the Christ?*—Come see a man that hath *opened our eyes*, and sometimes dispelled all our clouds and darkness; *Is not this the Christ?* anointed to be a *Prophet* to teach and instruct the like of you.—Come see a man that hath *pardoned all our sins*, and washed us in his blood; *Is not this the Christ?* anointed to be a *Priest* to justify guilty sinners like you.—Come see a man that hath *subdued all our iniquities*, and sometimes given a dash to the power of sin and Satan in us; *Is not this the Christ?* anointed to be a *King* to ransom slaves of the devil like you.—O come see a man, of whom we can sometimes say, he hath

hath *healed all our diseases*; *Is not this the Christ?* anointed to be a *Physician* for healing such desperate diseases as yours are.—Come see a man that hath *convinced us of all our sins* and vileness of heart and way, and drawn out our hearts to him as the *God-man*; *Is not this the Christ*; *IMMANUAL, God with us?*—You need not say, where shall we see him? you have neither a journey to go down to hell, nor up to heaven; *the word is nigh*: and in the glass of this word he is to be seen. All the believers here can say, we never saw him any where but in this word of the gospel, and in these public and private ordinances; and there he lies as open to your view as to ours. The word is the immediate object of our faith, wherein we see him; and when we hear him speaking to us in his word and hear with spiritual understanding, then we see him. To hear and know his voice, is all one with seeing him; it is in his word that we hear him telling how polluted and filthy we are, and thus all that ever we did; and hear him telling how fair and lovely he is, and thus shewing us that he is the *Christ*: so that we see him in what he tells us in his *word*; and as we have seen him there, so you may see him there; you have the same glass, the same Bible, the same word, the same promise, the same gospel-mirror to see him into, that ever any faint on earth saw him in since he ascended to heaven: *The word is nigh, even in thy heart, and in thy mouth.* O then, rest not on our report of him only; for, what he hath told us concerning ourselves, and concerning himself, will not profit you, if you do not come and see that our report is true. Come and see him yourself, by believing and taking it on his own word, that he is the Christ, anointed for your behoof.

But what is this I am doing, speaking to you only in the name of believers? Here, (however base a worm I am) my office warrants me to speak to you in a greater name than theirs or ours; yea, in his name, the *latchet of whose shoes we are not worthy to unloose*: In his name, then, who is the glorious *JEHOVAH*, the *God-man*, that can tell you all things that ever you did, and thereby give you convincing evidence that he is the

Christ, I call you to come and see him. He can tell you some things about you, O sinner, that the world does not know, and cannot tell you. And may I presume in his name to tell you something, perhaps, yet a secret, which if he would bless, you might therein hear him, telling you all things that ever you did. Let me allude to what past between Christ and this woman in the context, upon their first meeting; and, perhaps, there is more than an allusion in it.

Christ hath been at this occasion, offering you the living water; and if you be saying with this woman, whether in jest or earnest, *Sir, give me this water that I thirst not*; Christ is in effect, saying, *Go call your husband and come hither*: bring whatever husband you are in league with, that so your league and covenant with death, and your marriage with hell may be disannulled. If you be saying with this woman, *I have no husband*; why, then you may hear Christ saying, in effect to you, *Thou hast well said, I have no husband*; for as long as you are not married to Christ you have no head, no husband, that can do you any service. But, *behold, you have had five husbands*; you have had many husbands; and *whom you are now married to is not your husband*, your true and lawful husband. O harlot sinner, you have been married unto many a black husband all your days; you have been married to the law, the first husband; married to your own righteousness and self-conceit; you have been married to the world; married to your lusts; yea, and married to the devil; your heart hath been joined to idols: and now, by this, he is telling you all that ever you did. He is telling you what you have been, and what you have done. Have you been a common strumpet, a common whoremonger, a common drunkard, a common swearer, a common Sabbath-breaker, a neglecter of prayer in secret, and in your family? Yea, you have been a hypocrite, an atheist, a blasphemer, a persecutor, a murderer, an injurious person, unjust, unfaithful to God and man, unmerciful, unbelieving, impenitent. He is telling you your secret faults, not only what you did in such a company, but what was that you did in such a private place.

When

When thou wast under the fig-tree I saw thee, says Christ to Nathanael, in another case; so says Christ to you, when thou wast under the dark shade, hiding thyself from the eyes of men, my eye was upon thee; under the cloud of night I saw thee; and, *can any hide himself in secret places that I cannot see? do not I fill heaven and earth, says the Lord?* Yea, I say, all that ever you thought, or did, or designed to do; and I saw into thy heart and wicked nature from whence thy atheistical practices did spring. And now, if by his word he be telling you all things that ever you did, then what do you say to this question, *Is not this the Christ?* Is he at one glance giving you a view of all your lewdness, all your baseness, all your vileness? Then do you perceive that he is a Prophet, when he tells you how many false husbands you have had? O! *Is not this the Christ?* Is not this the only true Husband with whom your soul should match? Is he the man that hath told you all things that ever you did? O then, *Will you go with this man?* Will you marry the man, the God-man, the Christ of God? He is content, even after all your whoredoms to receive you for a bride, even after you have been adulterously matched with the devil and your lusts; will you match with this man, and quit with all your base husbands that have been haleing and dragging you to hell, and say, *What have I to do any more with idols?* Oh! my five husbands have ruined me; my false unhappy matches can give me no comfort, either in death or through eternity, but rather contribute to my eternal condemnation. But here is a glorious wonderful match in my offer, *a man that hath told me all things that ever I did; Is not this the Christ,* that is appointed to save me from the guilt of all that ever I did, and to save me from sin and wrath. O then, is it a match? is it a bargain? Why, say you, Who is he that I may match with him? Where is this Christ? Behold, man, woman; he is saying to you in this word, *I that speak unto thee, am he;* tho' it be by a poor sinful messenger that I am speaking to you, says Christ, yet, *I that speak unto you, am he.* And now, O hath he discovered himself to you in this word, and drawn out
your

your heart to the match? Then think not strange that you meet with some interruption in his converse with you; but go your way and leave your water-pot behind you; and give up not only with your unlawful husbands, but even with your lawful works and endeavours in point of trust and confidence: for your own black righteousness, and doings of yours, will never draw a drop of living water to you; but let your heart say, *In the Lord only have I righteousness and strength; I will go in the strength of the Lord God, and make mention of thy righteousness, even of thine only.* O may it be heard tell of you in the city of Dunfermline, as it was heard of this woman in the city of Samaria, that you have met with Christ; that by your words and walk henceforth you are determined to say, *Come see a man that told me all things that ever I did; Is not this the Christ?*

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