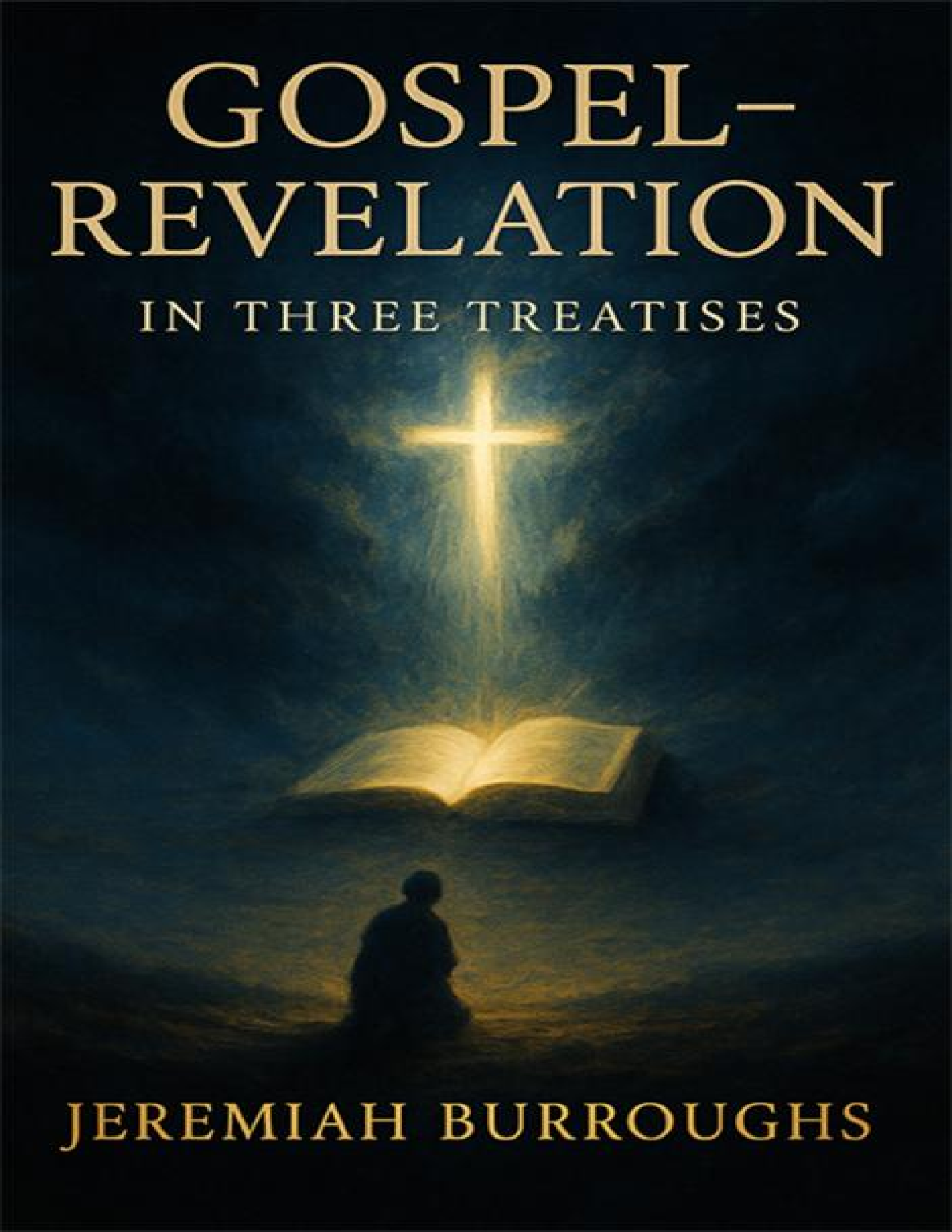
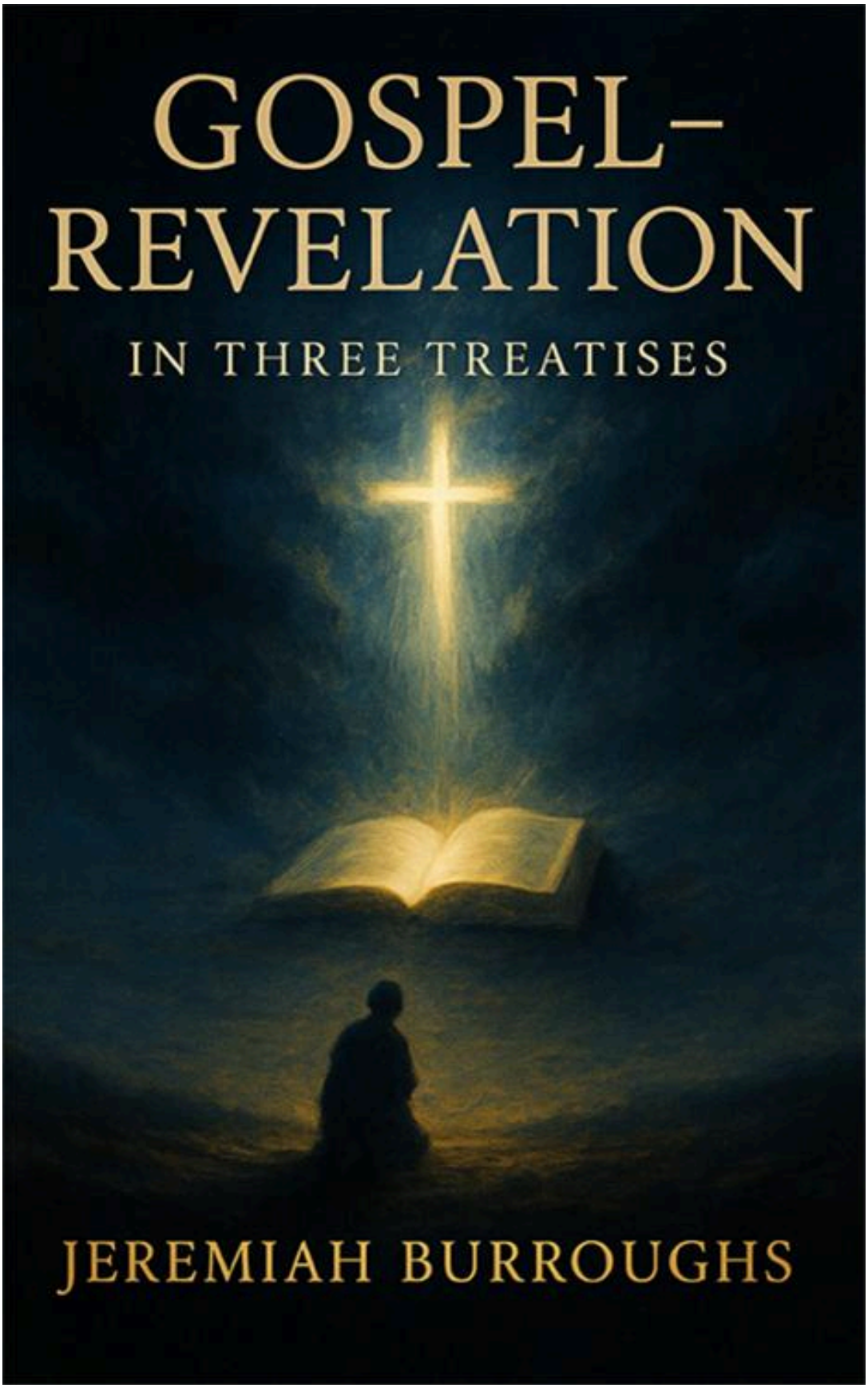
GOSPEL-REVELATION

IN THREE TREATISES



JEREMIAH BURROUGHS


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MONERGISM BOOKS

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PREF. TO THE READER.

Thou art here presented with the living Sermons of one who is fallen asleep in Jesus, whose memory is sweet and fragrant unto the Saints; He was famous for the Work of God and Christ in his Generation, and Instrumental for the begetting of many spiritual Children unto the Lord Jesus.

The Author of these Sermons (Mr. Jeremiah Burroughs) like Abel, being dead, yet speaketh: And of that, which is not only our Duty to hear, but our Privilege to be made acquainted with: for he Treats of God, of Christ, and Mans Soul: three choice subjects. Knowledge is Pleasant, Prov. 2:20, but none more pleasant than that is Divine. The knowledge of the holy God is Understanding, Prov. 9:10, the knowledge of Christ is Excellent, Phil. 3:8, the knowledge of both is Life eternal, Joh. 17:3. And for the Soul, it is that piece of Immortality which is of greater value than the whole world, Matth. 16:26. It is that which God challengeth to be his, Ezek. 18:4, and that which the Lord Christ accounted not his precious blood too much to give for, 1

Pet. 1:18,19. I shall not hold thee longer from the Work itself: But desire the blessing of God to go along with it, and those that are exercised in it.

R. W.

Pt. 1. The Nature of God.

Monergism Books

SERM. I. THE FIRST SERMON ON THE NATURE OF GOD.

The last day, you may remember, we opened that Point of the condition that men are in that live without a God in the world; It is evil to be without bread, without friends, without outward comforts; how great an evil then to be without a God in the world? And who they were that did live without a God in the world, that knew him not, that had no interest in him, and the like; and then was promised, Therefore seeing there are so many poor wretched creatures, so many Families that live without a God in the world, that know nothing of him, and live as if they expected nothing from him, and fear no evil to come from him at all; therefore we promised to labor to set forth before you somewhat of God that might help you to know him, to show you what he is: And to that end turn to that Scripture, Psal. 148, part of the 13th ver.

For his Name alone is excellent.

This Psalm is a Psalm of praise, praising of God for all the glorious manifestations of himself in his great Works, and calling upon all creatures to praise him, because he is glorious in every creature; but the Psalmist rests

not in this, in praising God for the glory of him that appears in the creatures, but he rises higher, and takes indeed the rise from thence to praise and bless God for what there is in himself, above that which doth appear in any creature. For so it is clear, that to this the Psalmist doth arise in my Text, Let them praise the name of the Lord: for his name alone is excellent, his glory is above the Earth and Heaven. The Earth and Heaven, and all creatures therein, are called to praise God's name, and David praises the name of God for what appeared there, but saith he, Praise the Lord: for his Name alone is excellent, and his glory is above the Earth and Heaven. His Name, the Name of God is either taken for God himself, or for the manifestation of God; often in Scripture for God himself, as, The Name of the Lord is a strong Tower, the righteous run unto it, and are safe; that is, God himself, He is the strength and Tower, he is the object of the trust of his people; and so other Scriptures; or otherwise, that whereby God may be known; His Name is great in Israel: And here we are to understand both; for his Name alone is excellent, that is, God himself is excellent alone, the Name of him, of him alone, is high, is lifted up, is excellent; and that we are to understand by the Name of God here, God himself, as well as his Manifestations, appears in the words at the end of the verse, His glory is above the earth and heaven. Now God's manifestation is either in heaven or earth. But there is a further glory of God that is in himself, that is beyond all that is, or can be manifested in, or to any creature; so that from the words thus opened, there are these two doctrinal Points one (I will but only touch it) is raised from the connection of the words with the former, and the other, that is, the substance of the Text, that we shall abide a while upon.

The first is this, That a gracious heart is not satisfied with praising God only for his works, but rises higher to praise him, and especially to praise

him for himself, for that that it sees in himself.

I say, a gracious heart doth not stick in the Works of God; nor is it only enlarged to praise God for what it sees in God's works, but it will rise higher than all the works of God, and praise him especially for that it sees in himself; Thy self O Lord is excellent, the glory that is in thyself, it is above the earth, and above the heaven. While we praise God for what we see in his works, our thoughts and hearts are limited; for God's manifestations of himself are finite, and so there is not that spaciousness that a gracious heart desires to let our itself in: but when it can rise up to God himself, and look at the infinite excellency that there is in himself above all that doth appear in his works, then the heart enlarged with grace can expatiate itself to the uttermost, and that is that which doth delight him, then is a gracious heart indeed in its own element, when it is expatiating itself even in God himself.

And further God in setting himself before the soul in way of Covenant, he doth not only tell those that he takes into Covenant, that he will do such and such things for them, but he would have them to close with himself, I will be your God. The Lord told Abraham that he would be his exceeding great reward, but that would not satisfy Abraham, What wilt thou give me? Having an eye to Christ, and the enjoyment of God in him; so let God say that he will do never such things for a gracious heart, that is not enough, except God himself be the portion of the soul, the soul cannot be satisfied with anything that God doth; if God should say to one whose heart he hath enlarged with grace, I will give thee all the world to possess, thou shalt have all the glory, all the pomp, all the sweetness, all the comforts in the world; nay more than that, I will make ten thousand worlds more, and give thee them all, and they shall have all of them more excellency than this present

world hath; why all this would not satisfy a heart enlarged with grace for the portion of it, though such a one sees itself unworthy of the least crumb of bread, yet it cannot be satisfied with all the world, what then will satisfy him? Only God himself, for so God propounds himself unto his people in way of Covenant, I will be thy God, I will be your portion; And upon this, those that are in Covenant with him, though they do rejoice to see God manifesting himself in all his Names, they bless God for the beholding so much as they do of him in his works; but the thing that their hearts are most upon; is God himself, the excellency that there is in God above all his works.

And as it is in praising God, so also it is in other workings of the heart towards God, as now grace doth not love God so much for what God gives to it, as for what God is himself; that is the difference between true sanctifying grace, and common grace; common grace may make me love God for what I receive from him, or for what I hope to receive from him; but sanctifying grace makes me to love God for what is in himself, more than for what I receive from him, or expect to receive; and so there may be the fear of God for some works of God, when God doth manifest his power and dreadfulness in his works, in thundering or lightening, then the heart of a sinner may fear God, though there be no grace; but now where there is grace, such a one fears God more, because of that excellency he sees in God himself, than from any dreadful works of God; and this would be a good rule to try yourselves by: You say you fear God, why? If you fear God, if it be the right fear of God, you will fear God more for what you see in God himself, than for any works of God, than for any works of his judgments, or threatening's, and the like: And so in the desires of the heart after God, why, where the heart is gracious it works after God for himself, and not for his

gifts; It is an argument of a false love, a whorish love, for the wife to love her husband for that she shall have by him, and not to love his person more: And so it is a sign of a base slavish spirit for a child to love his father because he gives him meat and drink, and clothes, and will leave him an inheritance, and not rather to love the very person of his Father; so the heart is but false with God that loves God, and that desires after God, more for anything that God doth, than for what God is; and as these workings of heart, love, and fear, and desire, are more in respect of God himself, than of his works; so praises of God, and delighting in God, where it is from true grace, it is more from what the soul sees in God, than from the manifestation of all the glory of God in all his works, for, Praise the Name of the Lord, For his Name is excellent, his glory is above the earth and heaven (but we shall let this pass.) The main Point in the Text which we are to pitch on is this,

That God is a most excellent being above all things.

This is the work that now I have to do, to endeavor to present God in the excellency of his being to you, only you must by way of caution know before we do begin, That God dwells in that light that is unapproachable, 1 Tim. 6:16. That it is but little that we do, or can know of God. And before we begin to set forth the excellency of God's being to you, you must know, that there is infinitely more than either the tongue of Man or Angel can express; when we have done all we can, there is more in God that is beyond what we can say, or Angels could preach unto you; I say, more than the glorious light of the Sun is more than a little glittering of a glow-worm in the night, more than all the Sea is beyond, and above a spoonful, a drop of water.

And further by way of Caution, you must know this, that it is impossible to set before you the excellency of God's being, and yet to speak so as everything should be plain to everyone. Many things in the opening of God's Nature to you, must needs have some difficulty in them, because the subject that we are speaking of, is so high above us; especially it must needs be difficult to unclean spirits, to spirits that have always been groveling below in the dirt, to drowsy spirits that think nothing to be excellent, but only to eat and drink, and satisfy their flesh; when they hear the excellency of God's Being set out unto them, it must needs be an argument above their reach; it cannot be expected that it is possible to speak so as their hearts should close with what is said, to apprehend it.

But howsoever we do not know what God may do in going along with his word, how he may come by his Spirit even to those that are of the weakest capacity, therefore I shall endeavor to do that that is my work, that is, to show you somewhat of God, what an excellent being he is, and so leave the work of the Spirit of God to himself, to make known those things that shall be propounded, and to settle them upon your hearts. Wherefore then God is an excellent being above all things.

First, He is, and there is none else besides him. The truth is, we can scarce say that anything is but God, Exod. 3:14. When God came to Moses to send him to Pharaoh, and Moses would know the Name of God, he bid him say, I am that I am; I am hath sent me; and God only describes himself thus unto Moses, I am, I am a being; and so the name Jehovah is a name proper to God, that signifies God's being: Now might Moses say, Lord, is this a name that will distinguish thee from anything else, to say I am? Cannot any man say so, I am? But yet God gives this name of his, as his proper name merely, I am a being, and I am that being that I am; and that is all the name

God would tell Moses, when Moses did desire to know so much of him, and how he might express him that did send him, I am that I am:

For indeed God's being it is that that is proper, and all other creatures in comparison of this God, have but a shadow of being, therefore in Prov. 8:21, saith Wisdom there (that is Godliness) I cause to inherit substance, the words are translated by the Learned, that which is Grace carries to God, and so by Grace being carried to God, we come to inherit that which is, as if all the while we inherited anything in the world, we did not inherit that which is. God himself properly is; So in Isa. 45:5,6. I am Jehovah, and there is none else besides me. There is nothing that hath a being besides me (that is) not such a being, as we shall further open, yea and in comparison no being; therefore in Isa. 40:15,17. We have a most excellent expression of the excellency of God's being in comparison of all other things, All the Nations of the world they are as the drop of the bucket, and as the small dust of the balance in comparison of God, Yea they are all nothing, less than nothing? What an expression is here; take all the Nations of the world, put them all together, they are all but as the drop of the bucket, that you shall see hang a little at the bottom, but as a little dust of the balance; how soon may you take your finger, and wipe off the drop of the bucket? Why so even all Nations of the world may as soon perish in respect of God; yea as if the Holy Ghost had said too much when he compared the Nations of the world to God (as if he should say) what, did I say they were as the drop of the bucket, and as the small dust in the balance? Nay, they are nothing at all; nay, and I must go lower, they are less than nothing. And thus you see the Name of God is alone excellent, because indeed he is such a being, as in comparison of him there is nothing that is worthy of the name of a being. That 40th of the Prophecy of Isaiah, when you come home, it will be a good

Chapter to read in your Families, to set out the greatness of God, for that is the work we are about to show, you what a God you have to deal withal in all your ways, the Name of God is excellent; Read that Chapter, and you will find God's Name set out as excellent indeed there. But that is the first.

In the second place, God, he is a present being, I am, saith he, that is, God enjoys himself, that infinite being of himself altogether, there is no succession at all in the being of God, as there is in other creatures, the creature enjoys but little of its own being; I beseech you consider the difference between God and the creature in this, when (I say) he is a present being, that is set forth in the words I am; I say the creature enjoys but very little of its own being; why, because whatsoever is past, it cannot enjoy, and whatsoever is to come it enjoys not; now all that it doth enjoy of itself, it is only what it hath at an instant, this present instant what it hath, that it may be said to be; but now with God there is nothing past, there is nothing to come; there is nothing past, I say, in respect of God's being, there is nothing to come, but his being is always present, he always saith, I am; therefore Christ speaking of his Divine Nature, in Joh. 8:58, saith he, Before Abraham was, I am; Christ doth not say, I was before Abraham was, no, but before Abraham was, I am. Certainly this had been no good English to have spoken of any creature; If any man should say thus, Before such a thing was, I am; if any Angel should say so, this were no proper speech; but Christ saith so, Before Abraham was, I am, because Christ in regard of his Divine Nature hath no succession of being at all; we cannot say that God hath so many years added to him since the world began, God was as eternal before the world was, as he is now, or ever shall be; it cannot be said that he was, not will be, but always it may be said I am; I am, was, and will be, the difference of time, it is in respect of the creature, not in respect of God, and

that is the reason of those phrases in Scripture, That a thousand years with God are as one day, and one day as a thousand years; There is no difference of time with God at all: And that is the second thing, therefore he alone is excellent.

Thirdly, This being of God it is in all places. His excellency it is everywhere throughout the world, and that, first, Not virtually only, God is not in every place only virtually by his power, that is, he works in every place, but he is in every place essentially. Secondly, God is not in every place by motion, from one place to another, and so gradually is in all places, but God is every moment in every place.

Thirdly, God is not in every place to fill heaven and earth, that is, one part in one place, and another in another, as a great thing that fills such a room, one part is in one place, and another is in another; but God fills heaven and earth, that is, all of God is everywhere, all that God is, is in every place: Yea further, God is as much beyond every place, as he is in every place; he is as much beyond the circumference of the heavens, and the earth, as he is in them; yea if God should make ten thousand worlds more, he would fill all those as well as he doth this, without any motion at all, he would not move from one place to another to fill up ten thousand worlds (if there were so many new ones made) but in the same instant in which they were all made, that immense being of his would fill up all. Surely God is a most excellent Being then above all other things whatsoever.

Fourthly (for I intend but merely to present the chief things of the excellency of God before you, and not to stand handling of these at large, for every one of them might require a large tractate, but now only to present before you what a God it is that you have to deal with) God is a Being that is All-sufficient in himself; He stands in no need of any creature; in Acts

17:25. He hath need of nothing, of none of us, he hath enough within himself; before the world was, God was as blessed in himself as now he is; there can be nothing added to him, there is such an excellency even in God's being its self, that there can be nothing added to him; we are poor creatures, that stand in need of a thousand things continually, the air to breathe in, the earth to bear us, fire to warm us, clothes to cover us, meat and drink, a thousand things; we stand in need of the meanest creature, and if God should take away the use of some mean contemptible creature, our lives would be made miserable to us; but that is the excellency of God's being that he hath need of nothing, he hath all within himself, all the creatures in heaven and earth, cannot add to him; no if there were ten thousand worlds more, although God did possess them all, yet they would not add one whit unto what is in God himself; therefore though the Lord hath made the heaven and earth, and all things therein, yet we must not think that God is ever a whit the better for these things, or hath the more glory; he had as much glory and blessedness in himself, as now he hath, or can have; when all the Angels and Saints shall be eternally blessing God in heaven, yet they can add nothing to God's glory: We say the Sun is a glorious creature, but doth that add any light to the Sun? So for Saints and Angels to be praising and blessing God, what doth that add to God? And in this the Name of God is excellent.

5. But further, in the fifth place, His Name alone is excellent in this thing, that his excellency is universal, that is, all excellencies that are in all creatures in heaven and earth, they are all in him virtually, and eminently, he hath them all in his own being, Psal. 94:9. Shall not he that made the ear hear, he that formed the eye shall not he see? The argument there will confirm this to us, that whatsoever is in the creature that hath any

excellency in it, that excellency is in God in an eminent way; the creature, one hath one drop of excellency, and another hath another drop of excellency in it, and so a third a third, every creature hath its particular excellency in it, but God is an universal good, all excellencies in all creatures are in God, all beauty, all comfort, all goodness, whatsoever hath any loveliness or desirableness in it, I say it is all in God, and I know not any one consideration that will help us more to understand God while we are here in the flesh than this, for in regard of our weakness, we can know little or nothing of God, but by looking into the creature, and so rising from them.

Now then when we come to look upon the creatures, and we see an excellency in one creature, and another in another, Now if we can conceive as it were the quintessence of all these excellencies drawn out, and conceive a being that hath all these together in him, this being is an excellent being indeed; this would make us to look upon God above the creature when we look upon everything that is good in the creature to be in God himself, why then what ever the creature hath to draw the heart, why that the soul saith is in God; and indeed this one consideration of God, and the presenting of God to the soul in this manner, is a special work of God's converting a soul to himself; when I say, the Lord intends to draw a soul to himself, to have the heart that was let out after creature-comforts, now to close with himself, and choose himself for his portion, the Lord doth show this to the soul: Soul what wouldest thou have, thou wouldest have this comfort, and the other comfort to delight and content thee; Know there can be nothing in any creature that thou seest, but thou mayest have it in me. Now this indeed we cannot by sense see, the comforts of the creature are sensibly before us, and we see them by our senses; but now God is above our sense, God he is

above our reason, and there must be faith to close with him; but now when God would convert a soul to himself, he doth show himself in such a way to the soul, as the soul doth see that there is all good in him that there is in the creature, and that it is in God in a more satisfying and eminent manner.

Certainly, whatsoever there is in the effect, it must needs be in the causes; now as all effects are to be resolved into the causes, so all causes are to be resolved into this excellent being, that is the first cause of all things; for these creatures that are effects, they have other causes of them, yet those causes are effects of some higher causes, at length we must come to the first cause, and all must be resolved into that; nay all excellencies in the creature are more in God, than the excellency of the effect is in its causes; for the causes when an effect is resolved into them, the causes if they be not united to produce such an effect, they cannot do immediately that thing that the effect could do; but now all excellency is so in God, as look what power any creature hath, or what thing it can do by any excellency it hath, that God can do; look what comfort it can bring by any good it hath in it, the same comfort God can bring; so that all is to be resolved into God; not that God hath all formally in him, as fire, air, meat, and drink, but what good there is here, what excellency there is here, it is eminently in God, that is, God is able to do of himself by his own being, whatsoever any creature is able to do, though all the creatures in the world should be annihilated (taken away) and thou only let live, God by his immediate power is able to let out to thee all those variety of comforts that all the creatures the world had before could do: Now when we can find all made up in God (as we say sometimes, that in someone good dish, there is all dishes made up (that is but a similitude) but here it is really that whatsoever any child of God loses in the creature, such a one can find it to be made up in God) Indeed this is

the art and skill of Religion: Godliness doth teach this art and skill, to make up whatsoever is wanting in a creature, in God himself, and that is the chief ground of the satisfaction and contentment of a gracious heart in the want of creature-comforts; and because the men of the world have no skill in this mystery, they think it a mere notion, a conceit of men, they are not able to apprehend any reality in it, therefore it is that they vex and fret so much when they want creature-comforts, for they know not whither to go to make them up in any other being: But the Saints know that all is in God, all excellency in all creatures is in God, therefore when you look thus upon God, as having all good that all creatures have, and that in himself; and when you come thus to God as such a being so much above all creatures, then you have in some measure a right apprehension of God: And that is the fifth thing.

6. But sixthly, The Name of God is excellent above all: For not only all excellencies in the Creature are in him; but all those varieties of excellencies that are scattered up and down severally in Creatures, are united into one excellency in him; for a water may have the quintessence of many herbs in it; there are many things in the water at that time; though but one drop of water, yet there are many things in it: So there is such an union of all excellencies in God, that I say it is but one in God; there is an indivisible union of all variety: Things that are various in the Creature, they are all united in one in God, that must needs be a glorious excellency indeed. If one man had all the beauty and strength, and all the wisdom that all the men in the world ever had, or have, and united into one, what beauty, what strength, what wisdom would that one man have! Now it is so in God, that all beauty, and wisdom, and strength, are united into one excellency, so that God he is one otherwise than any other Creature can be one; other

Creatures may be made one by composition, but now God he is not one by the union of many things together; for there is but one thing in God, God is but one, there is a variety, as we conceive, as the Sun when it shines upon different glasses, red, or blew, or yellow, it hath a variety, I but all this is but one Sun, so all the attributes of God that we speak divers times of, these are the several manifestations of that one excellency that there is in God, all united into one; therefore by this the Saints come to be the more happy, for they may not only enjoy all the good that there is in the Creature, but enjoy it all in one, and we say, the stronger is a thing, the more it is united; now in God all good whatsoever is united in one, all good in the Creature, yea and all good in himself, that is, all his attributes; so you must conceive of God; only the manifestation is divers; and therefore you must not conceive that there is any one thing in him more than another; you may not conceive of God, as if there were more mercy than justice, or more justice than mercy, or more of either of these, than there is of truth, wisdom, and holiness: Indeed God may manifest himself unto the Creature, more in one, than in the other, but as they are in his own being they are not, only one as much as the other, but they are all but one thing, only several manifestations, as but one Sun that hath divers reflections by divers glasses; so all God's attributes are but one excellency that is in him; therefore his Name is excellent above all things, because he is but one God in this manner.

7. Further, Not only all good and excellency is in God, but all possible good, what can possibly be imagined (as we know that the power of God that made the world, could make thousands of worlds) all this is in him, and infinitely in him, When we do speak of anything to be in God, we must be sure that we do not limit our thoughts, as when we speak of God to be a great God, do not limit it, he is great, but infinitely so; when we speak of his

wisdom, he is wise, but infinitely wise, and so of his holiness, and justice, and truth, and knowledge; all must be looked upon without any bounds whatsoever; in the Creature there are such and such things, but they are all limited by their causes, but God having no causes at all to limit him, therefore he is infinite, whatsoever is in him it is infinitely in him, whatsoever is in him, is not only infinite in the kind, as there is all the wisdom and holiness that can be; but I say, it is absolutely infinite; as it is in him, it is so infinite, that there is no kind of being but is included within it; speak but any one thing of God, I say, it is not only infinite in the kind, but so as it includes whatsoever hath being, in the infinite Ocean of being that is in himself; we are very ready when we look upon God to have limited thoughts, and therein we bring him down to the Creature; this is the very reason why God doth hate Images so much as he doth, because that Images do make a kind of a representation of him, as though he were finite; as Papists, they tell us they think not that such an Image is God, I, but being put in mind of God by such an Image, there is a kind of limiting the infiniteness that is in God; and therefore God hates it, and will not have that infinite excellency of his to be represented by any Image whatsoever; whensoever thou thinkest of God, or speakest of God, do not only compare him with that which is in the Creature, but when thou hast made thy comparison, let thy thoughts be infinitely above it; there is no one attribute of God doth help us more to understand what God is, than when we conceive him to be infinite in all that he is or hath.

8. Yea and further, All the good that there is in God, and excellency, it is eternally in him; it may be such a Creature hath an excellency, but how long hath it had it? It was not long before but it was nothing: but God hath been what he hath been (if we may speak so) he hath been eternally; now that is a

mighty swallowing consideration; the consideration of eternity; as a man that is an Accountant, if he writes a figure of one, add but six ciphers to it, and it is ten hundred thousand, now if he should be adding and adding all his life time, yea if he should have lived from the beginning of the world to have added to the figure of one, what an infinite sum would this be! But it is nothing to eternity; either if you look back to eternity it is nothing, or if you look forward to eternity, it is nothing; (the Saints indeed shall live eternally in respect of that which is to come, the souls and bodies of the Saints shall be eternally for time to come with God, and the souls and bodies of the ungodly shall be eternally in Hell) Now all the excellency that there is in God, is eternally in God, which way soever you look.

9. Further, Not only eternally, but immutably in him; and therefore his name is alone excellent, it is immutable, that is, God hath such an infinite excellency, that it is impossible that he can be better, or other than he is; if God should be otherwise than he is, he would instantly cease to be a God; the being of God hath that excellency in it, that there can be no addition, no subtraction, add anything to him, and you destroy him, take anything from him, and you destroy his being, alter anything in him, and he ceases to be God; so the Scripture saith, With him There is no shadow of change. Indeed there is a change in the creature, but nothing at all in God; as if you bring a piece of wax to the Sun it melts it, and clay, it hardens it, here is a different effect of the Sun, but the Sun is the same; so bring the creature in one disposition to God, and the love of God, and delight of God is in it; bring the creature in another disposition to God, and the wrath of God is upon it, yet God is the same, only the variety is in the creature. And therefore his Name alone is excellent, and the creature, whatsoever excellence it hath, it

changes up and down: As there is no shadow of change with God, so no shadow of constancy in the creature.

10. Further in the next place, All these things are essentially in God; whatsoever is in God, it is his being, its God himself: This one thing would much help you to understand the Nature of God, that whatsoever can be truly said of God, it is God himself; as thus, God's wisdom is God himself; God's mercy is God himself; God's power is God himself: it is not so in the creature, a man's wisdom is not a man's being, they are separable, one may be separated from the other; but God's wisdom is God's being; a man's power and strength is not his being, but God's is, so a man's mercy and goodness is not his being, but God's is, and therefore (as before) these things that are variously conceived by us, they are not only one in God, but his very being, and this doth mightily add to the glory of God, that whatsoever is in God, it is the very essence and being of God himself: These things that we speak of God (as I told you) because God is so infinitely above us, it is very hard to make them plain to every understanding; and no marvel, because we are fallen so far from him; and as I have gone along, I fear that a great many are ready to think, Lord what are these things, we cannot apprehend them; why then go thy ways home and be humbled for that great fall of mankind, Oh how far is man fallen by his sin? We see now why God dwells in the thick cloud and darkness: Oh how far am I fallen from God? For God made man at first able to know him; certainly Adam did know all these things perfectly: it was the happiness of Adam in his first creation to be able to look upon the face of God, and know what such things as these meant; but now since our fall, we are said not only to be in the dark, but darkness itself; and therefore it is but very little that we can know of God; we have such a sight of God, as a poor

man that lives all his days in a Dungeon, if he should have one day a little crevice opened, where a little beam of the Sun should shine, certainly he would stand and admire at it, if he never saw it before, but how little would that man know of the nature of the Sun that had but a little crevice opened for a beam to shine in a little time? Truly all that ever the Ministers of God can tell you, or if God should send his Angels to preach to open the Nature of God to you, it can be no other but a little glimmering. But I hope if you bend your minds you may know so much as to make you desire after the knowledge of him; for if there be no other effect than this, yet it will be worth the while to make you to see that you do not know God; and therefore your thoughts not being thus of God, as I have spoken, the truth is, you have made God unto yourselves but as an Idol (for if we conceive otherwise of God than he is, we do but make him an Idol to ourselves) now, Oh that it might have but this effect at least (this that I have said, with some few other things that are to be spoken) to cause men and women to humble themselves before God for want of the knowledge of God, and to be crying to God, that he would be pleased to make himself known unto them in another way than they have known him, that so when they come to worship God, they may be able to look upon him in another way than they have done: And therefore I beseech you, be not discouraged, to think, I shall never know these things, if God be thus, I shall never know what God is, be not discouraged, for this God he is able to communicate himself beyond that way that any creature is able to communicate its self, God can let out himself to any creature as much as he pleases, and it is no matter whether the creature be capable or no, the Lord can make it capable; and therefore be not discouraged because of thy weakness; but if thou in the uprightness of thy heart doest seek to God, and doest desire to know him above all

things, If thou searchest after the knowledge of God as after silver, thou shalt come to know God more than ever thou diddest; and certainly to have but a few glimpses of this infinite first being of all things, it is a kind of infinite satisfaction unto the souls of the servants of God, and though at first they find it hard to know God, yet by seeking long after the knowledge of him, they have found that knowledge of God that they would not be without for ten thousand thousand worlds; its only the rational creature that is able to know anything of God at all, and this is a great part of that worship and homage you owe to God, that you should know him, and so, that you might honor him as a God, that you might glorify him as a God: Oh my brethren, how would people live, had they but the real sight of such a God with whom they have to deal in all their ways? When we put you upon the searching, to know what God is, we put you not upon the searching to get notions to discourse of: I confess in the right knowledge of the infinite first being of all things, there are most excellent notions to be learned, but that that I endeavor to put you on to, is this, that you might search to know this God, to the end that you might fear him, and choose him to be your portion, that you might love him and serve him, and blessed is that soul that shall thus know him.

SERM. II. THE SECOND SERMON ON THE NATURE OF GOD.

For his Name alone is excellent . – Psal. 148:13.

11. The next thing is this, All excellencies are in God purely, and immixtly, that is, God hath all excellencies in him, and nothing else but excellency; the creature it may have some excellency, but it hath a mixture of imperfections; it may have some power, but there is a mixture of weakness; it may have some goodness, but there is a mixture of some kind of evil in creatures as they are in themselves; the very Angels themselves, though they are upheld by God, yet they have that in them that might make them sin against God, if God did but leave them to themselves: So there is a mixture of weakness in all creatures, but God alone is excellent, for he hath nothing else in him but that which is excellent, 1 Joh. 1:5. The Lord is light, and in him there is no darkness; this cannot be said of any creature, that the creature hath excellency in him, and there is no darkness at all in him; there is darkness in every creature, but the Lord is light, and in him there is no darkness; that that is said concerning light here, may be said concerning

anything else, the Lord hath such and such Excellencies, and in him there is no defect, all is in him purely.

12. Next, All is in God originally; that is, all is from himself: Now there is no excellency in God that is by participation; He hath it from himself, and in himself. Whatsoever the creature hath, it hath it derivatively, not originally, it receives it from another: but all that is in God it is originally, it is in himself, and by himself, and from himself, all is in him as the spring of all kind of excellency.

13. But in the next place, As all is in him originally, that is, he hath all from himself, So God is the fountain of all excellency to all creatures whatsoever; if there be any good in any creature, it is but a beam from this Sun, and a drop from this infinite Ocean, it all flows from that infinite Sea of all good, which lets out itself to this creature, or the other creature, in this or the other manner: So God is the fountain of all good to all creatures whatsoever, they are to look upon him as having all coming from him. And therefore he alone is excellent, and his glory is above the Heavens and Earth.

14. Further, As all things are from him, so they depend upon him; all excellencies that are in the creature, as they come from God, so they have their absolute dependency upon God, so as God need do nothing to destroy a creature: if he doth but withdraw himself from it, it falls to nothing presently; take the most glorious Angels, and the highest Heavens, Sun, Moon, Stars, Sea, and Earth, if God should but withdraw his hand from these creatures, they would presently fall down to nothing; they do depend upon God, as the light upon the Sun, there is no more light if the beams of the Sun be withdrawn; so if God withdraw his influence from the creature, it can do nothing, and its nothing presently; so that the influence that there

is from God to the creature, it is to maintain the creature in his being; every moment the Lord must put forth as infinite a power to maintain thee and me, and every creature, as he did at the first for the making of the world. And this is God's excellency to uphold all things, they do so depend upon him. If a work-man make a house, he goes away, the house can stand without him; but when God built the world, the world could not stand one moment without him. And not only God must have an influence into the creature to preserve the being, but likewise to enable the creature to act; the creature cannot act one moment without God, no creature can stir in the least degree, except the Lord concur with it; Therefore the Name of God alone is excellent; By him, saith the Scripture, we live, we move, we have our being; not only we are upheld in our being and lives, but we move, we cannot stir one moment, but God must concur with his creature for the motion and action of it.

15. Further, God alone is excellent in his operation, in his power, in the manner of his working; though God give a power to other creatures to work, yet God works in a different way from all other creatures.

First, God he doth whatsoever he pleases either in heaven or earth. The will of God, as I shown you before, it cannot be beyond God's power, God cannot will to do more than he hath power to do, Therefore the Lord he doth whatsoever he pleases in heaven and earth. The power of every creature can but work within the sphere, so far as the causes give a virtue and efficacy, so far it is able to work, and no further.

Secondly, The power of God appears in this, that the Lord doth the greatest, and the most difficult things, as easily as he doth the least and the easiest; as thus, God makes the whole world as easily as he can make a crumb of dirt; God can make the Heavens, Sun, Moon and Stars, and all the

Seas and Earth, with as much ease as he can make a fly. God can make ten thousand Angels, as soon as he can make one worm. And therefore God, he can as soon speak the word to the soul of a man that is dead, to live, he can as soon raise all the dead out of their graves, as he can give them a piece of bread to eat while they are alive, such is the infiniteness of God's operation.

3. Further, God is excellent in all that he doth. There is nothing that God doth in any time, but was decreed to be done from eternity; that is, the excellency of God's working; the creature works something, but perhaps a man did not think of what he doth, a few days ago, but God doth nothing, nor never will do anything, but it is that that was decreed from all eternity that he would do, and God will never do anything to all eternity, but what he had decreed from all eternity before; yet it is for us creatures to observe according to his revealed will; but this is the excellency of God above all creatures whatever.

4. And then there is a further thing that is as considerable as any of the other, God is so far from needing any matter to work upon, or instrument to work by, when he doth do anything, as there is no more required for any creature to be, or work at any time when God would have it, but the alone act of God's will that was from eternity. As now the world it was not made six thousand years ago; Now God willed from all eternity that there should be a world in time, and there was nothing required to make this world but that act of God's will that was from all eternity, that it should be at that time. Man, he doth will and decree to do such a thing; now when the time comes, then he bestirs himself, and takes this tool or instrument, and puts forth a power that he did not put forth before: But the act of God's will from all eternity was sufficient to make all creatures that ever since have been made, and to provide for all creatures that ever since have been provided

for, one act of God's will hath done all this; and that act of the will of God that hath been from all eternity hath done it; there are not several acts of God's will, but God's act is himself.

Diverse other things might be shown, as this,

5. Where God hath done any work, all his works add nothing to him. The creature hath somewhat added to him by his works; as thus, A man that is a work-man he can make a house, and so he hath the benefit of it to dwell in, to keep off the weather, and so he makes clothe, and hath the benefit of it: But all the works of God add nothing to him. A man can do something by the work that he hath made that he could not do without his work: but God can do nothing by any work that he hath made, but he can do the same without that work; when he hath made all his works, they are not helpful to him (but this was a branch of the All-sufficiency of God.)

16. In the next place, God alone is excellent in the manner of his communication of himself, God doth so communicate himself to his creatures, as one creature cannot to another.

First, God can let out as much of himself as he will to any creature; now one creature cannot let out as much as he pleases to another; for instance, A man that hath learning, he cannot make another as learned as he will; a man that hath holiness and goodness, cannot make another as holy, and as good as he will: but God can, this is God's propriety, he can let out of himself as much as he pleases, as much holiness, as much goodness, as much power as he pleases he is able to let out.

Secondly, the creature, When it doth communicate any excellency, the more it lets out, the less it hath; but God hath never a whit less by that that he doth let out to his creatures; as thus, the Sea is full of water, yet if you take out but a little water, the Sea hath so much the less; therefore some of

the Fathers would set out Eternity by this, that if a Sparrow should but once in a thousand years fetch one drop of water from the Sea in the bill of it, yet the Sparrow would sooner empty all the Sea, than the torments of the damned should be at an end; so that if a drop be taken out of the Sea it is the less: but God is such an infinite ocean of being, of excellencies, of happiness, that let him let out, and communicate never so much of himself, yet he hath as much still as ever he had: God hath let out excellency, and good to all his creatures ever since the world began, all the good, the comfort, the happiness, the sweetness, the beauty and excellency of all creatures have been from God that infinite fountain, but now this fountain is as full as ever it was, and will be as full to all eternity as ever it was: And here lies the excellency of God beyond all creatures whatsoever.

17. In the next place, God alone is excellent, there is no comparison to be made between him, and anything else; as thus, Take the creature in what we think it comes nearest to God, and the truth is, to speak properly, it comes no nearer to God than those things that we think come less; as when we say that God is a great God and fills all places, if you should suppose a body that should fill all this world, it is no nearer to God's immensity than a moat that flies in the Sun: or thus, Take never so many thousand years, as we spoke the last day, if an Accountant that should write down figures all his life time, they would come we think, to an infinite sum; yet all those infinite millions of years come no nearer to God's eternity, than one minute doth, and the reason that I give is unanswerable, because that there must needs be always an infinite distance between what is finite, and what is infinite, and greater than an infinite distance there cannot be; now take such a body as should fill the space between heaven and earth, there remains still an infinite distance between the Immensity of God, and this body, and take so

many numbers of years as possibly can be imagined by Men or Angels, yet there will remain an infinite distance between God's eternity, and those numbers of years; now greater than an infinite distance there cannot be; therefore all those years do not come nearer to eternity than a minute, and all the greatness doth not come nearer to Immensity than a moat in the Sun; God is beyond all comparison whatsoever, and the understanding that God is an infinite being, will help us to understand all the rest that I have named.

18. And there is one more, and that is this, He is the last end of all things; He is the highest end, for which all Creatures had their being, and the more any Creature is subservient unto God, the more excellency a Creature hath, For of him, and through him, and to him are all things, to whom be glory forever. All things must tend to God as the highest end; cursed be that Creature that shall challenge to be the highest end of any good thing whatsoever; this makes it to be a cursed thing for any man to make himself to be his last end, to make his name, honor or credit to be the end that he aims at; and indeed, this is the very thing that makes pride to be so great a sin; the Scripture never speaks so of other things, as it doth of pride; it is said of other sins, that God hates the workers of iniquity, but it is said of no sin, that God doth resist it, only the sin of pride; why? Because a proud man doth cross God in that which is indeed his excellency, and that is this, That God is the highest end of all things, for whom all things were made, now a proud man crosses God in this, nay saith he, I will aim at myself as the highest end; we may aim at our own good in a subordinate way, but we must be sure to lift up God as the highest end of all, because he is excellent above all; now put all these together.

First, That God he is, and there is none else; He is such a being, as in comparison of him nothing else hath a being; He is that being that hath no

succession, that is always the same; He is an excellency in all places, that fills all places without any local motion at all; He is a being that hath all sufficiency in himself, he hath all excellencies, in him is an universality of all excellencies, he hath all excellencies united in one that are scattered up and down in Creatures; yea, all the attributes of God are in him but one, he hath in him all possible good whatsoever; all things that are in God, are equally in him, they are all infinitely in him, they are eternally, immutably, essentially, purely, without mixture, originally, he is the fountain of all good to the Creature; all excellency in the Creature doth absolutely depend upon him; he is excellent in his operation, he can do whatsoever he will, he can do the greatest thing as easily as the least, and one act from eternity, is enough to do all that ever he hath done; He can communicate as much of himself as he will to his Creature, and he hath never a whit the less in himself; there can be no comparison between him and the Creature, the highest Creature comes not nearer him than the least, and he is the highest end of all things whatsoever; and this God is our God; this is the God that we profess to serve, that we profess to worship, and these are to be the thoughts that we are to have of God when we come before him; Now you cannot but imagine that there must needs be abundance of streams of Use and Application that must follow from these things; all that I have done, it is but to present what God is.

Now methinks I hear many that give their minds to understand what God is, even saying within themselves, Oh that we did but acknowledge God to be thus, surely there is a farther excellency in God than we have imagined, and might we have but further sight into these things that have been thus briefly presented to us, Oh of what excellent use might all these be! I shall endeavor therefore to present but to you, and even as briefly as I have done

the other, the several uses that may flow from all these things, I will only give you a hint of one or two now.

Oh what infinite cause have we all to be ashamed of those low thoughts we have had of God! If God be thus as he hath been (but a little) presented to us now, and by what we see, we may gather, that there is infinitely more in God, and God is infinitely higher than ever we thought of (I say) then upon the very hearing of such things as these are, and especially we being conscious to ourselves how little we are able to understand of them, we may see cause to be ashamed of the poor and low thoughts that we have had of this infinite Majesty; the unworthy thoughts that we have had of him, when we have come into the presence of God; you have come to prayer to God, have you come to prayer as unto such a God? Have you had such kind of thoughts as these are, that he is that high Majesty? Certainly you cannot sanctify God's Name but you must have high thoughts of God; and though I will not say, that those do not sanctify God's Name, that have not every one of these thoughts of God, yet thus much I will say, that those that have not apprehended every one of these things of God, have not sanctified God's Name as much as they should, for we are to apprehend what it is possible for us to apprehend here in this world, or otherwise we do not sanctify God's Name so as we ought; when we come to God in prayer, or to worship him in any other duty of his worship, if we do not apprehend of God as much as we possibly can in this world, we do not sanctify God's Name as much as we ought to do, and we are to be ashamed that we have not such apprehensions of God as we might possibly have; if God be such a God as this, what poor thoughts of God are these, that he is as an old man in Heaven? Some have such poor apprehensions of God, and when they hear the Scripture speak of God's eyes, and ears, and hands, they think that God

hath a body, when as the Scripture doth but speak to our capacities, that is, what a man can do with his eyes, or hands, or ears, that God is able to do by his infinite power. I appeal to you, have you apprehensions of the majesty and glory of God, beyond all majesty and glory that any Creature is capable of in this world? We do not sanctify God's Name, except, I say, we apprehend God higher in majesty and glory, than all creatures in the world are. Suppose you were to come to a King that had all the glory and honor put upon him that ever any creature had in this world, with what fear and trembling would we come before such a Majesty as this is? But if thou hast not come with further trembling and fear before God, when thou camest into his presence, if thou hast not come with higher thoughts of that God that thou hast to deal withal (I say) thou hast not glorified God as a God; no marvel though people are so slight and vain in the duties of God's worship, because they do not know what a God he is that they have to do withal.

This showeth you the dreadful evil there is in sin, why? Because it is against such a God as this God is; dost thou know whom it is that thou sinnest against? Oh thou sinner! Dost thou know whom it is thou strikest at? It is this infinite God that is thus presented to you, Whose Name alone is excellent, and whose glory is above the Earth and Heavens. Know sinner, and the Lord smite this upon thy heart, thou that art a wicked and ungodly man all the days of thy life, thou hast done nothing else but fought against this God, this infinite and glorious God thou hast been an enemy to all the days of thy life, and every time thou renewest thy sins, thou dost do nothing else but strike at this infinite God, and provokest the wrath of this infinite deity against thy soul and body; and darest thou stand out against this God? Wilt thou put it to the trial, to see whether that God that thou sinnest against be such a God as this is? Wilt thou put it to the trial, that God should set

thee apart to make thee an object upon whom to exercise all that infinite power that there is in God, to bring evil, and misery, and torments upon thee for thy sin? This is the case of all desperate sinners that do go on in a desperate way of sin; the language of their sin is this, I do hear much spoken concerning the greatness, and excellency, and glory of God, I will try and venture, I will put it to the experiment, whether God be such a God or no, as he hath manifested himself in his word: Oh woe to that Creature that shall come to feel what the greatness of God doth mean! Oh it is infinitely better for thee to fall down before him and therefore this should be the Exhortation to all sinners; Consider, Oh sinful man or woman, what a God it is thou dost contest withal! Shall the potsherd strive with his Maker? Let one potsherd strive with another, but let not the Creature strive with the Almighty, for he will be infinitely too hard for thee, and he will appear alone to be excellent; thou dost lift up thy will above his will, as if so be that thou wouldest rise above this infinite God, but know, in despite of thy heart he will be above thee, he hath thee under his feet this moment, and the sword of his justice is at thy very heart, and he can take thy heart blood when he pleases, and send thee down to eternal miseries; there is no striving with such a God as this is, who is alone excellent; the word hath proceeded out of his mouth in Righteousness, that every knee must bow unto him, and every tongue must confess this God; certainly one way or other he will have his glory out of thee; God can as well cease to be, as not to have his glory out of every Creature; do but consider of this, and learn to tremble before this God; The Lord is excellent and glorious above all things, and he is resolved that he will have his glory from every Creature one way or other, and if it prove that he comes upon thee to force it out of thee, better ten thousand times that thou hadst never been born; therefore according to the

Exhortation of the Holy Ghost in Scripture, Oh! Let us humble ourselves under the mighty hand of God, and let us all say, Thou O Lord art alone excellent, and thy glory is above the Heavens and Earth, and the desire of our souls is to lift up thy Name as the excellent thing above all Creatures. While we live here in this world, this is our excellency, and blessed is that man or woman that comes to see this to be his or her excellency, namely, that I might lift up God's Name in the place where he hath set me; heretofore I have lift up other things as excellent, if I could get an Estate, &c. But the Lord hath made me to see that he alone is excellent, and his excellency hath darkened all the excellency of the Creature in my eyes; I see nothing excellent but God, and all in order unto God; that is a good sign of the work of grace in a man or woman, when he shall see so much of the excellency of God, as God's excellency shall darken all the excellency in the world.

SERM. III. THE THIRD SERMON ON THE NATURE OF GOD.

For his Name alone is excellent . – Psal. 148:13.

But a second Use is this that we are now to proceed in, Oh how vile is sin then that is committed against such a God as this is? There is nothing in the world can show a soul the evil of sin, but the sight of God. If we should tell you never so much of the terrors of the Law, and of hell fire, though you might see the desert of sin somewhat, yet until you come to see with what a God you have to deal, you can never know what the evil of sin means. Against thee, thee only have I sinned, saith David, that was the thing that struck David's spirit, David knew that it was against God that he sinned; when God shall come to the conscience of a sinner, and present himself before his conscience, and say, Oh wretched sinner, it is I that you have sinned against, as Christ did in Act. 9, unto Saul, Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me? So when God shall say, Sinner, sinner, why dost thou rebel against me? If God would but give us one sight of himself, that we might behold him as he is upon his Throne, in this excellency of his Name above all things, it were impossible but the heart of a sinner should even

break at such a sight. Certainly one day every sinner shall have a sight of God: Happy it is now for us to have such a sight of God here in this world, that may cause us to see the evil of our sins, for otherwise the sight of God hereafter, will certainly sink our souls into the bottomless gulf of horror and despair. When Daniel was about to confess his sin, in Dan. 9. Mark how he begins, because he would get his heart to be affected with his sin, and the sins of the people that there he confessed: Mark how he begins his prayer, And I prayed (saith he in the 4th ver.) unto the Lord my God, and made my confession, and said, O Lord, the great and dreadful God; thus he begins, I made confession (saith he) I prayed and made confession of sin, and said, Oh Lord, the great and dreadful God: first he looks upon God how great and dreadful he was, and this it was that caused him to confess his sin with humiliation: you that say your prayers, and will confess that you are sinners, did you but at the beginning of your prayers, when you go to confess your sin, cast up one eye to heaven, and behold this God upon his Throne, and see him to be the great and dreadful God, it would cause you to confess sin after another manner than ever yet you have done: It is a good thing therefore in our prayers, when we are about to confess sin, first to set before our souls the greatness and the dreadfulness of that God that we have sinned against. When this Prophet Daniel would humble that proud Belshazzar, in Dan. 5:23. Mark what he saith, And the God in whose hand thy breath is, and whose are thy ways, hast thou not glorified: This speech set home upon a man's conscience, were enough to break the proudest and stoutest heart in the world. If so be that the eyes of the proudest stoutest sinner were opened to see God in his glory, and to hear the Lord speak thus to him, that God in whose hand is the breath of thy nostrils, and all thy ways, that is the God that thou hast not glorified, thou doest not think with

whom it is that thou hast to deal; but that is the God that you have heard preached of thus, Whose Name alone is excellent, such an infinite and glorious Deity is that Deity that thou hast neglected and despised, and preferred thy lusts before: Oh if God would but give commission unto your consciences to speak this with power to you, that God that is thus glorious and excellent you have sinned against, oh it would be of wonderful force to break the hardest heart of men. And in Psal. 104:1,2. Do but see there how David had his heart rising against sin and sinners upon the consideration of the excellency of God, there he speaks of the same argument that we have here in the Text, Bless the Lord, Oh my soul: my God, thou art very great, thou art clothed with honor and majesty (and so he goes on) who coverest thyself with light as with a garment. He proceeds in the Psalm describing the greatness and excellency of God: But then when he had done describing God's excellency, and found his heart warmed and enlarged, and raised with the meditation of the excellency of God, Mark how he breaks forth in the last words of the Psalm, Let the sinners be consumed out of the earth, and let the wicked be no more; bless thou the Lord, Oh my soul: As if holy David should have said thus, Oh Lord, I see thee to be very great, and thou art clothed with honor and Majesty, and thy Name is excellent above all things: What? And are there any wretched creatures that will dare to presume to rebel against thee who art so great, that will dare yet to set their will against thy will, and to prefer their lusts before thee? Oh cursed be those sinners, Let the sinners be consumed from the earth, and let the wicked be no more. There is infinite reason that wicked wretched creatures should be forever consumed, that sin against such a God as thou art, who art so great as thou art. My brethren, it is no marvel though the people of God are so afraid of sin; many of you wonder at the niceness of the consciences

of many people, that they dare not commit any known sin for a world; you wonder at them why they should be so nice, you think it is foolishness: Would you know the reason? It is this, God hath shown unto their consciences a sight of himself, they have had a sight of the glory of the Majesty of the great God, Whose Name alone is excellent, and it is that that makes them afraid of sin forever, and makes them look upon sin as the greatest evil, and even tremble at the least temptation unto any sin whatsoever. And that is the second Use, Great is the evil of sin, if committed against such a God.

Thirdly, Hence then if God be thus excellent above all, from the meditation of the Excellency of God and his glory, we see cause to be vile in our own eyes; the higher we see God to be, the lower we should be in our own eyes, there is nothing will take down the spirit of a man more than God: I dare say of every proud heart in the world, such a one knows not God, never had a sight of the glory of God that he hath to do withal; the sight of God will wonderfully humble the heart before him, Job 42:5, is very famous for this, Job saith, With the hearing of the ear I have heard of thee, but now mine eyes have seen thee (what follows then upon that) Wherefore I abhor myself, and repent in dust and ashes. Job that was a holy man, yet he confesses that he had but even heard of God, he never had such a sight of God as God gave him at this time, and upon the sight that he had of God, though he were a holy, and a gracious man, and could stand in his uprightness, yet saith he, Mine eyes have seen thee, and therefore I abhor myself, and repent in dust and ashes. Oh that God would give such a fight of himself to all your souls, to those proud, stout, and rebellious sinners that have gone on in ways of rebellion against him. You have heard of God by the hearing of the ear, but have your eyes ever seen him? If God would but

give you a sight of what I have briefly spoken to you, you would certainly fall down before him, and abhor yourselves in dust and ashes: So the Prophet Isaiah, though a godly man, yet in Isa. 6, he heard the Cherubim's and Seraphim praising of God, and crying, Holy, Holy, Holy is the Lord of Hosts; And there was a vision of God upon his Throne to the Prophet, what follows? Saith the Prophet, Woe unto me, for I am undone! Why? For I am a man of polluted lips, and I dwell among a people that are of unclean lips; Woe unto me, for I am undone, for I have seen the King, the Lord of Hosts! I see the Lord upon his Throne, and I behold the blessed Angels how they admire at his glory, Oh woe to me, I am undone. If so holy a man shall thus cry out upon the sight of God, and say, Woe to me, I am undone, because I am a man of polluted lips! Oh what mayest thou do then, that art a man of polluted lips, and polluted heart, and polluted life? Oh how are thy lips polluted! The Prophet Isaiah, he was no swearer, neither was he one that would talk filthy unclean talk, but yet he complains he was a man of polluted lips, and cries, Woe to me, I am undone, because I have seen the Lord: Oh how would thy heart then be humbled? What cause at least is there that thy heart should be humbled that art so polluted as thou art? The sight of God should mightily humble us before God, Psal. 8, the beginning, Oh Lord our Lord, how excellent is thy Name in all the earth? Saith the Prophet David, and so he goes on to show the excellency of God; then he cries out in ver. 4. What is man that thou art mindful of him, and the son of man that thou visitest him? Lord thou that art so excellent in thyself above all things, it is a wonder that thou shouldest vouchsafe so much as to look upon man. It may be thou lookest high, because thou art a little above thy brethren, but if thou hadst a sight of God, thou wouldest wonder that this God should look to thee, Psal. 113:6, there you have such an expression,

That God doth humble himself to behold the things that are done in heaven: Why what an expression is hereof God's excellency? God is so excellent that he doth humble himself to behold the things that are done in heaven: now if he be so excellent as to humble himself to the beholding of the things in heaven, then how doth God humble himself to behold things done in earth, to behold such wretched vile creatures as thou art? Oh be vile in thine own eyes upon the sight of the great God, and by these three Uses, you may have three Notes whether ever God hath made known himself to you, or no.

First, Are you ashamed and confounded in your thoughts for those low poor thoughts you have had of God?

Secondly, Hath the sight of God caused you to see the dreadfulness of the evil that there is in sin?

Thirdly, Hath the sight of God made you to be vile in your own eyes? That is a good evidence that you have had some sight of God indeed.

In the fourth place, If God be thus excellent, and his glory so great above the earth and heavens; Hence we may learn to know the vanity of the creature. Set but God now, and the creature together, nay, all the creatures in the world together, Oh how is the vanity of all creature-comforts in the world made known to us. There are many ways to convince us that there is a vanity in all things in the world, by the strength of reason we may be convinced, and by experience: A man sometimes that hath an estate, God doth but touch his body, and lays him upon his sick-bed; such a man saith, Oh what a poor thing is it to enjoy all the world? Had I all the world at my command, I could have no comfort in it, and therefore what a vanity is there in the creature: And another perhaps by arguments and reasons, will tell you that everything is vain, and there is no contentment, nor continuance in

anything in the world: When we see men that are rich and great die, and carry nothing with them, we are ready to say, Oh how vain the world is! These are some means to cause us to see the vanity of the creature: But what are all these to the sight of God? The sight of the glory of God, it is infinitely more powerful to discover the vanity of all things in the world to us: That man, or woman, that hath had once a real sight of this God in his infinite excellency, will not much regard what becomes of him concerning outward things in this world. He that sees God to be great, will see all other things to be small. And indeed we never see God to be truly excellent, except we see him alone to be excellent. Thou thinkest thou knowest somewhat of God, I but still the excellency of the creature is glorious in thy eyes: Certainly thou dost not know God aright: If thou knowest God aright in his excellency, thou knowest him Alone to be excellent, and therefore if thou knewest no other excellency but God, all other things would be but vanity in thine eyes. In 2 Cor. 3:10, saith the Apostle there concerning the glory of the Law, compared with the glory of the Gospel, That that which was made glorious, now had no glory by reason of a greater glory that is come: So I may say in this case, the things of the world that were glorious in thine eyes before, yet now they are not glorious, but all darkened, because there is a greater glory that now comes and shines in upon thee. If a man had lived in a dark Dungeon under the ground all the days of his life, and never had the glimpse of any light whatsoever, never since he was born, if on a sudden a candle should be brought to him, he would admire at that glory; but now if this man should afterwards be brought into the world, and see the glory of the Sun, the glory of the candle would be nothing to him: So the men of the world, because they live as it were in darkness, they have some comforts in the creature, and they think them to be glorious, for they

know no better: But that soul that hath had a sight of God, comes to see that all things in the world are but darkness to him. There is nothing can disengage the heart of a man from the creature, so, as a sight of God. You have a notable Scripture for that, how a sight of God doth dis-engage the heart of a man from the creature, in Act. 7:2. And he said, Men, Brethren, and Fathers, hearken, The God of glory appeared unto our Father Abraham, when he was in Mesopotamia before he dwelt in Charran, and said unto him, Get thee out of thy Country, and from thy kindred, and come into the Land which I shall show thee: And so he shows how Abraham was content to forsake all his friends and Country; Why? The God of glory appeared to him: it is said upon this, when the Holy Ghost would show what it was that brought Abraham out of his Country, that took off his heart from all his friends and Country, to go into a strange Country, saith the Holy Ghost, The God of glory appeared to our Father Abraham: Let a man's heart be never so much glued to any contentment's that are here in the world, let but the God of glory appear to that man, and all things are vanity, then the heart quickly comes off from anything. And indeed though there may be many arguments that may make men and women to deny themselves very much the use of creature-comforts, yet the heart is never thoroughly taken off till the God of glory appear to the soul. A notable example of self-denial it that of Moses, Moses that might have had all the riches and glory of Egypt, might have been next to the King himself, an heir, for so some write, that Pharaoh had no son, and that Pharaohs daughter did adopt Moses, to the end that he might be an heir to the Crown, and yet Moses that had all riches, and the treasures of Egypt at command, yet he forsakes all; but though he forsook all for a while, yet you will say, did he not repent him afterward? No, saith the Text, Heb. 11:27. By faith he forsook Egypt, not fearing the

wrath of the King, for he endured, as seeing him that is invisible, that was the thing that did it, it made Moses forsake all the riches of Egypt, and endure, to go on, and never repent him for making such a choice: What was the great thing that did take Moses off from the creature? It was the sight of God, that God that was invisible: My brethren, the sight of God, it puts a mighty magnanimity upon a man's heart; there is nothing great to a great spirit, nor nothing can greaten the spirit of a man or woman, so as the sight of the great God; no men and women in the world have such great spirits as those that have seen the great God: And the oftener any one hath the sight of the great God, I say, the greater will such men's and women's spirits be; they are raised to that height, that all the world will not satisfy such a soul for the portion of it. And this again in the fourth place, may be a Note of Trial, whether ever you have seen God alone to be excellent; Hath it taken off your hearts from the creature? Hath it engaged your hearts fully to God himself, that you can say, There is none in heaven, nor none in earth that I desire in comparison of thee.

In the fifth place, Is God's Name alone excellent? Oh my brethren, study to know God then: Labor to search into this Excellency so far as we may, and God gives us leave; God hath revealed much of himself to us in the Scripture, and in the book of the creature, and God expects that what is revealed of him in the Scripture, and in the book of the creature, that the rational creatures, Angels and Men, should labor and search to know: There is nothing so sweet, so amiable, so lovely, so delightful unto a rational creature (if it be purged from the filthiness and corruption of sin) as the sight of the infinite first being of all things: Why here is concluded all excellent sights whatsoever; some men are taken with such a sight, to behold fair buildings, and others to behold brave pictures, one with one

thing, and another with another: Oh but the sight of God hath all sights in it that may delight the soul, and give content to the heart of Man or Angel: and therefore labor to know the excellency of God. You poor creatures that have minded little all this while but merely to understand your Trades, and how you may get a shilling or two to provide for your families. Oh but know there is a higher object for you to busy your thoughts and hearts about: Learn to know this God, who alone is excellent, and be not discouraged at those things that have been spoken, though they are above thy reach at first, yet if your hearts be pure, and cleansed from filthiness, you have the promise, in Matth. 5:8. Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God. It may be you that are poor people, you can never come to get learning to have the knowledge of Arts and Sciences, and such things; I but if you have clean hearts you are blessed in this, God saith you shall see him: Labor to study God, and labor to know God more; Psal. 91:14. Mark how acceptable it is to God for his creature to labor to know him, I will set him on high, because he hath known my Name. Thy Name, O Lord, alone is excellent, and thy glory above the heavens and earth. And I will set him on high, because he knows my Name. Oh, saith God, yonder is a poor creature that above all things in the world desires to know me: he hath had a little glimpse of my glory, and oh how earnest is his heart to know me! I will reveal more of myself to him, and then I will set him on high, because he knows my Name, the Lord hath a high account of those that know his Name: As for those ignorant creatures, let them be what they will in regard of outward things, yet if they be ignorant of God, they are vile and low, and base in God's esteem; but take a soul that knows God's Name, the Lord will set him on high; such a one is high in the very thoughts of God, and the Lord doth take pleasure to make such a soul to be high: Paul in Phil. 3:8,

did account all things dung and dross (for what?) for the excellency of the knowledge of Jesus Christ: For indeed in the knowledge of Christ, God is known; and if you would study the knowledge of God, it must be in Christ, you can never know God but in Christ, Matth. 11:27, saith Christ there, No man knows the Father but the Son, and him to whom the Son shall reveal him. It must be Christ that must reveal the glory of God to our souls, or else we can never come to know him savingly.

Sixthly, If God be thus excellent above all, and his glory thus above the earth and heavens, hence we are taught to labor to keep the sense of the infinite distance that there is between God and his creatures always in our hearts: And this is a point of marvelous consequence, the sense of the distance between God and us: If God be infinitely above the creature, then God expects that we that profess any knowledge of him, that we should evermore have our thoughts upon God's excellency, raised in a kind of infiniteness above what we think of the excellency of any creature; and our hearts then should work after God in a kind of infiniteness more than ever they did work after any creature, as there is an infinite disproportion between the excellency of God, and the excellency that there is in any creature. I beseech you observe what I am speaking, for it is of marvelous use to help us to sanctify God in all our ways; as there is an infinite distance between the excellency of God, and of all creatures, so there ought to be in a kind, an infinite distance between what our hearts are in the working after God, and the working after the creature, otherwise we lift not up God's Name in his excellency and glory. And indeed a gracious heart will make it so; and in this I conceive the very work of grace consists, in that it is such a principle in the soul of a man or woman that is converted, that though such a one be a finite creature, yet it hath a kind of infiniteness in the working of

it after God. You will say, Infinite, how can that be? True, I confess properly it cannot be infinite, but thus it is infinite in its kind, that is, such a creature hath such a principle as it would fain, if it were possible, work infinitely after God: And,

Further, This principle of grace doth cause this in the heart, that it will never limit its self in any working after God, and therefore hath a kind of Infiniteness; and here is the difference between one that hath true grace, and the most glorious hypocrite in the world; An hypocrite he will ever be bounding his working after God, and think thus much is enough, what need anymore? If I do thus and thus, why I may do well, and go to heaven at last, and so doth bound himself: But now where there is the least dram of true grace, though there be many weaknesses in the soul, yet such a soul doth never bound itself in working after God. I indeed heretofore have set out my heart to the creature, but now I would fain, if I could, let out my heart infinitely after God: Why? For I see an infinite distance between the good there is in the creature, and the good there is in God; certainly where this is, there is grace, and this one note were enough to discern the truth of grace in the heart: If the sight of God have wrought this, that whereas heretofore thy heart hath been let out after such and such creature-comforts, now thou dost desire, if it were possible, to let out thy heart infinitely after God; here is the work of grace, and in this thou goest beyond any hypocrite: Oh keep this constant in thy soul, this is the especial sanctifying of God's Name in all our ways; when we see that God gives us leave to let out our hearts towards the creature in some measure, then there is a great deal of danger, that we should have our hearts stick in the creature, and that we should not have that disproportion in the letting out of our hearts to the creature, and to God, as ought to be: And this is the ground of all Idolatry in the world, when men

have seen some excellency in the creature, they have been taken with it, and there have stuck, and have not been carried from the creature to God. And that is Heathens Idolatry, when they see an excellency in the Sun, they think that is God: So Christians Idolatry may be in this, If there be any creature-comfort that thy heart closes withal, and there thou dost stick, and thy heart is not carried to God, yea, is not carried to God in such a disproportion as there is between him and the creature; I say, so far as thou wantest that that thou art capable of in this kind, so far thou art guilty of Idolatry. Oh that this one note might stick upon us, There is none like unto thee, O Lord: Canst thou say this out of the uprightness of thy soul, as in the presence of God, Lord thou that knowest all things, knowest that though I have a vile heart that is let out after the creatures more than it ought to be, yet Lord thou knowest that my heart is let out after nothing so much as after thee? That would be a good argument of a gracious work of God upon thee: Surely if none be like unto the Lord, then our hearts should be after nothing so as after the Lord: We must not content ourselves with a little love to God; Is there such a disproportion between thy love to the creature, and thy love to God, as there is between God, and the creature? Thou sayest thou lovest God, I but it may be thou lovest the creature as well: Doest thou think that this will satisfy God? When thou hearest that God's Name alone is excellent, God expects that thy love to him should be in a kind infinite above that love of thine to any creature else.

And there is this one thing further, with which I will conclude, Surely if God's Name alone be excellent, then in a proportion God's people alone are the excellent people upon the earth. According as a man's God is, so is he; as you know men conceive their excellency to be according to the excellency of him whom they serve; according as a man's God is (I say) so

is he: Now if God alone be excellent, and he be thy God, then thou art excellent; the people of God are therefore excellent, because their God is so excellent; this is the reason of that phrase that you have in Prov. 12:26. The righteous is more excellent than his neighbor: Why is a righteous man more excellent than his neighbor? It may be the righteous man is a poor man, and his neighbor is a rich man, perhaps this poor good man's next neighbor is a Knight or a Noble-man, yet he is more excellent than his neighbor: Why? Because his God is more excellent, because the infinite Lord of heaven and earth is the portion of a righteous man: If God be alone excellent, then the righteous is alone excellent; and I will give you a Scripture or two to show, that according to the excellency of God, in a proportion doth appear the excellency of the children of God; compare Deut. 33, and the 26th ver., and the 29th ver. together: In ver. 26. There is none like unto the God of Jeshurun: then, in ver. 29. Happy art thou O Israel, who is like unto thee? You see that there is a reflection of the glory of God upon his Saints, there is none like to God, and there is none like to God's people. And so in 2 Sam. 7:22, you have an expression to the same purpose, Wherefore thou art great, O Lord God, for there is none like thee, neither is there any God besides thee, according to all that we have heard with our ears: then in ver. 23. And what one Nation in the earth is like thy people? So that we see here, that according to the rise of God's excellency, so is the rise of the excellency of his Saints. In a proportion they rise in their excellency as God rises in his: If God be alone excellent, certainly they are the excellent people in the world: And why? Because the excellency of God is manifested over them to do them good. Here is a note that hath abundance of soul-satisfying encouragement to all the Saints of God in any of their afflicted conditions whatsoever; thou hast heard that God's Name is alone

excellent, so add this to it for thy comfort, who art one of God's, that God accounts his chief excellency in his manifestation of himself in all the world, to be, that he might let out himself for thy good, and do good to thee, and that I will show you by a Scripture or two, in Psal. 68:34. His Excellency (saith the Text) is over Israel: Oh Lord, there is an excellency in thee, and how doth this work, where doth this excellency of thine appear? Why it is over Israel; The Excellency of God it is over Israel; saith God, I have chosen out my Church, and mine Excellency shall be over them, and manifested towards them for good; therefore in Exod. 15:7, there where Moses is praising God for the great things that he doth for his people, saith he, in the Greatness of thine Excellency thou hast done this thing; so that God doth delight to show his Excellency, yea to show the Greatness of his Excellency for the good of his people: Oh how should the Saints of God make their boast of their God, and rejoice in him, and be encouraged in God alone! Though thou hast no other portion then God alone, thou hast portion enough. In Mic. 5:4, there is an admirable Scripture for the encouragement of the hearts of God's people in God alone, And he shall stand and feed in the strength of the Lord, in the Majesty of the Name of the Lord his God: It is a Prophecy there of Christ, and as it is true of Christ, so of all the members of Christ, they may stand when the world falls, whatsoever becomes of the world, whatsoever troubles are about them, they are to stand, and rejoice themselves in the Name of the Lord, in the strength of the Lord, and in the Majesty of the Lord their God: the knowledge of this reference that the Saints have to God, it is that that should put courage and boldness into their hearts before all the world, Rev. 22:4. And they shall see his face, and his Name shall be in their fore-heads. They shall see the face of God (and what then) then the Name of God shall be in their fore-heads,

they shall have a boldness and courage in the cause of God; whatsoever becomes of the world, yet we have happiness enough in God: Oh rejoice, rejoice in this (I say) you that are the people of God, for there is none excellent so as you are excellent, and if so be that God now invests you with this excellency. Two or three more Uses might be to finish the Point.

What cause then hast thou to fear this God, and to serve this God in all thy ways, and to worship him as a God whose Name is alone excellent? Who would not fear thee? There is none like unto thee, Jer. 10:7. Who would not fear thee, Oh King of Nations, &c. Let this God be feared by us, let us labor to hold forth the excellency of this our God in our lives and conversations, in our whole course: Oh that it might be written upon our lives, The Name of God is alone excellent; all you that profess to have any interest in this God, you should walk so in your conversations, that it may be written upon your lives, The Name of God is alone excellent, and his glory is above the earth and heavens. Oh take heed that this blessed Name of God, that is alone excellent, be not dishonored and polluted by you; that we might have been large in, if we had time. James calls it, about Jam. 2:7. That worthy Name of the Lord: you that profess yourselves to be Christians, and profess godliness more than others, know, that you have the Name of God upon you, and this Name of God it is excellent and glorious, let it not suffer by you: Oh woe to you that ever you were born, if you should be instruments of polluting the Name of God. Mee thinks any one that makes profession of God's Name, should think with himself, it were better that I were dead and rotten under the clods, than that ever I should live to pollute this blessed Name of God that is so excellent: What? Was I born that I might live to have my hand in so great a mischief as that this glorious Name of God should be darkened by me? Oh, the Lord forbid: Know what the Name of

God is that you profess, and meditate how excellent it is, and let this be a strong argument to keep you from sin: When any temptation comes, oh set this against it, Shall I pollute this Name of God that is so infinitely excellent? No man or woman can die with peace, and have peace upon their sick-beds, except they can be able to look back into their lives, and to say, Lord, though there hath been much weakness in me, and in many things I have dishonored thee, yet it hath been my care in my generation, and in the place that thou hast set me, to lift up thy Name, and I have done something through thy grace to lift up thy Name. Oh that I could leave this point upon your hearts, that every one of you might go home and make but this one Use of it; I have heard That the Name of God is excellent alone, and his glory is above all: This likewise I have heard to be my duty, that this was the great work that I was born for, that I should do something to make God's Name great before all those with whom I do converse; think everyone of this, how long hast thou lived? Many of you will be ready to say, I have lived thus long in such a place, and it may be that you can say that you have done no man wrong, but good; But what canst thou say to this Question? I appeal to thy conscience, Hath the Name of God been made great by thee? Hast thou done anything to lift up this glorious Name of God in the place wherein God hath set thee? It may be thou hast not thought that this was thy work; but this is the work that God expects from thee, that thou shouldest give up thyself to study by all the means that possibly thou canst, to lift up God's Name, and deny thy own Name; no matter though that be cast into the dirt, so be it the Name of God be lifted up; with this resolution, Oh that you would but go away, and that this one note might stick in your hearts, I am convinced that the Name of God is infinitely glorious, and

therefore for the time to come, through his Grace, whatsoever becomes of me, yet I will do what I can to lift up his Name.

Consider what hath been said in the Text, and the Lord give you understanding.

Pt. II. The Excellency of Christ.

Monergism Books

SERM. IV. THE FIRST SERMON ON THE EXCELLENCY OF CHRIST.

There is nothing of greater concernment, than to know God, and his Son whom he hath sent into the world, Even this is eternal life, saith Christ. We have therefore endeavored to open somewhat to you concerning God, that you may have right apprehensions of him, of that God with whom you have to deal, out of that Scripture in Psal. 148:13. His Name alone is excellent, his glory is above the earth and heaven, and concluded what for the present I intended to present before you about God, with the meditation of the excellency of the state of those who have this God to be their God, who is thus excellent and glorious; The Church makes her boast of her interest in God, in Psal. 84:14. For this God is our God: Oh happy are they that having heard what a glorious God, God is, are able to say, This God is our God, this is my God in whom my soul hath interest! And if the Name of God be so excellent and glorious, as you have heard, there is infinite cause that we should fear him, and sanctify his Name in our conversations, Job 13:11. Shall not his Excellency make you afraid? Oh where is that soul that shall dare to walk before this God with boldness and presumptuousness,

considering what a God he is that it hath to deal with? Shall not that excellency of his that hath been opened unto you, make you afraid, and cause you to fear such a God? Now then having spoken somewhat about the Excellency of God, and what apprehensions we are to have of God in all our ways, we are now to speak somewhat concerning the Excellency of Christ, and to show you what apprehensions you are to have of Jesus Christ, For this is eternal life, to know thee, and thy Son; to know God, and not to know him in Christ, is to very little purpose. It is no saving knowledge of God, if we were able to discourse never so much of him, except we know him in Jesus Christ, in his Son. And therefore for the knowledge of Christ, which I shall endeavor to present as briefly as I did the knowledge of God, You may be pleased to turn to that Scripture in Isa. 9, part of ver. 6, only in these words,

And his Name shall be called Wonderful.

If you read this verse, and that that follows, you might think that you were rather reading an Evangelist, than a Prophet, one rather relating a History of what was done, than a Prophecy of what was to be done. Isaiah here prophesies clearly of Christ, as if he had been come at that time, and yet it was between seven and eight hundred years before the coming of Christ that this Prophecy was, Unto us a child is born, unto us a Son is given, and the Government shall be upon his shoulder; And his Name shall be called Wonderful. But it is the usual way of Scripture to set before us things to be done, as if they were already done, to note the certainty of what God reveals to be done, and faith will make things that are not, to be, as if they were really present. And indeed, faith never hath a proper work so much as in this, in making things that are not present, to be as if they were present, to make them real. It was a time of great distress and trouble to the Church

God, when this Prophecy was, as will appear from the seventh Chapter even unto this Prophesy. And frequently we find in Scripture in times of the greatest distress of the Church, there were the clearest Prophesies of Christ, of the Messias to come. Jacob Prophesies of Shiloh when he was in Egypt; and Daniel of the Messias when he was in Captivity, in Babylon; and Isaiah here, To us a Child is born, unto us a Son is given, whose Name is Wonderful Counselor, the mighty God, when the people were in great distress. And there are four reasons why the Lord would have the Prophesy of the Messias, at those times especially, when the Church was in a sad, in a suffering condition.

First, Because that the only comfort of all the Saints of God then, was their expectation of the Messias to come, God would therefore propound Christ unto them as that that might lighten all their darkness, that might sweeten all their sorrows, and troubles; and indeed there was enough in this, in their expectation of the Savior that was to come, this was that that made their hearts rejoice in the midst of all their sorrows; Abraham saw his day and rejoiced, and was glad.

Secondly, Therefore had they the clear manifestation of Christ in the time of their outward troubles, to confirm their faith in this, that how-ever their enemies prevailed much against them, yet it was impossible that they should root out the Nation of the Jews, for the great Savior of the world was to come out of them, therefore they were under God's protection, and though they might suffer somewhat, yet they could not cease from being a Nation, because that the Messias was to come out from them, and this was a great encouragement unto them to expect mercy from God, because they were a people that the Lord would bring the great Savior of the world out of.

And then thirdly, That by the propounding of so great a mercy as Jesus Christ should be to the world, they might hereby have a help to their faith, that surely God would not deny them lesser mercies: what great matter was it for them to expect from God deliverance from some outward affliction, when as God makes known unto them, that love, and that infinite compassion, those tender bowels of his, even to send his own Son into the world for them?

And then fourthly, It was to teach them this, that the way of deliverance from any outward affliction, it was to exercise their faith upon Christ the Messiah that was to come, the Lord would teach his Church when it was in afflictions, not so much to be looking at the present affliction that was upon them, and so to seek for outward help and means of deliverance, but would have them exercise their faith upon the Messiah that was to come, though many hundred years after; and this exercise of faith was so pleasing to God, as it was the only means, or the chief means of deliverance from all outward afflictions: Nay, saith God, if so be that they will rely upon me, and exercise their faith upon that great promise of mine, to send my Son into the world, as for their deliverance out of these outward troubles and afflictions, it shall be but a little matter for me to do that for them; ordinarily when we are exercised with outward afflictions, we only think of some natural helps and comforts, contrary to those particular afflictions that are upon us, whereas the way indeed for us to sanctify God's Name, to do that that is acceptable to God when any outward affliction befalls us, it is presently to exercise our faith upon the great promise of God in Jesus Christ, upon the great Covenant of Grace, that God hath made with us in him, upon that great mercy of God in sending his Son into the world; my condition is very sad, and I am grievously afflicted, I but surely that mercy that would send Jesus

Christ into the world, that mercy is enough to deliver me out of any affliction, or at least to bless it to me; therefore do not only cry to God when you are sick, or in trouble to deliver you from it, but labor to exercise faith upon the Covenant of Grace in Christ, upon that glorious mercy of God in his Son, that is the way that God would have us to sanctify his Name in. And that is the reason why in times of great affliction, there were such clear Prophesies of Jesus Christ, as here in my Text, For unto us a child is born, unto us a Son is given, and his Name shall be called Wonderful, Counselor, &c. Now in this latter part of this verse, we have Christ set out unto us in five notable and famous Titles of his.

His Name is,

1. Wonderful,
2. Counselor,
3. The Mighty God,
4. The Everlasting Father,
5. The Prince of Peace.

I intend only to speak of the first, His Name shall be called Wonderful, because I would have some kind of proportion between what I have presented to you about God, and what I shall about Christ: And as for other things more largely about God or Christ, it may be afterwards, but only now I shall desire to present Christ unto you in this one Title of his, His Name shall be called Wonderful. From whence the Point is this,

Jesus Christ is the great Wonder of the world.

That is our point of Doctrine: God himself, above seven hundred years before he was born, gives him this Name Wonderful; in the 19th of this Prophecy, ver. 20, we read of a Savior, a Great one (saith the Text) surely Jesus Christ he is a Savior, and a Great one, he is the Wonder of the world.

Judg. 13:17,18. The story of the Angels appearing unto Manoah, Manoah would fain know his name, And Manoah said unto the Angel of the Lord, What is thy Name? Ver. 18, the Angel of the Lord said unto him, Why askest thou after my name, seeing it is secret? Now the word that is translated in your books Secret, it is a word that signifies Wonderful; And Austin in his Questions upon this Book of Judges, he is confident that this Angel was Jesus Christ, and that his ascending up in the sacrifice that Manoah offered, it was to fore-signify Jesus Christ to be the only Sacrifice that should ascend up to the Father, for a sweet savor in the nostrils of the Father; it was Jesus Christ that did appear here to Manoah, and his Name is Wonderful. Luther hath such a speech (I remember) of Christ, saith he, the most famous and wonderful and glorious Miracle of all Miracles is, Jesus Christ, he is the Wonder of the world; God is very wonderful in all his works; in the works of Creation, Psal. 8:1. Oh Lord our Lord, how excellent is thy name? And in the end of the Psalm. Oh Lord, our Lord, how excellent is thy Name in all the earth? Yea in that one work of his in making of our bodies, Psal. 139:14. I am fearfully and wonderfully made, (saith the Psalmist) God hath made our very bodies fearfully and wonderfully, it is a wonderful work of God the framing of our bodies in the womb. It was a means of the conversion of Gallen from Atheism, he saw the Anatomy of a man's body, and beholding the wonderful work of a man's body, it did force him to acknowledge the God of Nature, that there was a being above Nature: Now though God be wonderful in all his works, yet all his wonderful works in the Heavens, and in the Earth, and in the Seas, they must all stand by, and give way to this great Wonder; as the Stars, though they be glorious creatures in themselves, yet when the Sun arises, all their light is eclipsed, you see nothing of them; so though God hath many

wonders in the world, and hath done many wonderful works, yet when the Son of Righteousness doth arise, when Jesus Christ comes to appear, all the other works of God are darkened with the glory of this great Wonder; other things are wonderful unto us because of our ignorance, because we are not able to understand the reason of things; things are wonderful to children, that are little regarded by wise men, and understanding men; Ignorance makes men to wonder at many things that have nothing in them; but Christ he is a Wonder, so as God himself, the Father accounted him a Wonder, God himself gives unto Jesus Christ this Name Wonderful; and no marvel, though he be a wonder to the Angels themselves in Heaven, 1 Pet. 1:12. The Angels are said to desire to look into the things of the Gospel. To pry into them. They stoop down to pry into those things of the Gospel. Great is the mystery of godliness in Christ Jesus: Oh there are many glorious mysteries of godliness in Jesus Christ, And such things as eye hath not seen, ear hath not heard, neither can enter into the heart of man to conceive, as the Scripture saith in 1 Cor. 2:9, yea, they are revealed only by the Spirit of God that searches all things, yea the deep things of God; the Spirit that searches the deep things of God, must reveal the things of the Gospel unto that soul that ever comes to the knowledge of them. It was a work of the Spirit of God to instruct Bezaleel and Aholiab in those Arts of Workmanship, to work in Brass, and the like, it is a work of God's Spirit to show a man the reason of the things of nature; but now when God's Spirit comes to reveal Christ to the soul, for it is the Spirit of God that searches the deep things of God; this puts an emphasis upon it, showing that the things of the Gospel are deep things, they are things that only are revealed by God's Spirit, and not by an ordinary work of God's Spirit, but by an extraordinary work of the Spirit of God, that Spirit that searches the deep

things of God must declare these things to any soul that comes to the understanding of them.

His Name is Wonderful. Now surely he that God spake so much of before he came into the world, he that so many wise men and Prophets did so long to see, he that was the expectation and joy of the whole Church of God from the beginning of the world, before he came; he that was so typified out by all the Sacrifices and Types of the Old Testament, by the Temple, that was the wonder of the world at that time; He that when he came into the world, had his birth solemnized by the Angels, a heavenly Choir singing Doxologies; He that had upon his first coming the wise men from the East coming to worship him, surely he must be some wonderful one, some great one; and therefore as we read of the people in Luk. 1:66, when they saw and heard of such strange things at John Baptists birth, the Text saith, All they that heard them laid them up in their hearts, saying, What manner of Child shall this be? So when we hear of these things that were done by way of preparation to the coming of Christ, for some two thousand years together, and such great things that were done upon his coming, surely it must needs be some wonderful one. What manner of Child is this that is given to us? Wherefore then as we read of Moses in Exod. 9:9, when he saw that wonderful sight in the wilderness, the bush burning and not consumed, saith Moses, I will go and see what yonder great sight is; So we may well say, when Christ is propounded thus Wonderful, and God himself gives him this Name, let us take off our thoughts from all other things, and turn aside to see this great sight, to see what this Wonder is. Therefore for the opening of this Wonder that is in Christ, to show you how Christ is Wonderful, and how well he may challenge this Name, and how proper this Title is to him, to be called Wonderful, I shall open it in these several particulars.

First, Christ is wonderful in his Natures.

Secondly, Christ is wonderful in his Person.

Thirdly, He is wonderful in the manner of his Incarnation.

Fourthly, He is wonderful in the wonderful work that he came for into the world, the wonderful things that he came to do.

Fifthly, He is wonderful in his Anointment, in his Offices.

Sixthly, He is wonderful in his admirable Endowments.

Seventhly, He is wonderful in his glorious Miracles that he wrought.

Eighthly, He is wonderful in that great glory of God the Father that appears in him.

Ninthly, He is wonderful in the work of his Humiliation.

Tenthly, He is wonderful in his Conquest.

Eleventhly, Wonderful in his Exaltation, and the degrees of it.

Twelfthly, Wonderful in his Saints.

Lastly, he is wonderful, and shall be wonderful in the highest heavens, in the Church Triumphant: and in all these regards, we shall see what a wonderful Savior we have, and what kind of thoughts we are to have of Jesus Christ. As certainly for the want of the right understanding of God, and the low thoughts and apprehensions we have of him, the Name of God is little sanctified among us; so for the want of the right understanding of Jesus Christ, Oh how little is the Name of God sanctified in the mysteries of the Gospel? We have the word (God) we can say that God made us; and so the word Christ, and we hope to be saved by Jesus Christ, But oh, how far are we either from apprehending God, such an infinite and glorious God as he hath already, though very darkly, been set out unto you? And so before we have done, though it be but in a Sermon or two, you will find that your thoughts of Jesus Christ have been too low and too mean: Oh that we could

by any means heighten your thoughts upon God and Christ, that you may know the Lord, and his Son whom he hath sent into the world.

First, Christ is wonderful in his Natures.

These Heads that I have propounded, they all might be largely insisted on, but I think it best at first, to give you a short view of things, and to present them together as briefly as I may. Wonderful in his Natures, for he is God and man; our Savior is God, and so he is set forth unto us afterwards, the Mighty God, and is not this a wonderful thing, that mankind fallen from God, should have no less Savior than the Mighty God himself? If all the Angels in Heaven, and men in the world, had undertaken to have been the Savior's of one soul, they could never have done it, they could never have accomplished what they had undertaken; such is the state of man, as if ever he be saved, he must have a Savior above the Angels, above all the strength that there is in all the Angels in heaven, and creatures in all the world, he is that God that you have heard of, whose Name is alone excellent, whose glory is above the heavens and earth, but that we should be saved only by God, may seem to some to be no such great wonder, who can save us but God? I but know, that here it is not God putting forth an Attribute to save us, but it is God undertaking this relation of a Savior, and God putting himself in another condition (as it were) and taking upon him our nature, therefore that is that indeed that makes the wonder, God-Man, Theanthropos, 1 Tim. 3:16. Great is the mystery of godliness, God was manifested in the flesh, This is a wonderful mystery; that there should be such a word, Theanthropos, God-Man, is the greatest wonder that ever there was in the world, that there should be such a thing as should be called God-Man, and is really and verily God and man together in one; I say, this is the greatest wonder that ever was in the world, that the Divine and human

Nature should be joined together, that we should have a Savior that is as verily man as God, and as verily God as man, that those two Natures, the Nature of God, and the nature of man should come together in one, that were so distant before one from another, this is a wonder beyond all sense and reason, and we had need have a Prospective-glass of God to be able to see indeed anything into it; we can easily believe (we think) that Christ was God and man, every child can do so; when you ask your children what Christ was, you teach them that he was both God and man, I, but I appeal to you, when were your hearts taken with this as the greatest wonder in the world, that there should be ever such a thing as God and man in one, and that to be the Savior of mankind? That man, that is miserable, should look up to God to save him, look up to the mercy of God, this were not so wonderful, but that miserable man must be saved by one that is God-Man, Man and God, this is that that except the Spirit of God that searches the deep things of God (as you had it before) reveal it unto a man, it were impossible for man ever to have such a thought as this is; and indeed, the setting out of this so great a mystery, is one great argument, that the Scriptures are Divine: for it is too high a thing to have entered into the thought of a creature; I say, too high a thing that ever a creature should have such a thought, that the saving of man must be by God's being man, it cannot be imagined how such a thought could have come into a creature, to be verily man (I say) this argues the Scripture to be from God, it is too great a mystery for any creature ever to have imagined or thought of; it is that that is the stumbling-block to the Jews, and foolishness to the Gentiles; but the power and glory of God to those that shall be saved. If God should have put this unto us, and said, Well, I am inclined to do good to you, and willing to save you, but know, your estate is such as you can never be saved, except

there be such a Savior, such a Mediator for you, as must be God and man both; why certainly both Angels and Men would have stood amazed at this, and have concluded, that the estate of Man-kind is desperate then, if so be that the estate of man that is fallen from God, and hath sinned against him, be such as there is no way to deliver one soul from eternal condemnation, and eternal wrath, but by such a Savior as must be both God and man: I say, All Angels and Men, would have even concluded, then man must perish forever: but it is God, the Wonder-working God that hath wrought thus for Mankind, which hath sent us such a Savior as is both God and Man; Surely then his Name may be called Wonderful.

Christ is wonderful in his Person.

But Secondly, Here is a greater wonder than that, God is God and man. God and man (you will say) that may be, he hath come in the similitude of flesh, and hath taken the shape of man, some kind of union there may be between the Divine and human Nature; but consider this second Wonder, he is not only God, but a second Person in Trinity: Consider these two things in the Person of Christ, First, He is to be looked at, not merely as God, but as God the second Person of the Trinity, and this is a great wonder in Christian Religion, for it was little known before. We read but little in the Old Testament about the Trinity, only in Christ the Trinity comes to be known; when we are in straits we will cry to God that made the heavens and earth to be a Savior; but for us to know that we must be saved by God in the Second Person, that is the character and engraven form of his Image, the Son of God, and yet so the Son of God as he is Co-eternal with his Father, equal with his Father, as the Scripture speaks, and so God the Second Person in Trinity, as yet he is of the same Nature that his Father is of, the same God, and yet the Son of God, the consideration of the mystery of the

Trinity, that appears in Christ, is a great wonder above reason, that we may adore it, but search into it we are not able.

And then the second thing to be considered in his Person is this, That he is not only God and man, but God and man hypostatically united, the union of the Natures, that these Natures should be united both in one Person, this is the great wonder in Christian Religion.

There are two principal Wonders in Christian Religion; I beseech you consider aright of them.

The first is divers Persons in one Nature.

The second is divers Natures in one Person.

These are the two Wonders in Christian Religion.

First, divers Persons in one Nature, and that is the wonder of the Trinity, for there you have but one Nature, the Divine Nature, but three Persons, Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, and that is a Wonder that the Heathens knew nothing of, and was little known till Christ came.

And the second Wonder in Christian Religion is, divers Natures in one Person, that is in Christ; Christ is God-man, but one Person united hypostatically; now to search into this, that the same Person that is God, is man, and how the human nature subsists in the Deity, and hath no subsistence at all in its self, but in the Deity, how this is, only the Scripture reveals it to be so, but how it is (I say) is too deep a sea for any creature to wade into, we must stand and admire it, and adore God in it, that hath revealed this as the object of our faith, but to be able to search how such a thing can be, that that union can be in one person, this is that that is a wonder above all admiration: Indeed it is one of the most wonderful works that ever God did in the world, to unite two such creatures that seemed to be of such distant Natures, as the body of man, and the Soul of man in one

Person; to unite a piece of earth, and a piece of flesh, to such a glorious thing as a rational immortal soul is, the union of these two together in one person is the greatest work, for the works of Nature, that ever God did in the world; David saw his body wonderfully and fearfully made; but certainly the union of the body and soul, the soul being of the same nature with the Angels, that it should be united with the body to make but one Person, this is a great wonder in the works of Nature: But to unite the second Person in Trinity to the nature of man, not to the nature of Angels, for so the Scripture saith, Christ did not take upon him the nature of Angels, but the seed of Abraham; for if Christ would have been united to another nature, one would have thought it should have been to an Angelical nature, but to refuse that, and take man's nature, and unite it in one Person, that so it should be said that that Person that is God, the same Person is man, Here is the great Wonder in Christian Religion, the Personal union of the Natures of Christ; and indeed from hence many wonderful things will arise.

As from hence, that same Person that was the Creator of all the world was a creature; the same Person, I do not say the same Nature, this is the wonder in Scripture. And he, the same Person that is the Lord of Man-kind, yet is the Son of Man, the Son of Man, and yet the Lord of Mankind.

The same Person that is Eternal, Immortal, yet he died, so the Scripture saith, They crucified the Lord of glory: What, can God that is the Lord of glory, that made heaven and earth, the Eternal God, whose Name alone is excellent, can he be crucified? Yet that Person that was the Lord of glory, whose Name alone is glorious, that Person was crucified, but suffered in his human nature; whatsoever Christ did suffer in his human nature, it may be said that that Person that was God did suffer, though not the Divine Nature, the Divine Nature could not suffer, but the same Person that was God as

well as man he did suffer; it is the Scripture phrase clearly, and I might give you many Texts of Scripture to show you that that person that was God, suffered, but that is enough, They crucified the Lord of glory, 1 Cor. 2:8. But you will say, to what great purpose is it for us to understand this, that Christ was God and man in one Person, is it not enough to understand that he was God and man? What need we look so much at the union of the two Natures? My brethren, Know that there is a great deal in this, in knowing the union of the two Natures. It is of marvelous use unto you for the helping of your faith, to know not only that Christ had those two Natures, but the union of those two Natures.

You will say, How may it help our faith?

Thus, because hereby you may see that whatsoever Christ did, or suffered, though but in his human nature, yet it was of infinite value and efficacy, and the infinite value and efficacy of what Christ did and suffered, doth arise from the union of the two Natures, because it was that Person that was God, did such things, and suffered such things. I remember I myself once knew a very godly man in the time of his sickness was in a great Agony, under a very great temptation, and at Midnight sent a mile or two for a Minister, and he comes to him, and this was his temptation: Fearing he should die, and the Devil came with this temptation, Why, thy sin doth deserve an infinite punishment, thou hast sinned against an infinite God, and thou dost deserve eternal death; but Christ in whom you have trusted, he being man, and suffering only in his human nature, he could suffer only that that was finite, and his death was but a few days, a day or two, how can he by suffering that that was but finite, by enduring a little while pain upon the Cross, and by being under death but a day or two, how can he deliver you from an infinite suffering, and from eternal death? This was the temptation that lay upon

him, and he was in a most lamentable agony of spirit upon this temptation; but now in his calling to mind this, that though Christ in his human Nature was but finite, and that that he suffered could be but finite, yet because his human nature was united in one Person unto the Divine Nature, hence what the human nature did suffer, though finite, came to be of infinite value and worth, and though his death that he was under, was but for a day or two, yet it was of merit sufficient to ransom from eternal death, because the Person that was God as well as man, was under the power of death; and by recalling what he had heard heretofore about Christ being God and man in one Person, he came to be eased, and the Temptation began to vanish; and the truth is, there is no way that I know of, to satisfy ones heart and conscience in the sufficiency of Christ's merits, but in this, that it was the merit of him that was both God and man in one Person. It is true, those that do not see a necessity of an infinite merit, they can easily satisfy themselves, and say they believe in Christ Jesus that died for them. I but how canst thou tell that this death of Jesus Christ is of infinite merit to satisfy the infinite Justice of God that requires satisfaction for thy sin? Why God hath so appointed it, and I hope in God it is so; but if thou canst see the ground of this, that will be a marvelous help to thy faith, that thou canst look upon thy Mediator as God and man in one Person, and therefore thou canst look upon whatsoever he hath done or suffered as of infinite value, and so thou canst present it with boldness unto God. The right understanding of Christ thus, will help us to honor Christ much, and will make him to be a further object of our faith. Thus Christ is wonderful in his Person, in his Person as relating to God the Father, the second Person in Trinity; So in his Person, that is, his human and Divine Nature united into one Person.

Christ Wonderful in the manner of his Incarnation.

Thirdly, Well may he have this Title of Wonderful, seeing he is such a one as he is, thus opened unto you. But thirdly, Christ his Name is wonderful, he is wonderful in the manner of his Incarnation. Christ he is God and man; but how came Christ to take man's nature upon him? It was a wonderful and a strange kind of way that the second Person in Trinity came to take our nature upon him, it was by being conceived by the Holy Ghost, by being born of a Virgin; Christ was man, and came from man, but not by man; the way of Christ's generation it is wonderful, Oh who can declare it? We ordinarily can say, we do believe that Christ was born of a Virgin, born of the Virgin Mary, who cannot repeat his Creed? But I appeal to you, when were your hearts ever taken with the wonderful work of God in the Incarnation of Christ, that way of being born of a Virgin? God faith that he will do a great and marvelous thing; For a Virgin shall conceive a Son, it is such a thing as never was done before since the world began, nor never shall be done again; the ordinary manner of the generation of man was here stopped, when Christ came to be born, saith God, I will have a new way of generation, for indeed there was a great Lord to be born into the world, a great Prince, and he must be born after another way different from the ordinary way of Mankind, in a wonderful way, the Holy Ghost being the cause of the conception, and so brought forth by a Virgin: You will say, Why was this? Here indeed consists the wonder that we are to sanctify God's Name in, not only to know that it was after such a way, and not as Adam was, he was made man, but he must be made man in such a marvelous way: You will say, why could not Christ come into the world after the ordinary manner of generation? You will answer to yourselves, God would have it so, but there is something of God's mind that he would

have you know why he would have it so: If Christ had been made man after the ordinary manner of generation, he could not have been made free from Adams sin, from original corruption, for the Law did lie upon Adam, and his Posterity, against all that should come from him in the ordinary way of generation, therefore if Christ now should have come from him in the ordinary way, if he had been of the seed of Adam, then he must have been under the Covenant that Adam was, for it was to all his posterity, Adam was to stand as a public person, unto his posterity, and in him we were to stand or fall. (Now whether there might have been any other way or no for Christ to have been freed from it, we will not stand to dispute.) But now Christ was freed from the Covenant, so as he was not now under original guilt, under original corruption, because he was conceived by the Holy Ghost, he was conceived, not after the ordinary way of men, whereas you are to know, that all your children coming into the world after the ordinary way of generation, coming from man, by man, the first minute that their souls and bodies are together, that the child is alive in the womb, it comes under the guilt of Adams transgression, and comes to be originally corrupted, presently full of sin and corruption; but it was not so in Christ, and this is the wonder of Christ's Generation, that he was conceived by the Holy Ghost, and born of a Virgin, and so free from all kind of original sin; had there been the least sin upon Christ, he could never have been a Savior for thee, nor any, therefore Christ must come into the world in such a way as there must be no sin upon him at all, and this is the reason why he was born of a Virgin, and not after the ordinary course of Mankind, and therefore his Name may well be called Wonderful, from the wonderful manner of his Incarnation.

Christ wonderful in his Works.

In the fourth place, Christ is wonderful in the wonderful Works that he came about into the world; the work that Christ came into the world about, is the greatest, and the most wonderful Work that ever was undertaken since the world began, or can possibly be undertaken: Why what was the Work that Christ came into the world about?

It was first to stand between God, the angry God, God provoked with man's sin, and sinful man. It was to be a Mediator between God and his creature, it was to reconcile God and man together that had sinned against him, and was turned enemy to him; the Work that Christ came to do, it was to make up all the wrongs that sin had done, that sin had brought to God, Christ came to make up the vast infinite breach that there was made between God and man, so to procure Reconciliation for man, as to make God amends for all the sin that had been committed, here is the work that Christ undertook, he undertook to pacify the wrath of God his Father, in such a way, as that it should be let out upon him, and he would bear what ever fruits of God's wrath was due to the sin of man, he came (I say) into the world for to reconcile God and man, to make up all the breach, and to make restitution of all things; not only to make up the breach that was made between God and man by man's sin, but to make up the restitution of all things; whereas by man's sin all the works of God in this world had almost been frustrated, and had man's sin gone on, God had not had the glory that he made the world for; now Christ he comes into the world to make up all again, that his Father might have full glory from all his Works. Yea the great Work that he came into the world about, was, that he might bring this to pass, that God his Father should have further glory now from his work, than ever he should have had, if so be there had never been any breach made, here is the great work that Christ came into the world about, Christ

beholding, that through man's sin, all things were even brought to a confusion, Mans sin had plundered all the world (as it were) plundered the Works of God, and had brought all to darkness, and misery, and confusion, now Christ comes into the world to make all perfect again, and to raise up to God a Name of praise and glory, higher than ever he should have had if there never had been any sin committed against him; now was not this a wonderful work that Christ came into the world about? We speak much of Christ, and that he came into the world, but what came he for? Oh learn to sanctify God's Name in this, to look upon Christ whose Name is Wonderful, in regard not only of what he was in himself, but of what he came about, the great and wonderful work that he came into the world for, and did accomplish; and certainly did we apprehend Christ thus, and look upon Christ as having such a Name as this is, Wonderful, and know that upon this ground he is called Wonderful, it would teach us to adore him, to honor him, to magnify him, and to have high thoughts of him, it would be a mighty means to draw our hearts to believe in him, the very setting of Christ as he is in himself before the soul as the full object of faith, hath a mighty power to draw faith out; as the setting of a temptation before a man hath a power to draw corruptions; so the setting of Christ in his glory and excellency, in what he is, and what he came into the world for (I say) it hath a mighty power to draw forth faith, not only to draw forth faith where faith was before, but it hath a power to cause faith in the soul; Christ is not only an object for us to work upon when we have a faculty, but such an object as being set before the soul, hath a quickening power to cause life; therefore we cannot say, why should Jesus Christ be preached to a company of people as are dead in sins, I, Christ indeed is a glorious object, But they must have somewhat to work upon Christ. We must not say so, for Christ is not only

an object for the soul to work upon when it hath an eye to see, but such an object as the very setting of it before the soul, hath a quickening power to work life in the soul, to cause an eye to see him, and to cause the heart to make after him, though it was never so dead before: And it should be the work of Ministers to set Jesus Christ before the hearts of people, before their eyes continually, and though it may be there comes nothing of it this time, I but try it again, and though nothing comes of it the other time, but they pass all lightly by, and little regard the glory of God, that appears in Jesus Christ, yet he is to be set before them again and again; who knows when the quickening power and life may come from Christ? Now this is the scope of the setting Christ thus before you; This day I have endeavored to set him but a little before you in the opening this Title of his.

Let this be the Use of it, Oh when you go home, go and meditate of what hath been said, and labor when you are before God, which is the time for the exercising of your faith upon Christ, Labor to set Jesus Christ before your eyes, and look upon him as the great Wonder of the World, and never leave meditating until you find your heart come to this, to admire at the Glory of God in Jesus Christ; If ever your hearts were taken with admiration at anything in the World, Oh let them be taken up with the admiration of Jesus Christ; this may confidently be concluded upon, that that Soul that never found itself taken with admiring of the Glory of God in Christ, did never know what Christ meant; for Christ is such a kind of Savior, that if God do propound Christ to the Soul in any measure, it is impossible, but that the heart must be taken with him. There is a Savior sent into the World, he that is the Object of my faith, and by him my Soul shall be saved. Now the first work of the heart, is for to think this is too good to

be true, do not therefore think that you must be only saved by Jesus Christ, but know what manner of Savior it is, its he whose Name is Wonderful.

SERM. V. THE SECOND SERMON ON THE EXCELLENCY OF CHRIST.

And his Name shall be called Wonderful. – Isa. 9:6.

Christ Wonderful in his Offices.

Christ further is the Wonder of the World in his Offices.

In his Natures.

In his Person.

In the manner of his Incarnation.

In the end why he was sent hither.

And in his Offices, in his Anointment as he was Christ. Christ signifies the Anointed of God, and is all one with the Messias; that that was the Messias in the Old Testament, is Christ in the New. The word signifies Anointed. And Christ is the Anointed of the Father, Anointed to those three great Offices, King, Priest, and Prophet. Great in all these three Offices, never any man in the world had them all before, I say, never man in the world was Anointed to these three together, but only Christ. We read in Scripture of a King and Priest, so Melchizedek was; we read in Scripture of a King, and a Prophet, and so David was; we read in Scripture of a Prophet,

and a Priest, so Jeremiah was: but of King, Priest, and Prophet together anointed by God, we read of none but Jesus Christ only. Among the Egyptians they were wont out of their Philosophers, their wise men, to choose their Priests, and out of their Priests to choose their Kings; and so whosoever was a King to them, was eminent first in wisdom, being a Philosopher, able to teach, and eminent in his Priestly office, and then eminent in his power, that he might be honored by all people, as having those threefold eminencies that was accounted the greatest eminency in the world, for those were the three great eminencies, the eminency of wisdom to teach, and of Priesthood, and of Kingly power: Now Jesus Christ he was wonderful in all these; now that is the thing that I aim at to show in every particular of these Offices of Christ, how wonderful he was, and then (though but briefly) I shall set the beauty and excellency of Christ in his three Offices before you, and that shall be all that I intend to do at this time, and shall but be very brief in them too: For I told you in the opening of the Excellency of God, I did not intend to stand to open every particular Attribute at large, but only to set the Excellency of God before you briefly, so of Christ.

The Kingly Office of Christ.

Now for these Offices of Christ; his Kingly Office first; Christ is King, and wonderful in this Office of his, for you cannot understand Christ your Savior aright, except you understand him, as before in his Natures, in his Personal union, and so in his Offices. First, As King, I shall not need to show Scripture for these, the Scripture is full. If you read the 45th Psalm at your leisure about the middle of it, Thy Throne, O God, is forever and ever, the Scepter of thy Kingdom is a right Scepter. And Rev. 17:14. Christ there

is said to be Lord of Lord's, and King of Kings. Now Christ is a glorious King and wonderful in his Kingly power.

First, He is King over all, over all Kings, over all Powers, he hath the highest Authority of all; Take that for the first thing. In Rev. 9 he is said to be King of Kings and Lord of Lord's. I remember Theodotius, and another Emperor, did use to call themselves the Vassals of Christ, and so certainly all the Kings and Princes in the world, they are but the Vassals of this great King. Now he is wonderful in his Kingly power that hath all the Kings and Lord's, and all Authority in the world under his feet, indeed they all hold on him, and that will appear from the second place.

2. As his power is the highest, so it is universal, universal over all the world, the Government of all the world is committed to him, 1 Cor. 15:27. All things are put under his feet, God the Father hath given unto him the Government of all the world, he is not only the King of the Saints, though he be their King in a special manner, but he is the King of Nations too, Christ he is the King of Nations, God-Man (I say) the government of all the world is given to him, all the Nations of the World are under him to govern and to judge, and to make use of for the good of his Church; He is not only the governor of the World universally, but a heavenly King, even the Angels themselves are under him, Thrones, and Principalities, and Dominions, in Eph. 1:20. They are all brought into one under Christ, yea and the Devils themselves are under him; It is he that hath the Keys of Heaven, and the Keys of Hell, Rev. 1:18. He that was dead, is alive, and hath the Keys of Hell and Death: And this Kingly Power of Christ must needs be wonderful.

3. But further, in the third place, Christ is wonderful in this his Kingly Power, for he makes his Subjects, his Subjects do not make him, Col. 1:16. By him were all things created that are in Heaven, and that are in Earth.

There is no King that ever was in the World, but either God from heaven doth tell people that he would have such a one to be a King, or he is made by the people: For what is one man's flesh, more than another man's? (I say) at first men they agree together to set up such a man, or family, to have a Kingly Power, so that the Kingly power of the Family, and of everyone that comes of that Family, it is by the people at first, none must plead it to be by conquest, for then whosoever can conquer again, he must be King, if another can conquer he must have right too, if that be the only right, if that were the only right that a King had over his people, conquest, then as he had his right over the people by conquest, so if the people conquer him, then they have right. Certainly the best right of all the Kings of the earth this day, it must be by the first compact with that Family, that is their right. I but our King that we have to do withal, he makes his Subjects, they make not him King, but this King makes all his Subjects; Indeed if Kings could give being to their Subjects, then their right were another kind of right than now they have; but the truth is, Subjects do give being to their King; I but our King the Lord Christ he is Wonderful, a Wonderful King in this, because he doth give being to all his Subjects.

4. And then fourthly, The Subjects of this King are for him, he is not for them; whereas it is otherwise between man and man; certainly the Subjects are not made for the King, but the King is made for his Subjects; a Kingdom is not made for a King, but a King for the Kingdom: But it is otherwise here, Christ was not made for us, but we were made for him, all the Subjects of Christ were made for the honor of Jesus Christ, and Christ I say, was not set up King for them.

5. And then fifthly, This King Jesus Christ, is King in another manner than any other Kings upon the earth, for it is he alone that makes Laws, other

Kings have not power themselves to make Laws, but together with their people, but he alone makes Laws. It is true, the Kings of Israel they made not the people join with them in all their Laws, because God himself let Laws there for the government of the Commonwealth. But Jesus Christ, I say, he is the only Law-giver unto his Church, and therefore there can be no new Ordinances, nor no new Laws, nor no new Officers in the Church that can be invented by man: It is true, in the Civil state, there God leaves to human prudence, and we may invent Laws and human Ordinances, and new Officers, so as may be good for the Church, one Kingdom one kind of Law, and another, another; But now when we come to speak of Christ's Kingly Power, especially as it hath reference to the Church, there, as he is King of Saints, there are no Ordinances, nor no Laws, nor no officers that can be newly erected, but it must be the same, and it must be the same in all Churches in the World, the same Laws must rule all, and the same Ordinances, and the same Church-officers, there must be no additions of any; Why? Because that in Spiritual government, there we wait upon God for his presence; we wait upon the presence of Christ to work spiritually upon the soul, and we expect a spiritual efficacy from Jesus Christ upon our souls, to draw us nearer to him, and to draw him near to us, that we do in all Church Ordinances; and therefore only Christ can appoint Laws for them.

You will say, (an there be no Laws, no nothing added in the Church for way of decency and order, and such kind of things?

To that I answer briefly thus, There are some things that do belong to those spiritual Ordinances, things that are in the Church that may be helpful to them in a natural way; as now if congregations meet they must meet in some place, they must have civil order in their meeting, there may be some things civil and natural subservient unto those things that are spiritual; but

that that is properly Ecclesiastical whereby I wait upon Jesus Christ to have my heart drawn nearer to him, or to have him draw nearer to me therein, there must be no addition of men in any Law whatsoever, but only the things of Christ that are merely spiritual; if there be any natural help, or civil help, as we that are men cannot be exercised in things that are spiritual, without some natural and civil helps, there certainly the prudence of man may come in; but this cannot come to set up any new Ordinances, or set up any new Officers in the Church, or make any new Laws that shall concern the spiritual Worship of God, to work my heart in a spiritual way to God, or God unto me; here lies the evil of man's inventions, when there shall be any inventions of man that shall come instead of a spiritual Ordinance, that shall be set by man's Institution, and have more put upon it than it hath in a natural and civil way to be helpful, why then it comes to be superstition, I say, when anything is set by man in the worship of God, that shall have more in it than that that is natural or civil to help, then it comes to be sinful and wicked. When I think that by anything of man's appointment, God shall come nearer to me, or my heart shall be drawn nearer to God, by virtue of any Institution of man, here is the very proper nature of Institution; As for instance, Some thing that is natural or civil to help God's worship, that man may appoint, but nothing that is spiritual to draw my heart nearer to God, or God nearer to me. As thus, If the Church of God meet together for Ordinances, it must meet in some place, this is a natural help to have a convenient meeting-place, to have a place to keep them from the air, or rain, or wind, this is natural; but if it go one step higher than naturalness of the place, If I shall make this place by the consecration of man to be used as an Ordinance to draw me nearer to God, or God nearer to me, that is, to think that my prayers in that place are more

acceptable than in another, that because I perform services in that place it shall be more accepted, Here I say, man raises it higher than natural, and puts a Divine Institution upon it, and so it comes to be sinful; and so now you may come to know what the meaning is, when we say, that Christ only can make Laws for his Church, and Officers for his Church. Why? Because whatsoever is spiritual, it must be only by the Authority of Jesus Christ, this great King of his Church.

6. And then Sixthly, Christ is a wonderful King in this, that his Sovereignty is absolute, which no Kings power is; though they have great power in the world, yet they have not an absolute power to do what they list; and certainly, no Subjects are bound so far to the humors of men, that they shall do what they list, there is no absolute power that one man hath over another; bur the power that Jesus Christ hath is absolute, an absolute Kingly power, his Will it is the Law; no man's will in the World is sufficient to be a law, but the will of this King it is sufficient.

7. And then in the Seventh place, he hath power to bind Conscience, his Laws are such as lay obligations and bonds upon the Consciences of men; no Law that would be made by all the Angels in heaven could lay bonds upon conscience, but the Law only of Jesus Christ; all the Laws that men can make, must receive their power and authority especially from the end of them, and therefore if they should not conduce unto that end for which God sets up Magistracy over men, that is, for the good of the place, then the rule will hold, that if there be not scandal or contempt, there is no obligation upon a man's conscience, merely because it is the will of man. But now the Laws of Christ, whatsoever they are, they lay bonds upon consciences, and if I do offend them never so secretly, I stand as guilty before the great God; and that is the seventh thing.

8. And then in the Eighth place, Christ's Kingly power it reaches to men's hearts, (I must not as I go along enter into the large opening of anything that may be controversial, but merely present what at large might be opened to you, about the Kingly power of Christ) I say, Christ's Kingly power is wonderful in this, in that it rules over the hearts of men as well as their consciences; Christ by his power is able to subdue the wills of men, and bring their hearts to obedience to him; all the power there is in the World cannot do this: why the Kings of the earth, if they were put all together, they could not subdue the heart of any one poor man in the world, the will of the poorest Creature in the world cannot be subdued by all the powers of all the Potentates and Emperors upon the face of the earth; they may beat his body, or torture his body, or kill his body, but to subdue his heart, to make his soul to be subject and obedient to them, that I say, all the powers of all the Potentates in the world, nay all the Angels in heaven cannot do it, the will of a man or woman is such, that all the Angels in heaven cannot bring it down, only God himself; you many times say, you will break the will of such a one, that is, you will make them not to do such a thing, but you are never able to break their wills; Kings may prevail over their subjects, to make them to do what they would have them do, and their Estates and Liberties may come to be at their dispose; but all this while it may be he hath never a one of their hearts, and that is but a very mean kind of Kingly power, only to rule over men by fear, and they not to love him. But now Christ in his Church, he hath never a subject that is truly under his Kingly power, but he rules his very will, and hath never a subject but loves him; where Christ doth rule Spiritually in the hearts of his people, though they were never so stubborn and rebellious before, yet when Christ comes and

brings them under his power, he brings their wills and their hearts to him, and that is the glory of the Kingly power of Christ.

9. And then in the Ninth place, Christ is a wonderful King in this, that he hath the perfect knowledge of all his Subjects, and of their wants; alas, Kings and Princes in great States, they know but very few Subject that they have; but now Jesus Christ takes notice of every subject that is in his Kingdom, and knows all their thoughts, and all their ways, and all their wants, all their conditions, he knows them all perfectly. Oh this is the glory of this King, and wonderful is he in his Kingly power in this.

10. He is present with them all in all the Administration of Justice; the King he cannot administer Justice, but he must use Instruments to do it, and he cannot be present always; but Jesus Christ he is always present in the Administration of whatever is administered to any of his Subjects, he stands by and looks upon them all.

11. Christ is such a King as he hath no need of any Instruments at all; he may make use of them sometimes, but he hath no need of any. Kings can do but very little without some Instruments, what can a King do for the ruling of a Kingdom, but with such and such Instruments? But Jesus Christ is wonderful in his Kingly power, in that he hath no need of any Instruments for the administration of any Justice, but he can do it all immediately himself, if he pleases.

12. Christ is glorious in his Kingly power, in this, that he doth over-rule all the plots and counsels of all the enemies of his Subjects, for the furtherance of the glory of his Kingdom, and the good of his Subjects; now my brethren, look upon these things as real, and certainly by faith they are made real to the hearts of the Saints, and they do rejoice in this; if we had such kind of Governors, that had power over all the plots and designs of the

enemies, what a happy condition would we think ourselves to be in? Now this is in our King the Lord Jesus Christ, he hath power over all the plots and endeavors of all adversaries, to work them all for the good of his Church.

13. Further, the Lord Christ is wonderful for his Kingly power in regard of his righteousness, Thy scepter is a righteous scepter, he is King of righteousness, and so King of peace, as Melchizedek was. It is a happy thing when people live under righteous Governors, that they shall be sure never to have any oppression, any wrong at all done by them, but they shall enjoy all in a righteous and just way; Jesus Christ is such a King, thou shalt have nothing but righteous dealings from him. I, but there is something more in this, he is not only righteous, because he makes righteous Laws, and hath righteous Administrations, but this is a King that brings everlasting righteousness to his people, yea he himself is the righteousness of his people; it is he that doth clothe his people with righteousness. Indeed it is said of Saul, that he clothed the people with Scarlet; By a good Governor people may come to be clothed with fine raiment, and enjoy glorious prosperity, and the like: But this is that King that clothes his people with everlasting righteousness; to make them all to stand righteous before his Father, here is the glory of this King. And then he brings peace, he brings peace by righteousness, he doth not bring peace to them by the sword, but by his righteous Administrations; so he comes and brings peace, brings peace to the conscience, to the soul, which no Kings can do. What can Kings do? They may treat about peace, and if they be righteous they may be the cause of abundance of outward peace; I, but they cannot bring peace of soul; Christ is the King of Righteousness, and the King of Salem, so

Melchizedek signifies, he was King of Righteousness, and King of Salem, that is, King of peace; this is the glory of this our King.

14. And further, other Kings are born to be Kings, but Christ died that he might be a King; it is true, he was a King when he was born, and he was born as others are to be a King, but especially Christ had his power upon his death, it behooved him to suffer, and so to enter into his glory; so to enter into his glory, that is, upon his sufferings, it behooved him; and so the Apostle tells the Jews in the second of the Acts, that they had crucified Christ, and upon their crucifying of him, Peter there stands up and tells them in the six and thirtieth verse, that God had made that same Jesus whom they had crucified, both Lord and Christ; by his death he came unto his glory. Others come to glory by their Lives, but Christ comes to his glory by his Death, and was raised to sit upon the Throne of Majesty and glory upon his death, and in that he is wonderful in his Kingly power.

15. Further, Christ is King from everlasting to everlasting, forever; Thy throne O Lord endures forever and ever: other Kings are but of yesterday, and they are dead and gone; but it is not so with our King, the Lord is King forever.

16. Further, he is wonderful in this, he sits upon his Fathers Throne now at this time. You have such a place in the third of the Revelations, ver. 21, where Christ promises to those that over-come, that they shall sit upon his throne, even as he over-came, and is set down with his Father in his throne. The administration of all things in the World now, I say, it is given to Christ jointly with his Father, Jesus Christ God-Man, sits upon the Throne of his Father, not only the second Person in Trinity, but Christ God-Man sits upon the Throne of his Father, and together with his Father doth order and govern all things; here is a height of glory that no creature else can be capable of;

the Human Nature of Christ being joined in one Person with the Divine, so it comes to have of the glory of this Kingly power upon it, that it may be said, That Person that is Man, doth now at this time sit upon the Throne of his Father, and together with his Father doth administer his power; so that the Apostle speaks of a subjection of Christ that shall be afterwards unto the Father more than is now, in 1 Cor. 15:25, it is a text certainly that hath a great mystery in it, and is very hard to understand, For he must reign till he hath put all enemies under his feet; the last enemy that shall be destroyed is death, for he hath put all things under his feet; but when he saith, all things are put under him, it is manifest that he is excepted which did put all things under him; And when all things shall be subdued unto him, then shall the Son also himself be subject unto him that put all things under him, that God may be all in all. When all things shall be subdued unto him, then the Son himself shall be subject. It seems there is not that subjection now as shall be hereafter; Christ now sits upon the Throne of his Father, and rules together with his Father, but there is a time that Christ shall give up the Kingdom that now he hath, and he himself shall be subject, that is, he, when he hath subdued all the enemies of the Church, he shall in a visible and a more glorious way rule over his own Saints, and that eternally, and then he too together with his Saints, he as the head of his Saints, shall in another way be subject unto God than now he is for the present, there shall be another administration of things than now there is; now Christ sits upon the Throne of his Father, here Christ makes his Throne and his Fathers Throne distinct, so that there is yet to come another kind of Throne that Christ hath, besides the Throne that now he sits upon; but this, I say, is a great mystery, only the Scripture holds forth such a thing as this, that hereafter Christ shall have another Throne than that he hath now.

17. Yea Wonderful in this, that he will not only subject all enemies in the conclusion, but he will put down all Rule, and all Authority and Power. It is a very notable Text often read, but little observed, 1 Cor. 15:24. Then cometh the end, when he shall have delivered up the Kingdom to God, even the Father, when he shall have put down all Rule, and all Authority and Power. Though as our condition is for the present, we have a great deal of need of human Rule and Authority, yet that is certain, that there hath not been any such enmity unto the Kingdom of Christ, as the Rulers, and Kings, and Princes of the earth, for the greater part, I say, Christ hath had no men that have more kept-under his Kingdom than the Rulers and great ones, and Princes of the earth, therefore it seems his Kingdom cannot be full till he hath put down all Rule and Power, and he himself to reign wholly without any such help of man as now. But now in regard of our necessity, it is true, If all Rule and Authority should be put down while we are in such a condition as we are for the present, certainly we should be all in a confusion, therefore though Christ sees that so many of the Rulers and great ones of the world have been, and are enemies to his Kingdom, yet to keep things in a civil order, Christ would have Rule and Authority for the present; But there is a time coming, when his people shall be made so subject, as they shall have no need of these things, but Christ will put them all down here in the world, and himself only shall Reign; so you have it in the book of the Revelations, chap. 11, ver. 15. That there were great voices in heaven, saying, The Kingdoms of this world are become the Kingdoms of our Lord, and of his Christ, and he shall Reign forever and ever. For that it seems Christ hath not yet taken his Power, had not then, neither hath he since: But there is a time coming for the Kingdoms of the earth to be the Lord’s and his Christ’s in another way than now they are.

18. And then the last of all, Christ is such a King, as he doth in a spiritual sense make all his Subjects Kings, he hath a Crown of glory for every Subject, for every one of those that are his Subjects, in that near relation, as he is King of Saints, I say, he will put Crowns of glory upon them all; you have it in Rev. 5:10. And hast made us unto our God Kings and Priests, and we shall Reign on the earth, not only in heaven, but on the earth. Why now how wonderful is Christ in this his Kingly power, that he is able to make every Subject that he hath a King? And he will do it. Now then, If we should put all these together that have been named, you see how wonderful Christ is in his Kingly Power.

1. He is high above all, King of Kings, Lord of Lord's.

2. He is a universal King over all the World, a heavenly King, over Angels, yea over Powers, over the Devils themselves.

3. It is he that makes his Subjects, not they him.

4. His Subjects are for him, and not he for them.

5. He alone is able to make Laws for his Church.

6. He hath absolute Sovereignty.

7. His Laws do bind conscience.

8. He rules in the hearts of men.

9. He hath perfect knowledge of all his Saints, and all their conditions.

10. He is present in all Administrations.

11. He is the King of Righteousness, and of Peace.

12. He hath no need of any Instrument to do anything.

13. He over-rules all the plots, counsels, endeavors of his enemies.

14. He was not only born to be a King, but he died to be King.

15. He is an everlasting King, his Kingdom endures from Generation to Generation.

16. He sits upon his Fathers Throne as equal with him.

17. And will certainly subdue all enemies, and will put down all Rule, and all Power.

18. And will put a Crown of glory upon every one of his Subjects.

This is our King, Rejoice therefore oh Daughter of Zion, for thy King cometh. Oh did we but apprehend these things by faith, that we have to do with Christ as such a King, certainly our hearts could not be troubled whatsoever stirs there are in the world, whatsoever Kings and Princes do in the world; yet when we look up to this King, and by faith make all this real to our souls, Oh what matter of infinite joy is it! I beseech you do not think that these are notions that I speak unto you, those that exercise their faith aright upon Christ, they exercise their faith upon him as such a King.

You say you do believe in Jesus Christ.

In Christ, Why what do you mean by Jesus Christ? Why you will say, he was the Son of God. But what is further? Christ that is (Anointed) Anointed to what, to King, Priest, and Prophet; King, what kind of King? Here I have presented to you what kind of King Jesus Christ is Anointed by the Father. And thus must you present him before your souls when you exercise your faith upon him. Certainly there are few people that know what it is to exercise their faith upon Christ, because they never knew Christ to be thus. Well might the Psalmist say, Psal. 97:1. The Lord Reigneth, let the earth rejoice, let the multitude of Isles be glad thereof. Oh it is well for us that the Lord Reigneth; certainly did not Jesus Christ reign in his Church, yea did not he reign in the world, all things would come to confusion presently. Were it possible that such a handful as his Church that is a despised company, a poor people that lives in the world, and is so hated by the world, and all the Devils in hell, and their instruments, which do labor to extirpate

them, and yet that they should continue: certainly it is because the Lord Reigns, and so orders all things that seems to be against his Church, for the good of his Church, otherwise it could not continue in the world: Oh let the earth rejoice, because the Lord doth Reign; And again, in Psal. 99:1, mark there what use is made of Christ's Kingly power. The Lord Reigneth, let the people tremble; Oh the Lord Reigneth, let the people tremble; certainly all wicked and ungodly men that are Rebels against this King, they have cause to tremble, such men as say of Christ, We will not have this man to reign over us, they have cause to tremble, for the Lord Christ will overcome them; certainly his Garments shall be died in blood, and what will become of them when he shall come to take his Kingdom to himself? Moreover; Those mine enemies that would not have me to Reign over them, come and bring them, and slay them before my face. All wicked and ungodly men in their sins, they do as if they should say thus, we will not have this man to Reign over us; thou who doest cast off Jesus Christ as a King, certainly thou canst not expect good from him as a Savior.

Christ's Priestly Office.

Now for the second thing, and that is the Priestly Office of Jesus Christ, Christ is wonderful in that, he is a great High Priest. In Heb. 4:14. Christ is there called a Great High Priest, Seeing then that we have a Great High Priest that is passed into the heavens; And so in Heb. 7:26. For such a High Priest became us, who is holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners, and made higher than the Heavens. A great High Priest, a High Priest made higher than the Heavens, this is the High Priest that we have which we are to exercise our faith upon.

1. He hath a Royal Priest-hood, for it is joined with Kingly Power, and therefore Melchizedek was his type. He was not after the Order of Aaron,

but he was after the Order of Melchizedek, because it is a Royal Priesthood, and so the Saints are called a Royal Priesthood; And Melchizedek is said to be without Father or Mother: the meaning is, He was not so as he was a man, for he had Father and Mother, beginning and end, but in his typical relation he was so, they were concealed, to typify, that Christ, as he was man, he had no Father, and as he was God, he had no Mother, and he had no beginning in his Priestly office, it was from everlasting, and it shall endure to everlasting. So he is a Priest forever after the Order of Melchizedek, and not after the Order of Aaron.

2. And in the next place, All the Priests in the Law did typify Christ, and all did cease in him; certainly he must needs be a great High Priest that was typified by them, and in whom all ceased and vanished: As when the Sun arises, the light of the stars doth no more appear; there was no further Priesthood when Jesus came and took that Office to himself in his human Nature in this world.

3. But further, Christ is wonderful in his Priest-hood in this, that he had no need to offer for himself, as others had; for he was blameless, and without sin.

4. Yea, and consider what Christ offered, and there you shall see him wonderful; the Offering that Christ offered, it was the blood of God, I say, it was that that we may call safely according to Scripture language, the blood of God; and that will not seem to be a hard expression, if we understand what the personal union of the two Natures are, in Act. 20:28, faith the Apostle to the Church of Ephesus, Take heed therefore unto yourselves, and to all the flock over which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers, to feed the Church of God which he hath purchased with his own blood. These kind of phrases we have that come from the Personal union of the two Natures;

so that the blood that Christ did shed, and offer unto God as a Sacrifice for the sin of man, it is that that the Scripture calls the blood of God. Now the blood that other Priests did offer, was the blood of Goats, and Bulls, and Lambs, and Kids, but now what a wonderful Priest have we, that comes to offer Sacrifice to the Father for us, and comes to offer blood, that is the blood of God. He is wonderful in his Priestly Office in regard of his Offering.

5. Further from this follows, that Christ offered a Sacrifice unto God that was sufficient to satisfy God for all the wrong that ever was done him by man's sin; they offered poor things unto God, you know, in the time of the Law, things that were worthless: But now the Sacrifice that Christ offered unto the Father, when he, that High Priest, came to offer, it was a Sacrifice that did satisfy God's infinite Justice, did make up all the wrong that all the sins of the Elect had ever done to God, it was that that infinite Justice said it was well-pleased withal. It was worth all that Christ did render it up to his Father for, not only a Sacrifice that was a sweet savor, because God would be pleased to accept of it, but a Sacrifice that had in itself such a savor that could not but be sweet in the nostrils of God the Father, for it did fully satisfy the Justice of God the Father for the sins of mankind; here is a wonderful High Priest now, that he should come and offer such a Sacrifice that should be of such infinite merit and worth as it was.

6. Yea, and he was wonderful, because that he did offer himself, not only his blood, but himself, soul and body, he made himself a Sacrifice, none of the Priests did so in the time of the Law; was there ever heard of such a Priest that came to offer sacrifice, that did offer himself for such as he would make atonement for? Jesus Christ he was anointed by God the Father as a Priest of his Church to offer sacrifice, now he must have so nothing to

offer, and Christ saw that whatsoever he could offer, if so be that he had offered that that had been the worth of Heaven and Earth, whatsoever it had been, it could never have been an Atonement for those souls which he did undertake for, therefore Christ offers himself; as there is nothing but God can be a satisfying portion to an immortal soul, so no sacrifice but Christ himself could be a Sacrifice to pacify God's wrath for the sins of mankind, if Christ should have said, Father, Thou hast made me Lord over all the world, and I will give it all for a Ransom for the soul of this poor sinner, God would have said, It will not do it, but it must be thyself; I, and Christ yields to it, A body hast thou prepared me: And be made his soul an offering for sin. And a body hast thou prepared for me, both body and soul of Christ was offered to God the Father for a sacrifice, that he might smell a sweet savor of rest, even concerning us who are wicked and wretched sinners. Either Christ must offer himself soul and body to be a Sacrifice for thy sin, or else thy soul and body must have been offered as a sacrifice to God's Justice, and then it must eternally have been under the stroke of God's Justice; but to that end to free that soul and body of thine, if thou beest a believer, to free thee from the eternal Justice of God, therefore Christ did offer his soul and body as a sacrifice to his Father.

7. And yet further, Christ was wonderful in his Priestly Office, for he was not only the Sacrifice, but the Altar. It would be wonderful to hear of a Priest that should offer himself, but the Priest to be the Sacrifice, and the Altar too that should sanctify the Sacrifice, it is a greater wonder: and because this expression seems to be very hard, I take this out of Heb. 9:14. How much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit, offered himself without spot to God; he offers his body and soul as it were upon his Divine Nature, that as the Altar did sanctify the Offering, so the

Divine Nature of Christ did sanctify the offering of his Human Nature, so that he indeed became both the Altar, and the Sacrifice.

8. And then further, Christ is wonderful in his Priestly Office, and that is in this, That he offered but one Sacrifice, and at one time; now the Priests in former time, they offered many Sacrifices, and they offered often; but now if you would read of Christ's Priestly Office, read especially the seventh, eighth, and ninth Chapters of the Epistle to the Hebrews, and there you shall have as much almost as in all the Scripture besides, of the Priestly Office of Jesus Christ; The Priests in the Law they offered often, but Christ offered but once, and having but once offered he sits down in glory, upon his offering of himself but once before the Father it was available forever, for so the Scripture tells us in divers places of the Hebrews, and he was able to save to the uttermost, upon his once offering of himself.

And then further, Christ is wonderful in his Priestly Office in this, which is as much as in anything, and that is, that he doth now exercise it in heaven at the right hand of the Father by his intercession, for so the Scripture saith in the eighth of the Hebrews, That we have such an high Priest, who is set on the right hand of the throne of the Majesty in the heavens, and there he is making intercession. As the Priest (you know) in the time of the Law did exercise his Priestly Office, not only by offering Sacrifice, but by going into the Holy of Holies, and there had the names of the Tribes engraven upon his breast, and so presented them before God, and made intercession for all the Tribes. Also Christ he is our wonderful High Priest, for he having offered himself a Sacrifice to the Justice of his Father, he is gone to Heaven, and hath the names of all Believers upon his breast, upon his heart, and there presents them all before his Father, and is their Advocate, makes intercession for them, he is always holding before the Father all his

Sufferings, as it were pleading before God the Father for them. Why thou art a poor Creature here, and art, it may be, fallen down in thy closet pleading with God for mercy, and thou art discouraged for the straitness of thy heart, and the like, but now learn how to make use of thy faith, look upon Jesus Christ, he is the object of thy faith; I, but you must believe in Christ as the High Priest that is gone before into Heaven, and now is at the right hand of the Father making intercession for thy soul. It may be thou art discouraged because thy prayers are poor and weak; I but thy faith must be exercised upon that God-man, who is pleading with God the Father for thee, and that by his own merits, that are worth more than ten thousand thousand Worlds, and except you do exercise your faith upon Christ as a Priest thus, you do not exercise your faith aright; Oh what strangers are most people in the world to the exercising of faith! I appeal to you, when did you exercise your faith upon Christ as such a High Priest? You would see him to be a wonderful Savior indeed, if by the eye of faith you did behold him to be thus.

Thus he is wonderful in his Priestly Office; oh what wonderful things are these, if they were made real to us by faith! How wonderful would be the comfort and joy of the Saints of God in the exercising of their faith, upon this that I do but now name unto you, whereby as we go along you may see how far short you have come from exercising your faith upon Christ as such a Savior, as the Scripture doth present him to you.

9. Again, his Priestly Office endures forever, he lives forever to make intercession; the Priests in the Law they died, but Christ he is a Priest forever, and he makes intercession himself, he hath no Deputy, nor no Successors as others had, but he himself makes intercession forever for his people, and his Priest-hood is confirmed by an Oath, The Lord sware; the

Lord by an Oath confirmed the Priesthood of Christ after the order of Melchizedek, to the end that we might be the more sure of such a wonderful mercy of God to Mankind, that is the reason that he added an Oath to the Priest-hood of Christ, because that aimed at higher things than the Priest-hood of Aaron did, that was but an external Priest-hood, but this aiming at such high things, yea that Sacrifice that must be tendered up to God for a full atonement for the sin of Mankind, therefore God confirmed this by an Oath; for believers when they hear such things (those that are weak) I but Lord (think they) are these things so? Is it possible that God should have such thoughts of Mankind, to work so wonderful for man's Salvation! Therefore saith God, I have confirmed this by an oath.

And then this Priest-hood of Christ is a Priest-hood of a better covenant, the other was but after a carnal Commandment; and in comparison of this it was but an external covenant, for there was certainly a covenant of Works besides that of Grace, that God did renew with the people of Israel, even when he gave the Law, the Ceremonial Law did not only typify the Covenant of Grace that should be revealed hereafter more fully, but it was annexed to the Covenant of Works, as it appears plainly in the Epistle to the Hebrews, but yet still I say they had a Covenant of Grace that was couched darkly in the Ceremonial Law, therefore Christ is said to be a Mediator of a better Covenant, he comes to deal between God and Man in a better Covenant than was before.

And then further, the Priest-hood of Christ it comes to have more efficacy than that of Aaron had, for it prevails to the purging of conscience, which that could not do.

And it brings the Saints into the Holy of Holies, and that with boldness, and for that you have a most excellent Scripture of the Saints being brought

into the Holy of Holies by the Priest-hood of Christ, in the tenth to the Hebrews, Having therefore boldness to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus, by the Sacrifice that this our Priest hath offered to the Father, we come to enter into the Holiest of all, and that with boldness.

It was not so in the time of the Law; no, but after the High Priest had offered Sacrifice, he alone goes into the Holy of Holies; but now mark, here not only Christ our High Priest, but we, may come with boldness, which none of the people could do in the Law, that is thus, there is such an efficacy in the Sacrifice of our High Priest, as that every believer may come, though he hath never so many sins of his own, he may come with boldness into the Holy of Holies, into the most immediate presence of God the Father, through the sacrifice of this our Priest, that hath made such a way by his Blood for us, to come and enter into the Holy of Holies; the People in the time of the Law were to stand at a distance, for this Sacrifice was not actually offered; but since Christ's coming, and his actual offering up his Sacrifice, now the Saints of God may come with boldness into the holy, immediate, and glorious presence of God that can be; let God appear never so gloriously, yet the Saints have liberty and boldness to come into the most glorious presence of God; and therefore Christ is wonderful in this Priestly Office of his. Two or three things more should have been spoken.

That Christ hath made us Priests unto God, we have the glory of his Priest-hood upon ourselves, if we belong unto him; Priests, that we may offer up Sacrifice to God now acceptable; were it not through the virtue of this Priestly Office of Christ, we could not do it: But it is by the Priestly Office of Christ that all Believers are now made Priests unto God, so as they may offer Sacrifice to God acceptable; it may be thou goest to God in Prayer, and offerest up a Sacrifice to God, and thinkest God will be well

pleased with it, I pray now upon what terms dost thou offer them up? Thy Prayers should be Sacrifices, but in the time of the Law none must offer a Sacrifice but a Priest; Hast thou an interest in the Priestly Office of Christ, and doest thou go unto Jesus Christ by faith, and give up thy Sacrifice into his hands, and desire that he would present it to the Father? Certainly except thou dost so, all thy Sacrifices are cast out as dung and filth in thy face, and are an abomination unto God. As in the time of the Law we know, let a man offer never so good a Bullock, or Sheep, though they were worth never so much, yet if he did not offer them by the Priest, we know they were abomination unto God: so our services are as our Sacrifices, and they must be offered up unto God by this our High Priest; and in this Jesus Christ is wonderful in his Priestly Office, for by virtue of that Sacrifice of his that he offered to the Father, all the Sacrifices of all the elect ones are tendered up to the Father, and so come to be accepted; And then do we exercise our faith upon Christ aright, when we can look upon our High Priest, and tender up our Sacrifices by faith unto the Father through him. To believe in Christ is to have thy faith act upon Christ in his several Offices. Oh what strangers are most unto the glory of Jesus Christ? What little glory hath Christ from you, when you understand him not in those things that are his glory? Or you that do understand him, oh but how seldom hath your faith acted upon him, according as he hath been set out unto you in these several things?

The Prophetical Office of Christ.

Christ is wonderful in his Prophetical Office; I will but name one or two particulars about that, which is exceeding comfortable.

First, a wonderful Prophet he must needs be, for he is one that knows all the mind of God the Father perfectly, which certainly all the Creatures in

the world do not; take all the Angels in Heaven, and Men in the World, and they know not all that is in the heart of God the Father. Now Christ he knows all that is in the very heart of the Father, and whatsoever the Father doth, Jesus Christ knows it; in the fifth of Joh. ver. 20. For the Father loveth the Son, and showeth him all things that himself doth; there is nothing that God the Father doth, but he shows it all to Jesus Christ; and in the first of John, ver. 18. No man hath seen God at any time, but the only begotten Son which is in the bosom of the Father. This is a wonderful Teacher indeed, a glorious Prophet, we may well call him Wonderful in regard of his teaching. He is called (the) Prophet, and (that) Prophet in Scripture, because he is one that came from the bosom of the Father, and lives in the bosom of the Father, and whatsoever the Father hath done or will do, he shows it unto him, and therefore he knows all the mind of his Father, and knows all things that doth any way concern his Church, or whatsoever shall befall his Church, it is he that knows it, and is able to make it known as he pleases; and he is anointed by God the Father to be the teacher of all those that are elect ones, and that do belong to Christ, he hath taken the charge of every one of them, to teach and instruct them in all the mind of his Father; now next unto the Sacrifice of Christ, there is no one thing in Scripture of greater use than this to the Servants of God; believers many times go away, and say, oh I have heard of great and wonderful things, but we cannot understand them; oh do not go away discouraged, but remember the last thing that is said in the Sermon, that Christ is wonderful in his Prophetical Office, and hath undertaken the charge of thy soul to instruct it in all the mind of his Father, and so far as is necessary for thy Salvation thou shalt be instructed, or Christ must be unfaithful in his Office; now that cannot be, but except thou be instructed this must be so, for Christ hath the charge of thee. And

this is made in Scripture as a fruit of his being slain, in the fifth of the Revelation, ver. 6. And I beheld, and loe in the midst of the Throne, and of the four Beasts, and in the midst of the Elders, stood a Lamb as it had been slain, and he came and opened the seals, opened the Prophecies, and so fore-told what should befall the Church to the end of the World; it was a Lamb slain that did it, noting, that it is a fruit of the death of Christ, that those things which concern the Saints come to be opened and made known unto them, and Christ cannot plead to his Father, and say, that thou gavest me the charge of such and such, but they were dull and could not learn, and therefore that is the second thing.

2. That the dullness cannot hinder, whether they have strong parts, or weak parts, it is all one to the teaching of Jesus Christ, it may be a hindrance to a Ministers teaching, but if they come under the teaching of Jesus Christ, it is all one, whether strong parted, or weak parted, it makes no difference at all; and there is one Scripture that doth declare the faithfulness of Christ in his Office, and an infinite treasury of comfort it is to the Saints; in the fifteenth of John, ver. 15, there is an expression of the Prophetical Office of Christ, saith Christ there, Henceforth I call you not servants, for the servant knoweth not what his Lord doth; but I have called you friends, for all things that I have heard of my Father I have made known unto you. Jesus Christ knows the counsels of his Father perfectly, and all his will and mind; now saith he, all things that I have known of the Father, that is, that concerns you to know, there is nothing that I have known of my father from eternity, that any way concerns you to know, but I have revealed it to you; Christ he is the Prophet of his Church, to reveal to thy soul, if thou beest a believer, whatsoever he knows of his Father, all those treasures of wisdom, and counsels of his Father concerning thy eternal estate, Christ is designed

by his Father to make these things known unto thee, first or last thou must come to know what thou art capable to know. Oh how wonderful is Christ in this Prophetical Office of his, to undertake to teach all the elect from the beginning of the world to the end; this indeed is the reason why many poor weak people do understand more of Christ than many learned men do; you will say, We never can believe it, that such poor ignorant people should understand things of religion better than Learned men, and great Rabbis.

Thou speakest ignorantly, and carnally, thou dost not understand what the Prophetical Office of Jesus Christ doth mean, for God the Father hath anointed Jesus Christ to come to instruct his elect ones in all the mystery of godliness, and whatsoever he hath heard from the Father he tells them. When God the Father sent Christ into the World, he saith, Go your way; and this is the charge that I lay upon you, that whatsoever you have heard of me from all eternity, first or last, reveal it to those souls; it is a wonderful benefit that the Saints have by this Prophetical Office of Christ; and this is spoken to his Disciples, not as eminent only, but he calls them friends, in the fourteenth verse, And all things that I have heard of my Father I have made known to you; here is the fruit of Christ's friendship; you are my friends, and here is the fruit of my love to you; he doth not say, I have called you friends, therefore I will give you great possessions in the World; no, but I have called you friends, for all things that I have heard of my Father I have made known to you; for Jesus Christ to make known these blessed things that he hath heard of the Father, that are kept from the wise of the world, this is the fruit of Christ's friendship; therefore though Christ doth not give you Possessions in the world, though you be poor and mean, yet you may be dear friends to Jesus Christ.

Quest. How shall I know this?

Answ. Why? If Christ reveals to your souls those great things of eternal life that he hath heard from the Father, certainly you are the friends of Jesus Christ; oh that we could exercise our faith in this Prophetical Office of Christ, in which he is wonderful; when you would exercise faith upon Christ, exercise your faith upon him as a Prophet; Lord, I am weak and dull, but Lord thou hast anointed thine own Son to reveal unto me thy will, as much as concerns my everlasting good; look upon Jesus Christ as the wonder of the world in all these things, in his Kingly, Priestly, and Prophetical Office, and then do you honor the Son of God as the Son of God, when you look thus upon him. And then another Scripture we have in Joh. 17:8. I have given unto them the words which thou gavest me, and they have received them, and have known surely that I come out from thee, and they have believed that thou didst send me. When I was in thy bosom from eternity, thou gavest me such words, and diddest put this upon me, that I should reveal thy will to such and such, and every particular one was mentioned unto Christ, whom such words should be made known too; saith Christ, I have done it, I have given unto them the words which thou gavest me, and therefore Christ he is called the Word, especially in regard of his Prophetical Office, The Word was made Flesh, the Word was God; Christ comes to reveal the mind of his Father unto the children of men; as by the words of a man, the mind and counsels, and thoughts of a man come to be made known, so Christ was the Word of God; though I say not that this is all the sense from that, but there is a higher sense; but this is one thing aimed at, that by him the counsels of God come to be made known to the children of men, therefore Christ saith, That no man knows the Father but the Son, and him to whom the Son shall reveal him: He comes to reveal God to the children of men. And that may be a third particular.

3. The wonder of Christ's Prophetical Office, it is in the great things that he is sent to reveal, in the high things, the supernatural things, things that are so infinitely above the reach of reason. Let a man be elevated unto the greatest height of reason, he is not able to reach into the mysteries of godliness, no, as the Apostle saith in a place in the Corinthians before named, it must be the Spirit of God that searches the deep things of God; now this is the Spirit of God that is sent from the Father and the Son, that searches the deep things of God, they are deep, high, supernatural, glorious things that Jesus Christ doth discover; Oh there are unsearchable riches, the Apostle calls the Gospel, Unsearchable riches, rich things that have no footsteps at all in the creature; we can never come by any knowledge that we can have from the creature, to understand those things: There is nothing written in the book of Nature, in the great book of God's Creation and Providence, not one letter written of the glorious things of the Gospel: Now these are the things that Christ is wonderful in, to reveal things that are so high, and so wonderful and glorious, therefore in Luk. 4:22. When Christ was performing that Prophetical Office of his, the Text saith, That all wondered at the gracious words that proceeded out of his mouth; as if they should say, Oh here are wonderful things indeed, these are secret things indeed that we were not taught, they all did wonder at the gracious things that proceeded out of his mouth. It is true, before Christ was Incarnate, there was somewhat of the mystery of the Gospel, and our forefathers that were saved, were saved by the same Gospel, but the knowledge of the glorious mysteries of the Gospel were kept hid till that great Prophet should come into the world, and that is a special reason why all the time before the Incarnation of Jesus Christ, there was so little knowledge; God, and the way of eternal life was known so little, because the Lord would reserve the

Revelation of himself, and those great Counsels of his Will concerning man's eternal estate, he would reserve them for the great Prophet to come to reveal, and when Christ came, then broke forth light into the world; and as Christ comes to any place, so there breaks forth the light of those glorious supernatural things that are above the reach of reason, yea such things as Angels could never have understood, therefore I remember it is said in one place. That those things are made known to Angels by the Gospel, the Lord sending his Ministers in his Name to preach those things from Christ, that so the Angels come to understand further things in the mystery of the Gospel, than they did before; therefore they are things above the reach of any men's understanding whatsoever.

4. And especially, it will make the Prophetical Office of Christ wonderful, if we add to this a fourth consideration, that these things are not revealed to the wisest and the great ones of the world, but to such men and women that ordinarily have the least understanding in the things of the world, those men that have the dullest capacity to understand the reason of things in the world, those that are the most ignorant people in the world, why Jesus Christ chooses out them, and makes them to be apprehensive of the mysteries of the Gospel, such things as Angels themselves desire to pry into. Here is a wonder, that such poor, weak, dull, ignorant creatures, sometimes that can scarce be able to speak two or three sentences in good sense together to a man, yet that they should have the clear understanding of the chief mysteries in the Gospel, and such things as Angels desire to pry into, here is a wonderful work, and therefore we read in Matth. 21:15, when the poor children came to understand somewhat of Christ, When the chief Priests and Scribes saw the wonderful things that he did, and the children crying in the Temple and saying, Hosanna to the Son of David, they were

sore displeased. Mark how this is joined to the wonderful things, they saw the wonderful things that Christ did, and the children crying in the Temple, Hosanna to the Son of David, they were displeased. It is one of the most wonderful things in the world to see that sometimes poor young children, and such as understand but very little in the matters of the world, and yet that these shall come to understand the deepest mysteries of godliness, those things that exercise the understanding of Angels, and shall exercise them to all eternity, yet poor children and youths shall come to understand these things further than the great Rabbies and Doctors of the world, is not this a wonderful thing in the dispensation of the Prophetical Office of Christ? You make this use when you see poor youths come to have understanding in the great things of the Gospel, you think surely it is but a conceit: Oh, but rather make this use, let your thoughts be carried to admire at the wonderful dispensation of the Prophetical Office of Jesus Christ; and so in Matth. 11:25,27, you shall see what a wonderful thing it is made, even this dispensation of Christ's Prophetical Office, in ver. 25, and so on. At that time Jesus answered and said, 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. Now that the Father did hide them from the wise of the world, and revealed them unto babes, it was by Christ, though he thanks the Father, and that it was done by Christ it appears in ver. 27. All things are delivered to me of my Father, and no man knoweth the Son, but the father, neither knoweth any man the Father save the Son, and he to whom the Son will reveal him. All things are delivered to me; so that Christ here makes the revelation of God unto babes, to be the fruit of God's delivering up all things to him; All things are delivered to me, and no man knoweth the Father but the Son, and him to whom the Son will reveal him;

so that Christ having received all power from the Father, upon this it is that these babes come to have such understanding in the mysteries of godliness, and the wise of the world never come to understand.

And then that is very remarkable as we go along, that upon this ground Jesus Christ doth invite souls to come to him, Come unto me all ye that labor, and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. As if he should say thus, Conceive now as if Jesus Christ were preaching now personally to you, and he were saying thus to you, All power is committed to me by the Father, and as a fruit of this, that the Father hath committed to me, I do reveal him to whom I please, and none can know the Father but by me, I have the dispensation of all the treasures of wisdom, and the revelation of all the mysteries of eternal life from my Father; Oh therefore come to me, come to me all ye that labor, and are heavy laden; you labor under the burden of your ignorance, perhaps you complain, alas, I do not know God, nor understand the great mysteries of salvation; I pray, and hear, and yet I cannot come to understand what God is, Why come to me saith Christ, for all things are given to me, and if I reveal the Father, you shall know him; therefore all you that labor and are heavy laden, all you that see the need you have of the knowledge of my Father, and of the way of eternal life, come to me, and I will reveal these things unto you, and so will bring rest unto your souls. Wonderful is Christ in the way of his Administrations, and that is another consideration in the Prophetical Office of Christ.

5. But further, Christ is a wonderful Prophet in this, that he reveals things many times suddenly, he is not bound to those ways that any man or Angel is bound to; if a man or Angel would come to instruct others in the truths of the Gospel, they must instruct them by degrees, to understand one thing at once, and another at another time, and so deduct one thing from another in

that way, but Christ he can make known the things of eternal life in an instant to the soul. Whosoever comes to Christ, must be convinced of sin, and be emptied of himself, and be humbled, all these things are in every soul that comes to Christ; now all these things may by one beam of light be wrought that Jesus Christ shall let into the soul. As an Apothecary may get the very quintessence of all herbs in one drop, though you cannot see the herbs: so Jesus Christ I say, sometimes by one beam of light lets in a hundred truths into the soul, so that they do apprehend the substance of all those particulars that are spoken of, and there is a proportionable work upon their hearts to bring them to Christ; is not this a wonderful work of Christ? That a man that hath been an ignorant, sottish blind creature, a profane ungodly man, hating all godliness, perhaps he comes to hear a Sermon merely to scorn, as many have done, this man comes in the very heat of his wickedness, so that a man would wonder that some fruit of God's wrath comes not from heaven to strike him into the bottomless pit, yet it may be at this very Sermon, there shall be someone beam of light darted into his spirit, that may work his soul to heaven, possibly, if he should die at that instant; though it is true, ordinarily God begins to stir first, and doth it not all at once, but yet sometimes some that come into a Congregation most ignorant and sottish, and know no other God but Mammon and lusts, and yet coming to the word, at one instant God darts in that light into his spirit, as this man comes to have his heart turned to God, and comes to know his misery, and to know the way of salvation, and the Covenant of Grace, but not distinctly. It may be after this beam of light is darted in, God may come over again distinctly, and reveal to him his miserable estate by nature, and humble him more, and so he may have a little glimpse of this at one Sermon, and a little more at another, but at that very instant there may be

that let into the heart, that possibly may unite the heart to Jesus Christ, and save it if it should die at that present; here is a wonderful work in the Prophetical Office of Jesus Christ.

6. And then Christ is wonderful in his Prophetical Office, in this, he teaches the heart; no men, nor Angels, can teach the heart, but Jesus Christ; though men, or Angels may present truths before another man, and so convince the understanding, yet there is no men, nor Angels, can be able to say thus, I will so make known such a truth to this man or woman, as I will gain his heart by it, it shall transform his heart into the very image of that truth that I shall present unto him, no man, nor Angel can do it; but Christ he teaches so as no man teaches, Job 36:22. Behold God exalteth by his power, who teacheth like him? Now God teacheth by Christ in the administration of his Prophetical Office. Man may come and tell us, this and the other thing ought to be done; Oh but who teaches like Jesus Christ? None teaches the heart but Jesus Christ, Job 38:36. Who hath put wisdom in the inward parts, or who hath given understanding to the heart? Certainly none living, no Angel can do it, nor no man can do it, it is only Jesus Christ in the administration of his Prophetical Office, it is he that teaches, and prevails with the heart when he comes with truths, therefore when you see people come to hear many truths, and sit under a clear and distinct Ministry that opens many truths unto them, it may be many will get brain-knowledge that shall make them to confer about those truths, but yet not changed: you will say, What should be the reason why they that have so much knowledge live wickedly? Why here is the ground, Jesus Christ he hath not exercised this Prophetical Office of his so far upon them, to over-power their hearts, Here is the reason why such men have had knowledge in the brain, and yet lived wickedly a long time; yet if they belonged to Christ, at some other

time they shall come to hear the Word of God, they shall hear the very same truths they heard before, and perhaps delivered in a weaker manner than they have heard it, and yet their hearts shall be a hundred times more wrought upon at that time than ever they were wrought upon before. Sometimes a man comes by accident into a Congregation, and hears a Minister upon such a subject, and it may be a Minister by the by speaks of something that he little thought of perhaps before he came up, and this man hath heard the same truth largely handled, perhaps many Tractates about it heretofore, and his heart never touched, but now hearing it mentioned by the by his heart is mightily wrought upon, and he goes away, and saith, Verily God is in this place. What is the reason? Why here Christ speaks to the heart, and before man only spoke to the ear, this is a wonderful thing in the Prophetical Office of Christ, that he speaks to the heart; and thus should we exercise our faith upon Christ in this, when we come to the Word, look upon Christ by the eye of faith as the great Prophet of the Church, that teaches so as no man teaches, that doth not only speak unto the ear, but speaks unto the heart.

7. Further, Christ is wonderful in his Prophetical Office in this, In that he teaches immediately himself; indeed he doth teach mediately, that is by his Ministers, therefore you shall find Act. 1:1, there St. Luke speaking of Christ's teaching when he lived here upon the earth, saith he in ver. 1. The former Treatise have I made, O Theophilus, of all that Jesus began both to do and teach; why Luke is he that writ the Gospel, and the Acts, he writ the sum of what Christ did teach in the whole course of his life, and yet here he tells us that he did make a Treatise, and did relate what Jesus Began to do and teach; if one should have said to Luke, Why, did you not relate all that Jesus did do, and preach? Why Christ is dead now. But the meaning is this,

That indeed all that Christ did preach personally when he was here in the world, it was but a Beginning, Christ was to teach afterwards to the end of the world, and that he was to do partly by his Ministers that should be to the end of the world, he doth exercise his Prophetical Office by them.

And by the way, whensoever you come to hear any Minister of God to reveal anything of the Gospel to you, you are to look upon it as Christ exercising his Prophetical Office in this way; he is wonderful in teaching in this, that he doth not only by instruments, but immediately himself many times; where there is want of means, we may there expect Jesus Christ immediately to reveal the Will of his Father to those souls that do belong to Election.

8. And then Christ is wonderful in teaching, for he teaches infallibly, which none can do. Likewise many other particulars might be named in the wonder of Christ's Prophetical Office, but time doth slip me, therefore we will proceed to the next thing in the wonder of Christ, only take this along with you, That in your believing in Jesus Christ, you must believe in him as Christ, that is Anointed by the Father, King, Priest, and Prophet; and when you exercise your faith upon him in all these three of his Offices, then you will know what it is rightly to believe indeed. But to go on.

SERM. VI. THE THIRD SERMON ON THE EXCELLENCY OF CHRIST.

And his Name shall be called Wonderful. – Isa. 9:6.

Christ Wonderful in his Miracles.

Christ is wonderful in the Miracles that he wrought here in the World while he lived; in the second of Acts, ver. 22. Ye men of Israel hear these words, Jesus of Nazareth, a man approved of God among you by Miracles, Wonders, and Signs which God did by him in the midst of you, as ye yourselves also know. Never did any come into the World to work such great Miracles and Wonders as Christ did, and indeed all that ever did Miracles and Wonders, they did do them by Jesus Christ. Josephus that was no great friend to Christ, he was a Jew, and did not acknowledge Christ to be the Messias, yet he writing the Story of those times, could not but take notice of such an one as Christ; he did profess, that at such a time there was a Wise man did arise, which they did call by the Name of Jesus, that did work a great many Miracles; and saith he, If it be lawful to call him a Man. He was afraid to call him a man, because of the wondrous things that he did.

But if any of you say, How shall we be able to know certainly the truth of all those Miracles that he did? We read in the Gospel how great things Christ did; how he cast out Devils, and cured the Blind and Lame, and raised up the Dead, and the like, but how can we know the truth of them?

For the answer of that, Augustine hath this, Either all those things are true, or they are not true; if they be, then he is confirmed to be the Messias; but if they be not true, then saith he, this is the greatest Miracle of all, that such a supernatural Doctrine as that is, to believe in him that was crucified, to save the World, and for men to venture their souls and eternal estates upon this, without having this to be confirmed by Miracles at first, this is the greatest Miracle of all; but we will pass by that, only note it as we go, that Christ was wonderful in all the Wonders that he wrought while he lived.

Christ wonderful in his Glorious endowments and excellency of his Person.

But further, Christ he is the Wonder of the World, in regard of those glorious endowments and excellency of his Person, those Personal endowments and excellencies that he had; and herein he is the Wonder of the World.

Now the endowments and excellencies of Jesus Christ they are great and glorious, Thou art fairer than the children of men. It is he that received the Spirit without measure, it is he that had the Treasures of wisdom and knowledge dwelling in him bodily, and he must needs be the Wonder of the World; that Scripture in the second of the Colossians, doth show unto us what a wonderful Savior we have, it is such an expression that had we not had it from the Holy Ghost we should never have dared to have ventured upon it, as in Col. 2:3. In whom are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge; and then in ver. 9. For in him dwelleth all the fullness of the

Godhead bodily; what a high expression is here? All the fullness of the God-head doth dwell bodily in Jesus Christ; surely he hath excellent endowments then, he is filled with glorious things, his Human Nature is elevated and enlarged to the highest capacity that a Creature can have to receive excellency. And God hath raised up the Human Nature of Christ to show how high he is able to elevate a Creature, and make it capable for the receiving of Glory, that he might declare it to Angels and Saints to all eternity; I say, man's nature is raised to that height, that God might to all eternity make known to the Angels and Saints this thing, and say, Behold to what a height is mine infinite power able to raise a Creature, to be capable of happiness? Therefore Christ's Human Nature is so raised, and our nature in him, which should be a wonderful comfort to us, that our nature should be raised to so much glory in Christ.

And a great argument to us, to take heed of the abuse of Human Nature, of thy Body, and of thy Soul; oh that ever any one should be given up to that sottishness, that is, a man that hath Human nature in him, that should look after no greater good than merely to eat, and drink, and play, and satisfy his lust; dost thou know oh Creature that thy nature is raised to such an height of excellency, that God might declare to Angels and men what his power was able to do? And shalt thou that hast the same Nature, that art a kin (as it were) to Christ, shalt thou be so base and vile, to mind thy filthy and base lusts, and mind no higher good than this? The very thought of the raising our Nature in Christ, it is a mighty argument to raise up the thoughts of one that is a man, to a higher pitch than ever they have been; think thus, certainly my nature is capable of some higher good than merely to eat and drink, and play, and to have a little Money here for a while; why now that shows the personal excellency and endowments of Christ in general, that all

the fullness of the God-head doth dwell bodily in him, and therefore Christ he is called the Character, and the engraven form of the Image of God, in the first of the Hebrews; it is not said so of man; though man be said to be made according to God's Image, yet it is never said of him, That he is the brightness of God's glory, and the express Image of his Person, so as it is said of Christ; and in the Colossians you have mighty high expressions about the Personal excellency of Christ, chap. 1:15. Who is the Image of the invisible God, the first born of every Creature; and then he is the beginning of all things, ver. 18. He is the Image of the invisible God, as God and man, for so I must speak of him; he is the Image of the invisible God in another manner, and more fully, than any creature is, or possibly can be, for Jesus Christ, take him God and Man, he hath the very character and engraven form of whatsoever glory there is in the Father; I say, take him as God and Man, as thus, he hath an omnipotency in him, therefore it is said in the third of the Philippians latter end, Who shall change our vile body that it may be fashioned like unto his glorious body, (how) according to the working whereby he is able even to subdue all things unto himself. Now this is a great Mystery of godliness, that God-Man should have an Omnipotency in him; and then likewise he hath the express Image of all the knowledge of God: for as he is God-man, he is made the Judge of all the World, and he will be the Judge, not merely as he is God, but as God and Man; now seeing he is the Judge of all the World he must have an infinite knowledge, he must know the hearts of men, and all the works of men; and he must have an infinite Holiness and Justice that must judge all the World. And thus God-man hath an express Character of the Attributes of God, which none else hath; and then he hath an express character of the Immensity of God. If you speak of his Body, it cannot be everywhere, but God-Man is in all

places; thus you have it in the third of John, ver. 13, it is a very strange expression, and it can never be understood but by understanding the personal union of the two Natures. Why at that time he was speaking to them there upon the earth, and yet saith he, The Son of man which is in heaven. At this time he that is the Son of man is in heaven, his body could not be in two places at once, but God-man was then in heaven. Thus you see the excellency of Christ, in being the character of the Father, and having the Divine Attributes in him in another manner than any creature in the world could have that is a mere creature.

2. And then further, this personal excellency of Christ will appear, when we consider how Christ comes to have those excellencies, that he hath them all by virtue of the personal union. The human Nature alone it is but a creature if you take it distinct; But now this human nature is filled with all excellency from the Father; and indeed the Father is the fountain of all firstly; these excellencies that Christ hath, they come from the personal union immediately; now God unto other creatures gives them as it were of bounty out of himself, he doth confer from himself, he puts forth an act of power for the bestowing of such and such excellencies upon such creatures, but when the human nature of Christ was to be filled with such excellencies, it is by taking of the human nature of Christ into himself, as we say concerning sight. Philosophers have a dispute whether it be by taking in the species, or by sending out something from the eye. This may a little resemble this great mystery, there are some things that God bestows by sending out from himself, other excellencies he bestows by taking in to himself: Now all other creatures, Angels and men (but only the human nature of Christ) have all the excellency that they have by God's sending out from himself; but now all the endowments of Jesus Christ, and all his

excellencies, he hath them all from God taking of him into himself, that is, in a personal union, not taking him into communion with himself as his Saints, but taking him into a personal union, and so comes to have all excellencies in another manner than any other creature can possibly have.

Thirdly, Christ is wonderful, take him God and man, in this, That all his personal excellencies that he hath, depend upon himself; he is Independent, the excellency that Christ's human nature hath, it is, I say, Independent in this, that is, it depends upon his person; there is no dependence of the excellency that Christ hath, but upon the very person of Christ himself, all depends upon him, for he saith of himself, That he hath life in himself, so you have it in Joh. 5, it is spoken concerning Christ's excellency there, For as the Father hath life in himself, so hath he given to the Son to have life in himself. Indeed the Son is from the Father by an eternal generation; but now though he be firstly from the Father, yet now the Son hath life in himself, yea and eternally he had life in himself, and so what excellency the human nature hath, it doth depend upon its own person, which is a higher and a more glorious way of having excellency, than it is possible for anything else to have.

4. And then in the fourth place, hence Christ, even God man, he comes to be worthy of Divine honor, Divine honor is due to Jesus Christ that is God-man; there is no creature can partake of Divine honor by coming never so near to God, but only the human nature of Christ being personally united: Let a child of God, a Saint, be never so holy, because he comes to partake of so much excellency of holiness, he is not therefore to partake of Divine honor, nor an Angel; but now Christ, God and man, the very human nature joined with the Divine in one personal union, comes to share in the Divine honor that is due to him both God and man, and it is a wonderful Work of

God to bring that that is in its self but a creature, to come to have a share in Divine honor.

5. And then Christ is wonderful in this, that hence he is an infinite object of the Delight of his Father, not only as he is eternally begotten of the Father, but as he is both God and man, This is my beloved Son in whom I am well pleased, I am pleased fully in him, Jesus Christ is an object even adequate to the very heart of God the Father; Oh how should we take content in him! Certainly if he be so excellent as he is, as to give full satisfaction to God the Father, then he may very well give full satisfaction to your souls.

Yea, and God the Father manifests his satisfaction so fully in him, that he hath made him to be heir of all things, Heb. 1:2, and therefore he is said, to be the beginning of all things, all do subsist by him.

Yea, and further, there is that satisfaction that the Father hath in him, that God the Father did make all things for his sake; I say, all things in the world are made for the sake of Jesus Christ, Angels are made for his sake, and this world, and seas, all the work that ever God did, or will do to all eternity, it was for the sake of Jesus Christ, that God the Father might honor himself in Jesus Christ; that Text is very full for that, and we need no more, in Col. 1:16. All things were created by him, and for him. So that God hath a higher end in creating the world than you think for, God did not only create that he might manifest that he was a mighty God, and merciful, and bountiful, and the like, but God had a higher end when he made the world, it was to advance his Son, when he made the Angels, God would never have made them, but for the honor of his Son.

Oh what infinite cause have we to honor Jesus Christ; Oh how happy are they that live to the honor of Jesus Christ, by whom God may have glory

beyond a natural way! Did you consider this, that you were made for the honor of Jesus Christ, and the honor that God the Father would have from you is this, that you should live to the honor of his Son, and all other honor that you give unto God, except it be in order to his Son, it is not accepted, I say, whatsoever honor any man or woman doth endeavor to give to God, is not accepted of him, but in relation to the honor of Jesus Christ; therefore if you look at God in a mere natural way, and honor, and worship him never so much, as the heathens did, all this would not do; but now that honor that God hath in reference to his Son, when a poor sinner is sensible of the breach that sin hath made between him and the infinite God, and comes to see Jesus Christ, and seeks to advance Jesus Christ by faith, I saith God, here is the honor that I would have. And therefore when all the elect ones that were given to Jesus Christ to redeem, when they are all converted and brought to Jesus Christ, the world will fall about our ears, why, because saith God, I have the end that I made the world for, and now I have brought in all that do belong to my Son, and all those works by which my Son will come to have his honor eternally are done, let there be an end of the world, and the end of the world is like to be the sooner now; because that we see God is doing so much for the setting up of Jesus Christ in this latter age; as when a man's time is almost at an end for his work, then he doth work more speedily than he did before; now saith God, I have made the world for the honor of my Son, but yet to this day how little honor hath my Son had from the world? And there is a time, saith God, that I will manifest to all the world that I did make it for Jesus Christ, he did not make it for a company of Tyrants to do what they would in, nor for a company of profane people, to eat and drink, and follow their lusts in, but the end at which God aimed at in making the world, saith he, I will set up my Son in the world, and all the

works that ever have been done in the world, shall at length come in to conduce to the honor of my Son. And this shall be the great work that shall be done at the Day of Judgment, he will show to all the world how all those works that did seem to go most against Jesus Christ, how they were brought about for the honor of Jesus Christ: Oh blessed are those souls that come to see that all things were made for the honor of Jesus Christ, and so give glory to him accordingly. Thus you see what a wonderful Savior we have, that God hath made all things for him; Surely our Savior is glorious and wonderful.

6. There is one thing more, he is wonderful in his Endowments and Excellencies in this, that his Excellencies are in him to be conveyed to his people, Out of his fullness do all we receive, and grace for grace. Out of the fullness of all Excellency that is put into him. The Saints of God and elect ones, they draw all the excellency they have here, or shall have to all eternity. For you must know this, Though the Divine Nature be the fountain of all Excellency, yet it is not to be conveyed, but only through Jesus Christ; this is the great mystery of godliness, and this is the wonder in the Gospel that is so much above nature, that though God be the fountain of all in himself, yet he hath determined that this goodness of his shall be first let out to his Son, and so shall be conveyed through him to the Saints, so that all the gifts and graces we have, we must not look upon them only as coming from God the Creator of all things, but as coming from God through him, that is God and man in this mystical way; therefore if you say you look at God, and believe in God's mercy, without understanding the way of God's communicating himself, you may utterly mistake, it must be in Christ that we must receive grace for grace. Now that there should be such a thing revealed, that God should say, I will set up my Son, the second Person in

Trinity, to take your nature, and to be God and man, and he shall be as a Conduit to be filled with all things whatsoever, and you shall have as it were your pipes joined to him, and through him, you shall come to partake of what good I intend for you, This is the wonder of the world.

And hence it is that Christ is compared to all things that have any excellency in them; Is there an excellency in light, Christ is called Light, Christ is called Pearl? And Gold, and Rayment, and the Sun, and Living water, anything that hath any excellency in it, Bread, Wine, Milk, whatsoever in the creature hath any excellency in it, Christ is called by that Name, to show that all Excellencies are in him as one; As I told you that God's Excellency was such an excellency, as the very quintessence of all excellencies was united in one in him, so Christ hath the quintessence of all excellencies in him, and in him as in a conduit to be conveyed to all that God intends eternal good unto.

Oh what a Savior have we, my Brethren! Now me thinks this should be a very strong argument to draw your hearts to Jesus Christ, or at least to say as Philip said, Let us see but Jesus Christ, this wonder of the world, and we will never wonder at anything more in the world: Oh let us understand what Jesus Christ our Savior is; here you may see what a full object of your faith Jesus Christ is, and how you may venture your souls upon him, and your eternal estates; here is enough to draw faith, and encourage faith, and enlarge faith; and oh that God would be pleased, by presenting what Christ is, to work faith in some soul that hath not had it before; but now where faith is before this, look beyond your own worth, and your own enlargements: And thus in these things you see how wonderful Christ is. There remains two things more.

SERM. VII. THE FOURTH SERMON ON THE EXCELLENCY OF CHRIST.

And his Name shall be called Wonderful. – Isa. 9:6.

Christ is Wonderful in regard of the glory of the Father that shines in him.

We proceed: The Name of Christ is Wonderful in regard of the wonderful glory of the Father that shines in him; It is in Jesus Christ that God reveals himself, and appears both to men and Angels: It is true, somewhat we might know of the invisible things of God by the things that are seen, as the Apostle speaks in Rom. 1:20, by his great Works of Creation and Providence: but there is as much difference between the Glory of God that shines in all his Works of Creation and Providence, and the Glory of God that shines in the face of Christ, as between the glittering of a Glow-worm in a dark night, and the glory of the Sun in the full strength of it. Now only take this along with you, that God expects that those that do see his glory in Christ, should glorify him in another manner than those that see his glory only shining in the Works of Creation and Providence; that as there is much difference between the shining of the Sun in its full strength, and a Glow-

worm, even so there should be as much difference between believers glorifying God, and heathens, as there is between the Glow-worm, and the glory of the Sun; you should not satisfy yourself except you find that there is some such proportionable difference; for certainly if you have seen God in Christ, you have seen him wonderfully indeed; therefore in 2 Cor. 3:18, saith the Apostle, But we all with open face beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image, from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord. This Scripture hath very much in it, he speaks of the Gospel, and compares that to a Glass, wherein the glory of God shines, so as we may behold it with open face, and so behold it, as that we are changed into the very same image of it, from glory to glory, from one degree unto another. We may behold the glory of God in the glass of the creature, and never be changed into the same image; but when we behold the glory of God in the glass of the Gospel, we then come to be changed into the same Image, and still to be changed more and more; and with open face we do behold it. And in chap. 4, ver. 6. For God who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined into our hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ. Mark it, he is the knowledge of God, the light of the knowledge of God, and the light of the knowledge of the glory of God; and all this is, in the face of Jesus Christ; in the face of the creature there may be the knowledge of God, but the light of the knowledge of the glory of God, this is in the face of Jesus Christ. He that hath seen me, hath seen the Father, saith Christ to Philip; It was a maxim among the Fathers in the time of the Law, that no man could see God, and live, God was so glorious, that they thought that he could not be seen, but it would overwhelm any creature that was in the flesh that should see him; but now mark in that Prophecy that we have of the times of

the Gospel in Isa. 40:3. There is a Prophecy of Christ that is apparent, The voice of him that crieth in the wilderness, prepare ye the way of the Lord (which is in express words applied to John the Baptist the forerunner of Christ; And in the very same words) make straight in the Desert a high way for our God, every valley shall be exalted, and every mountain shall be made low, and the crooked shall be made straight, and the rough places plain; Then it follows in the fifth verse, And the glory of the Lord shall be revealed, and all flesh shall see it together; before no man could see God and live, Flesh was not able to behold God, but now when the Word was made Flesh, when the times of the Gospel came wherein God would make himself appear through his Son more clearly and fully, now all Flesh shall see it, shall see the glory of the Lord; now the glory of God appears wonderfully in Christ in these four or five particulars.

First, The glory of God's Attributes do shine more brightly in the face of Christ than any other ways; As for instance, The power of God appears infinitely more in Christ, than in making heaven and earth; for God to unite God and man together in one Person, is a greater work than making heaven and earth; there is more power of God put forth in the hypostatical union of the Natures of Christ, besides all the power of God that appears in the great Works that Christ did do, and in carrying Christ through all those great Works that he was carried through, than in making of heaven and earth. There is more power of God appears in the conversion of one soul to Christ, than in making heaven and earth: Then what power of God appears in Christ himself?

And the wisdom of God appears more in Christ, than in the creation of heaven and earth. Now for God to find out such a glorious way of Reconciliation as he hath found out in his Son, in this the wisdom of God is

more glorious than in all his works infinitely, the glory of God's wisdom in other things is darkened in comparison of his wisdom in this; If God had put it to Angels to find out a way of Reconciliation, they could never have guest at such a way as this is; that we should be reconciled in Christ, here is the glory of wisdom.

There likewise doth appear the glory of God's holiness more in Christ than in any other way; it is true, the Law is a glass of God's holiness, and those that cast reproach upon the Law, they spit in the very face of God's holiness; I but that is no such glass as Jesus Christ is, there we see the holiness of God in another manner than we can do it in the holy Law that God hath made. God never shown his hatred of sin so much as he did in Christ, and it cannot be devised by all Angels and men how it were possible to have such an Argument to manifest the hatred of sin so as it is manifested in Christ, that God should deal so with his Son, as he hath done for the sin of man; I say, if an infinite Wisdom should set itself on work never so much to find out an Argument to manifest the hatred of sin, there could not be a greater Argument: So that when God sent his Son into the world to die for man's sin, he did as it were say, I have many ways to manifest my holiness to the children of men, how infinitely I do hate sin, but here is a way that it shall appear to the uttermost, they shall see it in my dealing with my Son; certainly in Christ God's wisdom hath found out an Argument to make us all to be convinced of the infinite holiness of God, that God hates sin more than hell its self, and that we should do so too.

Again, the Justice of God appears in Christ, more than in anything else: It appears not so much in all the torments of the damned, as in God's dealings with Christ, in that he required such satisfaction from him as he did; when as we hear of the dreadful curses of the Law, and of the torments that are in

hell, we may thereby be put in mind of an infinite Justice; Oh how righteous is God in his ways there, and his Justice seems to be wonderful unto us: But when you behold in this red glass of the blood of Christ, God's Justice, it is a great deal more glorious here, than in all the damned in hell. If God should grant to any of you to stand upon the very brink of hell, and there to look into the pit, and see all the torments and tortures there, and hear all the cries there, then you think your hearts would be affected with the Justice of God, to fear it. I but when God makes himself known to you in Christ, when you hear of the sufferings of Christ for sin, God would have you to be more affected with his Justice, and to fear it more, than if you saw all the Torments of hell. And the truth is, there is no such way to set out the Justice of God, as to show the dealing of God with his Son for the sin of man. If I would preach but one Sermon that should be my last, of the Terribleness of God's Justice, I would speak of some Scripture that should show the terribleness of the dealing of God with his Son, and that would set out the Justice of God to be a great deal more glorious than anything else.

And so the glory of God's mercy and goodness is more in Christ than any other thing; we enjoy these outward comforts as a fruit of the bounty and goodness of God; I but what are all these to all the love of God in his Son? I remember a learned man compares all the good things we receive from God, from his general bounty and providence, and his love and mercy that appears in Christ, with a few sparks that come out of a burning furnace, and the heat of it within; look what difference there is between them, such difference is there between the love of God to us in all the comforts in this world, and the love of God in Jesus Christ; God he would have an Argument to manifest the infiniteness of his love unto his creatures, and no

such Argument as this, So God loved the world that he sent forth his only begotten Son.

And so the glory of God's Truth that is manifested in fulfilling Promises, any promise that is fulfilled manifests the glory of God's truth and faithfulness, but now the fulfilling that great Promise of God in sending his Son into the world, here the truth and faithfulness of God appears more gloriously than in all other; for there was never a promise so difficult as this promise; many men can be content to fulfil promises of smaller moment, when there is no great difficulty in the fulfilling of them, I but here is the greatest Promise that ever was, and there was the greatest difficulty for God to fulfil this promise of anything that ever God did promise; and indeed when as we hear that Christ was promised some four thousand years before he came into the world, and yet at length he came into the world, it is a good Argument to teach us never to doubt of the fulfilling of God's promises; And indeed the right apprehension of God's faithfulness in this great Promise of his Son, will mightily strengthen the faith of the people of God to believe any smaller promises, and not to stagger in them; and the reason why people are so ready to stagger in their belief about smaller promises, it is because they have not been acquainted with the work of faith in believing that great promise that God made with his people in sending his Son into the world; so that these Attributes with all other, do shine gloriously in Christ. No marvel then though the Angels upon the birth of Christ, they cry out, Glory be to God on high; as if they should say, Oh Lord, Here is one come into the world, wherein thy glory doth appear, and by whom thou shalt have glory to all eternity: Though Christ was but a Babe in the Manger, yet the Angels did see more glory in him, than in the highest heavens; they did not see so much cause to cry, Glory be to God on

high, from any object that ever they saw, as when they saw the Babe in the Manger, then Oh glory be to God on high, we behold thy glory shining here, and blessed are those that shall be enabled to behold the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ; who would not but have beheld the glory of God in his great works? What man or woman that hath any knowledge of God at all, would for a world but have beheld so much of the glory of God as doth appear in the great Works of Creation and Providence; Oh what comfort have the Saints in beholding the glory of the great God, when they look up unto heaven, and upon the earth, and in the seas! Oh but then the sweetness, and soul-satisfaction that there must needs be in the beholding the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ!

And this by the way would be a good evidence of your faith; have you beheld more of God's glory in the face of Christ than ever you did in all the world besides? Yea and hath the glory of God in the face of Christ, darkened all the glory of the world besides unto you? Have your hearts been taken with that glory more, than with all the glory that there is in the world? Why here would be a good evidence of faith indeed, that you have had a true and real fight of Jesus Christ; we cannot have a real sight of Jesus Christ, but we must certainly see more of God in him, than in all things else.

And then secondly, As the glory of God's Attributes, so the glory of the great Counsels and Works of God, especially in the governing of man unto his eternal estate, that appears in Christ above all.

As the great Counsels of God in Election, We are chosen in Christ, the great Counsels and Works of God in Vocation, Justification, Adoption, Reconciliation, Sanctification, and Glorification, these are the great Works that God doth glorify himself in, these are the great things that the thoughts

and counsels of God hath been from all eternity exercised about, whatsoever your thoughts are exercised about, yet I say, the thoughts and counsels of God have been exercised from all eternity about these great Works of his, Election, Vocation, Justification, Adoption, Reconciliation, Sanctification, Glorification, all these Works whereby he doth order and guide mankind unto an eternal estate. Now the glory of God in all these Works they are in Christ, Christ he is the head of our Election, and all are chosen in him; what is Vocation but a calling unto Christ, and revealing Christ to the soul? And so Justification it is in Christ still: And we are made children, adopted in him, and reconciled in him, and sanctified through him, and are to be glorified through him; all these great Works about which the heart of God is so much busied, the glory of God in all these, it doth shine in the face of Christ, and without the knowledge of Christ we could never come to know any of these things. What could the heathen know of God's eternal Election, or Vocation, or Justification, or Adoption, or Glorification, to speak such words to the Heathens as these are in reference to God, it would be barbarism; But now these are the great things of God that are revealed to Christians by Jesus Christ, we come to have all these glorious counsels of God in these great works of his to be opened to us, and Christ is wonderful in all them, and all those that did know what these things mean, they see the glory of God wonderfully in them.

Thirdly, the glory of God is wonderful in Christ, in that all the good and mercy that is in order to eternal life, that God communicates to the children of men, it is through Christ.

Now we mentioned somewhat like to this in the former, when we shown Christ's endowments, that from him we have all Excellencies; But now I only mention it to show how the glory of God the Father is in him, because

that God hath appointed him for the communication of all the good that he doth intend towards the children of men in order to eternal life; now the glory of God must needs be eminent in him this way; for God accounts it a great part of his glory to communicate himself to his creatures, therefore that through which he doth communicate himself, must needs be partaker of abundance of glory; God hath honored Christ in this, that he hath chosen him to be the instrument of the conveyance of all saving good to all the Elect. Now suppose there were a glass that all the beams of the Sun that ever could shine upon the world, were contracted in it, and no beam of the Sun could shine upon the world but thorough that glass, first it must come upon the glass, and shine thorough it, and so shine upon the world, surely this glass would be very glorious. You may conceive of Christ thus, Conceive of God the Father as the Sun, and of all his elect ones as the world, and Jesus Christ as the glass between the Father, and all the Elect; now all the beams of the love, and mercy, and goodness that ever shall come from God upon all his elect ones, they all come thorough this glass, thorough Jesus Christ; Oh how glorious is Jesus Christ, how wonderful is he then in that glory of the Father!

Fourthly, The glory of the Father is wonderful in him in this, that God the Father attains unto his greatest design, the great design that God had in making of the world, and in the preserving of the world; I say, God attains unto it by his Son, by Jesus Christ, And that design would be lost, if Jesus Christ did not bring things about for the glory of his Father. God hath made a world for his glory, and he preserves a World for his glory, but the main design that God had in making the world, and that he hath in preserving the world, it is to fetch about a great design that he hath only by Jesus Christ,

and therefore it is that the Father is so well pleased in his Son, because that by him he comes to attain the great design that he hath in making the world.

Quest. You will say, What is that?

Answ. Truth it is, we understand but little of it for the present, but we know in the general it is this, That he might have his elect ones eternally with himself to behold his face, and magnify him together with Angels for his mercy in Jesus Christ, that is the great design that God had; other men have great designs in their heads, but the greatest design that God hath of all, it is to fetch about his honor in his Son, and to glorify himself in his elect ones to all eternity, that is the great design for which he made the world, without which he would never have made it. And God, as I may so say, is well enough satisfied in the midst of all the dishonor that is done to him in this wicked corrupt world, with this consideration, Well, but my Son doth drive on my design, and this pleaseth me; no matter though I be dishonored, though my Name be never so much blasphemed in the world, yet my Son carries on my great design, and the glory I foresee I shall have in the accomplishment of that great design of mine, it doth so please me, that it is no great matter to me what wicked men that belong not to mine Election do. Christ is wonderful in this, that he carries on the great design that God had from all eternity in making the world.

And then lastly, The glory of God is great in Christ, and therefore wonderful, because it is through him that all the services and praises that God hath from his elect ones, do all come through him: As there is a reflection of the glory of God in the descending of it, when it doth descend upon the elect through Christ, so in the ascending of it again from believers it doth ascend through Christ, there is as great a necessity that when we tender up any honor to God, that it should come through Christ, as when

God lets down any beams of his glory, that that should come through Christ; Christ is as Jacob's Ladder, for God to come down as it were from heaven to us, and for us to ascend up to heaven through him, Eph. 3, last, Unto him be glory in the Church by Christ Jesus throughout all Ages world without end. Unto him be glory in the Church (but how) by Christ Jesus; except the glory that you tender up to God goes through Christ, God accounts not himself glorified in it; For whatsoever comes from God to you, except it comes through Christ, it will be to little purpose; so whatsoever comes from you unto God, except it comes through his Son, it is not accepted of God; therefore oh how wonderful is Christ in this, That such glory of the Attributes of God do shine in him? The great Counsels, and Works of God about man's eternal estate are all in him: And all the good that God communicates to his elect ones, all is through him: And the great design that God had from all eternity, he doth attain it by his Son. Lastly, All the honor that he hath from all his elect ones, it is through his Son. How wonderful is Christ then in regard of the glory of the Father in him? Only as we go along, remember that when we set Christ thus before you, we do it not merely to your understandings, that you may conceive thus of Christ, but as an object of your faith, you must exercise your faith upon Christ, as such a Christ in whom the glory of the Father doth so much appear.

Christ Wonderful in his Humiliation.

The next thing is, Christ is wonderful in his Humiliation; and indeed this may seem to be the greatest Wonder of all, at least to our sense it is, especially if we do understand what hath been said before of Christ, what a Person Christ is; now to hear what we shall hear of his Humiliation, will appear to be an amazing, and an astonishing Wonder.

As first, The wonder of his Humiliation is in this, That Christ, God and man, as you have heard before, should have all the sins of all the elect ones from the beginning of the world, to the end of the world laid upon him. For such a one as Christ is, infinitely beloved of the Father, and equal with the Father, accounted it no robbery to be equal with God, yet that he should stand before God the Father with all the sins of the Elect charged upon him, so the Scripture tells us, 2 Cor. 5:21. For he hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin: He hath made him to be sin for us; for Christ to be made a worm was a wonderful Humiliation, but for Christ to be made sin was a greater Humiliation than to be made a worm; surely this must needs be a wonder to all the Angels in heaven, for them to see such a one, whom they knew to be the eternal Son of God, equal with the Father, to stand before the Father clothed at it were with all the sins of the Elect. We read in Zech. 3, a kind of type of this, in ver. 3, of Joshua the High Priest, he was clothed with filthy Garments, and stood before the Angel, so Jesus Christ stands clothed with filthy Garments, he that is clothed with Majesty and Glory, yet he must come and stand clothed with filthy Garments before the Father. For one to be clothed with filthy garments, and yet to be in some room alone, that nobody should see him, is no great matter, but to see a great Prince to come out before the world clothed with filthy garments, it is a very great humiliation: But Christ that was infinitely above all the Princes in the world, he comes and stands before Men and Angels, yea before God himself clothed with these filthy garments. For a man to have sin upon him before other men it is no great matter, but for him to come into the presence of God with sin upon him, it is a terrible thing. But now the Son of God must do it, he comes into the presence of the Father, and stands with all the sins of the Elect upon him, what an object is here of Wonder? Luther calls

Christ the greatest sinner that ever was in the world, I confess that is somewhat hard, for it was but charged upon him, but his meaning is only this that I am speaking of: Christ had not only the sins of David, his Murder and Adultery, and denial of Peter, and the like, but all the sins of all the elect ones, from the beginning of the world, to the end of the world, which they were, or should be guilty of, charged upon him.

Secondly, The wonder of Christ's Humiliation it is in this, that he that was so high should be now brought down so low for the sin of man; is not this a wonder, that he that thunders in the heavens, should be crying in a Manger? Is it not a great wonder, that he that framed the heavens and earth, should work with a Carpenter in his Trade; that he that is the great Judge of all the world should be accused, and should be condemned as a Malefactor, and crucified among Thieves? That he that is the Lord of Life should die, that he that dwelt in that light that is unapproachable, should have darkness to cover him, that he that is the blessed God should be made a curse for the sin of man, are not these things wonderful in Christian Religion? And yet all these are things that may be said of Christ; for the Lord of Life to come and die, and that accursed death, this was a wonder that all the world seemed to be affected with, the very insensitive creatures; for at the death of Christ the Sun withdrew his light as being amazed with this wonder, not able to behold it, and the earth shaked and trembled, and the graves opened at this wonder, the very stones clave in sunder at this wonder; there was such a mighty concussion of things at this time, that it made one that knew nothing of the cause of it, One Dionysius, seeing the darkness at that time, and such great things which were done, cry out, Certainly either the God of Nature suffers at this time, or the world is at an end. So great a wonder it was that the Lord of Life should thus die an accursed death; Angels, yea all

insensitive creatures they stood amazed at it, and seemed to be exceedingly affected with it.

And then in the third place, Why, Christ may die, and yet not suffer so much to make us wonder, many of the servants of God have died cruel deaths; But then in the third place, There is a greater wonder in Christs humiliation, than in the sufferings of the servants of God, because though their bodies suffered, yet they had much freedom in their souls, they were filled with joy and comfort in the time of their sufferings, so it was in the Martyrs; Oh but it was otherwise with Christ, though he were the fountain of all consolation, yet Christ suffers in his soul, he was sorrowful in his soul to the very death, he gave his soul to be an offering for sin, and indeed the suffering of Christ's soul, was the soul of his suffering, the chief of his suffering, when as Christ was in the Garden, there he acknowledges that his soul was compassed round about with sorrows, his soul was very sorrowful; and in another Evangelist he began to be amazed, and a third Evangelist saith, he began to be filled with sorrow in his soul, and the very trouble of his soul was that that drew forth from him such a wonderful sweat as never was heard of in the world before, nor never since, nor never is like to be, that a man from distress and trouble of his soul should sweat so: Many a man when he is in fear and trouble of mind, he may sweat; but when did you ever hear of a man out of trouble of mind that did sweat blood, that blood should come and break through his skin, and run down upon him, and this through the trouble of his mind? For there was no bodily affliction upon Christ then, but merely the trouble of his Spirit, and he knowing what cup he was to drink, and the trouble that he suffered in his Soul, did cause the blood to break through his veins, and come to trickle down; and not some thin blood, for so I have read of one in Paris that was condemned to die, and

the very trouble of his spirit did cause some blood to come out of his body, but thin; but the Scripture tells us that there was clodders of blood; and when was this sweat? When he was abroad in the night time, and lay upon the ground, and in the Winter season: In a Winters night when he was abroad, and lay upon the ground, he sweat this sweat, and all from the trouble of his spirit: A man may sweat in Summer, and in Winter in the day time, or in a warm room, or in a bed, but for Christ in a Winters night, and lying upon the ground to sweat such a sweat, for clodders of blood to trickle down, never was Garden watered as this Garden; now who would not have accounted this a Wonder of all Wonders?

Here upon this ground lies groveling the Son of God, the same God that made the heavens and earth, lies here in trouble and anguish of his Spirit, while he sweat clodders of blood; certainly there was some great matter upon the Spirit of Christ at this time. We know it by experience, a Porter when he hath a great burden upon his body, he carries it while he sweats again: Oh but when you see Porters sweating under their burdens, remember Jesus Christ sweating under the burden of sin.

Besides that other expression, If it be possible let this cup pass from me, and then the second time, and the third time to do it again: Why the Martyrs have gone cheerfully to their deaths, whose deaths have been as cruel as the death of Jesus Christ, and more cruel for the outward part of it, but here even the great Champion from whom all the Martyrs that ever were, had their strength, he, when he comes to die, If it be possible let this cup pass from me, saith he; certainly he saw that which the Martyrs never saw: He suffered in his Soul.

Fourthly, Christ he suffered these things from his Father, that makes the wonder greater, and so his sufferings greater; he did not suffer only from

wicked men and devils, men indeed they are like themselves malicious, the devils are like themselves cruel, I but Christ he might have looked up to his Father, and have said, But oh blessed Father, thou hast said from heaven, that I am thy well-beloved Son: Christ would have accounted it no great matter to have suffered from men or devils, so be it that his Father had shined upon him; Oh no, but here is the wonder, and the greatest thing for Angels, and men to admire at, that God the Father he inflicts these sufferings with his own hand upon him, and the chief sufferings of Jesus Christ they were inflicted by the very hand of God the Father himself; for a King to come and take his own child, and scourge him, and put him to death with his own hand, we would say, There was never such a thing heard of! Yet thus it was in the work of our Redemption, God the Father takes Christ with his own hands, and puts him to death, For he made his Soul an offering for sin, it was he that bruised him: If you read Isa. 53:10, you shall find it was the Father that did it; And that was typified in Abraham's coming with his knife to sacrifice Isaac his Son, was not that a wonderful thing, that story of Abraham? Isaac must be sacrificed, and Abraham to sacrifice Isaac his only Son with his own hands, what a strange history is that? But that was but the type, here is the Antitype, here God the Father takes his Isaac, his only Son Christ, and sacrifices him himself; surely there was some great thing to be done, that God the Father should do it thus himself.

Fifthly, Not only God he comes himself upon him, and inflicts these evils, but he doth not spare him at all.

You will say, If God himself must be the Executioner, and come and lay his hand upon him, he will lay his hand gently upon his own Son. Nay, when Jesus Christ the Son of God came to take our sins upon him, the Father would not spare him one whit, but lets out the fullness of Justice

upon him, lets out his Justice to the full, Rom. 8:32, it is said, That God spared not his own Son, certainly if God would have spared any, one would have thought it should have been his Son: Oh here behold the Justice of God the Father, that when his own Son takes sin upon him, and that by imputation, he must pay to the uttermost farthing to Justice, yea though he prayed with strong crying's and tears, as in Heb. 5:7. Though it is true, the Father did carry him through, yet in this God would not spare him, notwithstanding any of his cries, but he must suffer to the uttermost, and pay the uttermost farthing that Divine Justice did require for the satisfying of it for man's sins. Many poor creatures think that having to deal with God who is a merciful God, though they have the guilt of great sins upon them, yet if they cry out to God for mercy, that God will spare them; why, art thou dearer to God than Jesus Christ was, thy sins are thine own, his was but by imputation, yet when he cried, he must not be spared? What thoughts must the Angels in Heaven have upon this when they see him whom they knew to be the eternal Son of God under the hand of the Father, and the Father not so much as to spare him in anything? Certainly if we do not know these things, or believe them, if we think to put off God lightly, if we think that a few cries to God at last will be enough to cause God to spare us, and pass by all our sins, do but know God in Christ, and a thousand of thy vain thoughts about God, and the pacifying God for thy sin, will vanish away and come to nothing, did we but know God aright in Jesus Christ.

Sixthly, Yea but yet further, there is a further wonder in this humiliation of Christ. God did not spare him; I but when God deals thus with his Son, will he leave him? For one to suffer much, yea and though it be much from God, yet so long as they may have the presence of God with them, that God doth not leave them it is not so much. But in all these sufferings, God the Father

leaves him, this is that is expressed by that speech, that wonderful speech of Christ upon the Cross, My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me; There was never a speech spoke in this world that had matter of so much admiration as that speech of Jesus Christ that was the eternal Son of God, in the midst of his sufferings, that he should thus cry out, certainly he did not mistake, what Christ apprehended to be, was, we many time may apprehend that God hath forsaken us, when there is no such thing, but certainly Christ was never deceived in his apprehensions, but what he did apprehend, it was true: But now what this forsaking of God was, it is a very hard thing, a great mystery, which is too deep for us to dive into, but that there was a forsaking, and that he was not deceived, but that he apprehended was real, that must needs be granted, or otherwise we must grant that Christ was deceived, which would be blasphemy for us to say.

Seventhly, Yea again yet further, the wonder in Christ's humiliation was this, that all this Christ foresaw, and yet did willingly undertake it to save mankind, see what the heart of Christ in his sufferings towards his elect ones, was, that rather than he would see them to be plunged into the bottomless gulf of eternal misery, he would put himself into it to keep them out, he did it willingly; When he did first undertake this great work with his Father, he knew what he should suffer, A body hast thou prepared me, it is written in the volume of thy book I should do thy will, and lo I come, I delight to do thy will, And what was it? It was the suffering of all these things that I have named unto you, and I have but even named them unto you.

Eighthly, And yet further, the wonder of Christ's humiliation (my scope is now to present as briefly as may be, as much of Christ as I can unto you, that you may have some help for your more clear apprehensions of Christ,

and how to make him the object of your faith) The wonder of Christ appears in this, that there should be such a way to save men as this is, that the Son of God should be thus humbled, and this we find clearly in Scripture set out to us; but that God would have such a way to save sinners, and no other, this is as great a wonder as anything, it is certainly the astonishment of the Angels, and the admiration of the Saints to all eternity; that the Lord should look upon base man, and that he should have thoughts to save him, that was nothing; but when God saw that if he be saved, he must be saved after this way, that God should as it were trouble heaven and earth for the saving of a poor wretched sinful creature, and though God saw that it would cost him so dear to save a soul, yet that he should go on with his work to save him, here is the wonder; but this is the way of salvation, and this is that that is infinitely above reason, not only above sense, but above reason; which of the Heathens could have imagined that there should have been such a way to save man by as this; Why how wilt thou be saved? I will cry to God for mercy, and break off my sin, and be sorry with all my heart, why if this were the way there was no wonder in that; but know oh thou sinner, whosoever thou art, that if ever thou be saved, that thou must be saved by a wonderful way; and the truth is, considering that this is the way of saving sinners, we may stand and wonder that any are saved; when you hear of but few that go to heaven, and that most people in the world perish, and when you come to hear the way of saving man, and what it cost, and the great difficulty of it, you may then stand and wonder that any should be saved: Oh whenever you think of salvation, think wisely of this, it is a wonderful work of God to save a sinner, and the most wonderful work that ever God did do; why, because the way of saving a sinner is so strange; and truly my Brethren, then doth God begin to work savingly upon the heart of a sinner,

when the sinner begins to stand and wonder at the way of saving, and till that time it cannot be conceived that God is beginning savingly to work upon your hearts. I appeal to your consciences, you that have gone on in a secure dead-hearted way, when was ever your hearts taken up in admiring at the way of God's saving sinners? Why, if it hath done so, that is a good evidence that God is beginning to show himself unto you in a saving way. But now if you go on, and have but low thoughts about the way of salvation, if your hearts do not sanctify God's Name in admiring at the wonderful way of salvation, know, that yet the Gospel is hidden to you, certainly you yet do not understand the counsels of God about the way of salvation, when your hearts are not taken up with admiring at the glory of God in it.

I will but leave this note of Trial with you, whether Christ be revealed to you; have your souls wondered at him, My Brethen? There are divers things that men wonder at in the world, and their hearts are taken with them, and all because they understand not Christ the great Wonder of the world. We read in Rev. 17, that when Antichrist had gotten a great deal of power, that the world did wonder at him, ver. 6. When I saw her, I wondered with great admiration, &c. Antichrist having a great deal of power makes men to wonder much at him. Now in ver. 8. The Beast which thou sawest, was and is not, and shall ascend out of the bottomless pit, and go into perdition, and they that dwell on the earth shall wonder, (whose names were not written in the book of life from the foundation of the world) when they behold the Beast that was, and is not, and yet is, saith he, those whose names are not written the book of life, that was written from the foundation of the world, they shall make a wonder at Antichrist, and at his great power, and at the way of his falling too. So in Rev. 13:2,3. And the Dragon gave him his

power, and his seat, and great Authority, &c. When the Dragon had given his power to the Beast, that is the Civil state and power, had given its power unto Antichrist, unto their Church-state, so that they had the Civil sword in their own hands, and were able by that Civil power to force all to come in to their Dictates, now the Text saith, That they all wondered at it; but who are they? In chap. 17, ver. 8, those whose names were not written in the book of life; so that carnal hearts now may be taken with the wondering after the pomp and glory of the word, and after the power of Antichrist, because Antichrist prevails in the world, but they are those whose names are not written in the book of life; those whose names are written in the book of life, they will never stand wondering at the excellency of Antichrist, because of his outward glory; no, Those whose names are written in the book of life, they have learned to wonder at Jesus Christ, not at Antichrist; let Jesus Christ be never so mean, and humbled, and low, and persecuted in his members, in his Ordinances, yet they see that excellency in Jesus Christ, as makes them wonder, and it is such a wonder as it doth darken all the wonders in the world besides.

SERM. VIII. THE FIFTH SERMON ON THE EXCELLENCY OF CHRIST.

And his Name shall be called Wonderful. – Isa. 9:6.

The point that we are upon you may remember is this, That Jesus Christ is the great Wonder of the world; As is his Name, so is he Wonderful.

9. There is yet more wonder in it if we consider that God the Father was well pleased with all this, it pleased him, so you may find in Isa. 53:10. It pleased him to bruise him. It pleased the Father; For God the Father taking such delight in his Son, and seeing him brought into such a low condition, not only to be in the form of a servant, but in the form (I say) and similitude of an evil servant, to be beaten, and so beaten by himself, and all this to please him, certainly there was some great matter in it, that God the Father should be well pleased with making his own Son to be a curse for man's sin, and yet this we find in Scripture, that it was a thing that well pleased God, certainly were it not for some great and wonderful design that God had to bring about, God the Father could not have been well pleased with such a thing, with the death of his own Son, and putting him to death, and

that to an accursed death, yet he was well pleased; certainly there was a wonderful design that God had to bring about by such a way.

10. And then further, the humiliation of Christ is wonderful in regard of the efficacy of his humiliation, that by his death, all the wrath, and the Justice of God should be as it were swallowed up in reference to all the elect, that the wrath and justice of God should be swallowed up in a few days suffering of Jesus Christ (of this man Jesus Christ) that God should account it as much as if all the elect had been under his wrath to all eternity, the efficacy of Christ's suffering is a wonderful efficacy, for it is an infinite efficacy, it is infinitely satisfactory.

11. Yea further, not only satisfactory to God's Justice, but it is that that takes away the sting and venom of all the sufferings of the Saints to the end of the world; the efficacy of Christ's humiliation it is in reference unto God the Father, and it is in reference unto the Saints; I say in reference unto the Father, it satisfies all his Justice and Wrath; And in reference unto the elect ones, it is that which takes away the sting and the venom of all their humiliations and sufferings to the end of the world; though God hath so appointed that his Saints that he sets his heart upon to do good unto forever, should here in this world suffer many hard things, be under grievous afflictions, yet there is such a way taken, as that Jesus Christ's sufferings should take away all the sting, the venom, the evil of their sufferings, and so Christ was wonderful in his sufferings in that regard: There was never sufferings, nor such a death in the world, that it should take away the sting of all sufferings, and death too, for so many thousands of people, and yet this did it.

12. And further, Christ is wonderful in his sufferings, because he suffered as a common Person, he did not suffer as a particular man, but we are to

look upon Jesus Christ in all the work of his humiliation as a common Person, and so all the elect from the beginning of the world to the end are looked upon by God the Father as suffering in him, as dying in him, as being made a curse in him; as the first Adam was a common person, and God looked upon all mankind as dead in him, in Adam, so the second Adam was a common Person, and in his death all the elect are looked upon as dying, and so as satisfying God's wrath for their sins in their own person, but virtually in him as in a head. And in this Christ was wonderful in his humiliation, and indeed we do not understand Christ's humiliation aright, except we understand it thus. We sometimes speak of the great sufferings of Christ, and so far we understand perhaps that this was for us, that he died for us, but we do not understand that we died in him, and that he was a common Person, and all the elect were looked upon as in him, as suffering in him, and satisfying God's wrath in him, why thus we are to exercise our faith upon Christ's humiliation; and indeed this is the mystery of the humiliation of Jesus Christ.

13. And further, Christ was wonderful in his humiliation in this, that by such a way he enters into his glory; that when God intended the greatest height of glory to a creature that ever was, or ever should be, that yet he would have such a way to lead unto it, as that Christ should first be brought into such a low condition, to be a worm, and no man, to be so accused, to be made a scorn of men, to be indeed in the lowest estate that is almost possible to conceive a creature here to be in, and yet that God should intend this to be the way to the highest degree of glory that is possible for a creature to attain unto, here was the wonderful counsel of God, the wonderful work of God; now you know that so it was in Christ, the Scripture saith, Ought he not to suffer these things, and so to enter into his

glory? God manifested in him what way he would have to bring us unto glory, that is by the way of suffering, by the way of Afflictions, by the way of trouble, to pave the way to glory by such kind of pavement as this, this was the wonderful work of God.

14. And in this further, here was the most wonderful Argument of God's hatred to sin that possibly can be imagined, and wonderfullest pattern and example of self-denial that ever was in the world, Christ was wonderful in this, in that in him there was held out the most wonderful Argument of God's hatred of sin, as if God would say, I will set mine infinite wisdom on work to find out an Argument to manifest my hatred to sin; there could not have been a greater, an infinite wisdom could not have found a greater manifestation of the hatred of sin.

And then he was in his humiliation, I say the pattern of the greatest self-denial that ever was, or ever can be. God holds forth his own Son to be the pattern of self-denial to all the world; the Lord sees how we are altogether for ourselves, how hard it is for us to deny ourselves; Well, saith God, I will not only require of you that you shall deny yourselves for me as your duty, and bound as creatures to do it to your Creator, but I will send into the World such a pattern of self-denial, as it is impossible for men or Angels to imagine a more wonderful pattern of self-denial, My Son, that is equal with myself, to come in the form of a servant, although he had right to all things, he shall empty, and deny himself to the extremity of all kind of misery.

And then that that makes up all the wonder is this, that all this should be done for us, for such poor worms, for such vile base creatures as we are; why might not men and Angels have thought thus? Why Lord, had it not been better for ten thousand thousand, and hundreds of thousands, and millions of such creatures to have perished to all eternity, than that thy Son

should be brought so low, to suffer so as he did? But no, saith God, I will manifest a great wonder in the world in this, that all this shall be done and suffered for poor worms (men) in whose eternal destruction I might have glorified myself forever; though it is true, I could as well have honored myself in their ruin and destruction, as I did in the eternal destruction of the Angels that sinned against me, yet I will show forth a wonderful work, that men and Angels shall wonder at to all eternity, that such and such things shall be done and suffered to save them, so unworthy, so vile; thus Christ is wonderful in his humiliation: And these things have been but briefly presented to you, that so I might give you a general view of the mystery of godliness that there is in the humiliation of Jesus Christ.

Christ Wonderful in his Conquest.

But now it follows further, that Christ likewise is wonderful in his Conquest, he is the most glorious and wonderful Conqueror that ever was in the world.

For first, What did he conquer? What doth he triumph over? What? He hath conquered even Divine Justice itself, as I may so speak; the Law, God's wrath and justice came even fighting as it were against Jesus Christ, and Christ encounters with them, yea he encounters with the Devil, and with Hell, and with Death; all these are enemies that Jesus Christ encounters withal. And certainly had any one but seen Christ go into the Lists to encounter with these Combatants, he could not but have stood amazed at it, Oh what will become of this Champion that is entered into such a combat as this is! But stay but a little, and you shall see him leading Captivity captive, you shall see him Triumphing over all, you shall see him conquering and saying, I have the Keys of Hell, I that was dead, am risen, and have the Keys of Hell and Death, you shall see him Triumphing over

Wrath and Justice, and the Law, and the Devils, you shall see him fetching all that he came for out of the hand of the Devil, yea here is the wonder of the Conquest, never was there a man that did conquer death but only Jesus Christ that had power over Death: All other Conquerors they may conquer men, and kill them, but they cannot conquer Death itself; now Jesus Christ's Conquest was over Death its self, to have the very keys of Death, and that follows, Death and Hell.

And further, which makes the wonder of his Conquest, he doth conquer death by dying, that is the wonder of it. What man conquers his enemy by being slain himself? Jesus Christ did so, he conquers all his enemies that came against him, he conquers them by dying, and therefore in Col. 2, it is spoken of Christ's coming to die upon the Cross: And having spoiled Principalities and Powers, he made a show of them openly, Triumphing over them in it. When Christ was brought upon the Cross, one would think he had been triumphed over himself then, for he was brought very low indeed when he was brought there to hang between two Malefactors, as if he had been the greatest Malefactor of all; now one would have thought that Devils and wicked men, and Death, and all had triumphed over him; but mark, the Text saith, That he did there spoil Principalities and Powers, and made a show of them openly, Triumphing over them in it. We can imagine somewhat of Christ's Triumph now in heaven sitting at the right hand of the Father, when he ascended into heaven, there he Triumphed; but to imagine a triumph of Christ in his Cross, when his enemies were scorning and contemning him, that then he should spoil Principalities and Powers, and upon the Cross Triumph over them, this is a great mystery of godliness, and herein is the wonder of Christ's Conquest, of Christ's Triumph.

And then further, the wonder of the Triumph of Christ consists in this, That he hath not only vanquished all the enemies of his people, but he hath vanquished them by his own power: Conquerors have use of the strength of others, but Christ had strength enough of his own without any addition, and he did not only quell the Adversary, but he turns all into good to his people: It is one thing for a Conqueror to overcome an enemy, so as an enemy shall not be able to do anymore hurt to those that belong to him, and another thing to subdue them so far as to make them all to be servants to him, that is a greater Conquest. Man by a strong Army may be a Conqueror by killing his enemies, and so never to hear of them more, but if he can subdue and bring them all to be useful and serviceable to himself and his people, this Conquest is a great deal the more glorious; now such is the Conquest of Christ, that he hath not only quelled their power, but hath brought all to be serviceable to his people, the Law is serviceable to them, and now God's Justice is for good to them, and the very wrath of God is now for their good, and the Devil, and Death, and Hell, and wicked men, they are all made useful unto Jesus Christ, and so unto his people.

Lastly, Christ is wonderful in his Conquest in this, that he conquered likewise as a common Person, as a head, and in him he hath made all his Saints Conquerors, yea the Scripture saith that they are more than Conquerors through Jesus Christ, in him they are looked upon as having overcome all those: Thou that art the weakest in thyself, and art able to do least, art afraid of every expression of God's wrath, and terror of the Law, of the threats of wicked men, of the temptations of the Devil, of the very thoughts of Death or Hell, yet I say, if thou beest a believer, thou hast conquered all these already, they are not only conquered to thy hand, but thou hast conquered them all, that is, virtually in thy head, thou art made a

Conqueror over Sin, and Death, and Hell, and as in Christ thy head, so in some measure in thyself, that is, Christ hath put such a principle into thy heart as will conquer all thine enemies that come against thee, in due time, so that this is the glory of Christ's Conquest, and he is wonderful in it.

Now more particularly there is following the Conquest of Christ, Christ's Resurrection, and his Ascension, and his sitting at the right hand of the Father, and his coming to Judgment: In all these we have a wonderful Redeemer. I very briefly present all these before you, but in a few words to show you a little of the mystery of godliness in every one of these, that so I might in a very little narrow compass, present the chief glory of Jesus Christ unto you, I mean the heads of it; though we cannot tell you the thousandth thousandth part of the glory of Christ.

Christ Wonderful in his Resurrection.

Christ was wonderful in his Resurrection; there was never such a Resurrection, nor never shall be, as Christ's was. That Christ rose from the dead, I suppose you all know, but now the mystery of godliness in this, and the wonderful work of God in it, In Rom. 1:4, it is said, That Christ was mightily declared to be the Son of God in his Resurrection from the dead.

You will say, Why, others rise too, both godly and wicked shall rise, how is Christ wonderfully and mightily declared to be the Son of God by the Resurrection from the dead?

Why thus, Christ he undertaking to satisfy for man's sins, to pay the debt that man did owe to God for his Sin; God the Father comes upon him, sues out the Bond, casts him into Prison, into the Gaol: Now when Jesus Christ did arise from the dead, there was a declaration to all the world that he had satisfied the debt fully to God the Father, that he had paid fully what Divine Justice did require for the sin of man; now this was a mighty declaration of

Jesus Christ to be the Son of God; had he not been the Son of God, he could never have rose again, having died upon such terms as he did; Christ did die to satisfy God's wrath, and undertook this, Lord I am content to come under the bonds of death till thine infinite Justice shall say, That it is satisfied, that it hath enough: If all the Angels in heaven, and men on the earth had undertook such a work, and said, Lord, Let us all die, and abide under the power of Death, until thine infinite Justice shall say, It is enough, they must have abode to all eternity under it, they could never have come out of Prison, but have lain there; but now Christ he undertook this work, and was content to be under the power of Death till God should fully discharge him, as being satisfied; God saith at length I am satisfied, Let the prison doors be opened, let him go; so that when Christ comes out of the Grave, now he is declared before men and Angels mightily in a wonderful manner to be the Son of God; and it is upon this that the Scripture saith in Psal. 2. Thou art my Son, this day have I begotten thee, which is applied by the Apostle in Act. 13, and some other Scriptures unto Christ's Resurrection.

This is now, as if so be that Christ had been begotten but that day; why Christ was the begotten Son of the Father from all Eternity.

I but Christ coming under the charge of man's sin, and under the power of death, all the while he was in that low estate of humiliation, he doth not appear like the Son of God before the world, but when he comes and gets the power over all, and is acquitted and rises again, now he doth appear like himself indeed, the only begotten Son of the Father, he is now mightily declared to be the Son of God; and in this the Resurrection of Jesus Christ was wonderful, for the wonderful power and efficacy that there is in it; Christ being acquitted, all the elect were in him acquitted, all were acquitted in him virtually, though there is another acquitting personally when they

believe: At the very time of Christ's Resurrection, all the Elect were acquitted as in a head, yet I say, There is another acquitting from God in one's own person, that is upon believing: From hence that notable Scripture we have in 1 Pet. 3:21. The like figure whereunto, even Baptism doth now save us (not the putting away of the filth of the flesh, but the answer of a good conscience towards God) by the Resurrection of Jesus Christ.

What answer is this that the Apostle speaks of? And how is this answer by the Resurrection of Jesus Christ?

The answer that here the Apostle speaks of, it is an answer unto all demands that God's Justice, that the Law, that the Devils can make, for any punishment that a sinner hath deserved: If God's Justice should say to a sinner, Thou hast sinned, and therefore thou must die, thou must be punished, thou must satisfy Justice.

If the Devil should come and demand that the Threats of God should be fulfilled because here is a sinner.

If thine own conscience should in the Name of God demand that thou shouldest answer for thy sin.

A good conscience by the Resurrection of Jesus Christ, is able to make answer to all these demands: A good conscience, that is, one that hath a good conscience can make answer through Christ's Resurrection, and say, Why are these things demanded of me? Christ hath satisfied for all, he hath satisfied for my sin, and paid my debt, and is risen again. Hath not God the Father acquitted him in raising him from the dead, and therefore in him all is satisfied, and this is the answer I make to all the Bills that are put in against me. If there be Bills put in against men in any Court, they come and make answer; Whatever Bill can be put in against a believer, if the Law of God, or any Temptation should put in any Bill, saith a believer, here is my

answer, That all is satisfied in Christ: Now this is by the Resurrection of Jesus Christ; if Christ had died, yet if he had not risen again, thou couldest not have made answer, That all is done, all might have been doing, but thou couldest not have made answer that all is done; but by the Resurrection of Jesus Christ, thou canst make answer to any demand.

And observe, That this is the answer of a good conscience. Men and women that talk so much of faith, and yet have evil consciences, they cannot make this answer by the Resurrection of Christ: Those that tell you we are to believe, and God looks at nothing else but believing: It is true, if they understand it aright, in the point of Justification, that is the thing that is for the justifying of a person, but there is somewhat more that is required of a justified person, and therefore no person can make this answer, by the Resurrection of Jesus Christ, but such a one as hath a good conscience: The answer of a good conscience (saith the Text) by the Resurrection of Jesus Christ: If thou hast a corrupt and vile wicked conscience, thy conscience flies in thy face for sins that thou livest in, know, that thou canst never make answer (to those demands that shall be made against thee) by the Resurrection of Jesus Christ, with any comfort, till thy conscience comes to be purified by faith: That is the wonder of Christ's Resurrection, mightily declared to be the Son of God.

And in his Resurrection, there is a Resurrection of all the Saints, all the elect ones; for the Scripture saith, That he was the first fruits from the dead, that is, that look as the first fruits did sanctify all the rest, and all were consecrated in the first fruits being offered to God: So all the elect ones in Christ's Resurrection did rise again, I say, virtually in him, and it was a pledge of their Resurrection, the Resurrection of their souls spiritually to life here, and their Resurrection to eternal life, and so we are to exercise our

faith upon Christ's Resurrection; this is the mystery of godliness in Christ's Resurrection, and hence is that known place in 1 Tim. 3:16. Without controversy, saith the Text, great is the mystery of godliness, God was manifested in the flesh, justified in the Spirit.

A wonderful mystery there is in godliness; why what mystery?

God was manifested in the flesh, the Son of God came and took our nature upon him, that was wonderful, but this is as great a wonder as the other, Justified in the Spirit, it is all one as by being justified upon his Resurrection, by the power of the Spirit he was quickened, and life was put into him, and so he rose again, and thereby was declared before all the world to be justified, to stand acquitted from all the charge of our sins that was upon him; and so if you compare that place Justified in the Spirit, with that in 1 Pet. 3:18. Put to death in the flesh, but quickened by the Spirit, that is, by the power of his God-head he was quickened, upon his Resurrection; now that that one Apostle saith (quickened) another saith (justified) to show, that when he was quickened, that is rose again by the power of his Deity, then both he, and all the elect ones stood just in the presence of God, acquitted of all their sins, and this is the mystery of godliness.

There is abundance in every one of these, but it is not my purpose to handle the Resurrection of Christ, or his Ascension, but merely to give you a little glimpse of the mystery of godliness that there is therein, that you may understand him aright, so as you may be able to exercise your faith upon him, not only Dying and Humbled, but Conquering and Rising.

Christ Wonderful in his Ascension.

And for the Ascension of Christ into heaven the manner of it was wonderful. There comes a cloud and carries him up, and the Disciples

stands gazing; it was a wonder to be gazed at, the Ascension of Jesus Christ, body and soul into heaven, in that glorious way.

But especially if we consider that Christ ascended likewise as our head, ascended into heaven as the High Priest went into the Holy of Holies: And it is said, that we are set together in heavenly places together with Christ, so you have it in Eph. 2:6. And hath raised us up together, and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus: For Christ went as in our names to take possession of heaven, this is the mystery of godliness in Christ's Ascension: He went up to Heaven, but he went in the name of the Elect to take possession, as a man that hath bought house and lands, may have one appointed by him to go in his name to take possession of the house and land, Jesus Christ in the name of all the elect from the beginning of the world to the end, went up unto heaven to take possession there, and on purpose to prepare Mansions for them against their coming: Thus wonderful was Christ in his Ascension.

Christ sitting at the right hand of the Father.

And in heaven Christ sits at the right hand of the Father, thereby declaring that God the Father was well-pleased with all that he hath done, because he sets him at his right hand; after Christ had made an end of all his work, he is said to sit down, in Heb. 10:12. This man after he had offered one sacrifice for sins forever, sat down on the right hand of God; he had done his work, and God the Father approves of him, and so honors him in setting him at his right hand, and there gives unto him all power to rule together with himself, as you heard in his Kingly Office, and there he is to make Intercession continually for his Elect, and hath that weight of glory put upon him that is possible for human nature to have put upon him, that is the meaning of sitting at the right hand of God; these four things are meant by it.

First, When he came to heaven, God the Father, that he might acknowledge that his Son had fully done the work that he was sent into the world about, he doth honor him by setting him at his right hand.

Secondly, He gives unto him all Authority and Power to Reign together with himself.

Thirdly, There he is as the High Priest to make Intercession for his Saints, to be their Advocate continually at the right hand of the Father to make Intercession for them.

And then fourthly, It is to signify that Christ hath the highest degree of glory, that it is possible for human nature to be capable of; Therefore you must not understand the right hand of God in a corporeal way, as if God had right hand or left, but sitting so in those four respects as I have named: And all these make Christ a wonderful Redeemer, he that shall come up to God the Father in Heaven, and to have God own his being fully pleased with what he did upon the Earth, and there setting him upon his own Throne, to reign with him, and there to be forever to make intercession for the Saints, and to have the height of all glory to be bestowed upon him; Certainly this is a wonderful Redeemer.

Christ wonderful in his coming to Judgment.

And then Christ shall in a wonderful manner come to judge the world again, then he shall come to be admired indeed; so you have it in 2 Thes. 1:10. When he shall come to be glorified in his Saints, and to be admired in all them that believe: Those that do believe in Christ, they see him to be wonderful; now they do admire at him; but when he shall come again in glory at the great day, then he shall appear so wonderful, as they shall all stand admiring, and saying, Well we indeed heard that our blessed Savior was the wonder of the world, and we saw so much as made us admire at his

glory; but we never thought that we had had such a glorious Savior, as now we see we have; wonderful and glorious is Jesus Christ now, but when he shall come with his thousand thousands of Angels, and when there shall be such a wonderful change in the world, the Elements melt with fervent heat, and the Heavens depart like a scroll, and the Heavens and Earth shaken, and all the Princes and Monarchs in the world, and all the children of men appearing before him: Oh wonderful then shall he be in his attendance, and then in his own person.

Wonderful shall he be then in the manner of his proceedings, in bringing forth all the books of God's forbearance, and the books of men's conscience, and the book of the word to proceed with men and Angels for their eternal estate, in this Christ will appear then to be wonderful: Thus Christ is wonderful in his humiliation, and in his exaltation: But further, a word or two more.

Christ wonderful in his working towards his Saints, and in the high esteem that the Saints have of him.

Great and marvelous are thy works, O Lord God Almighty, who would not fear thee, O thou King of Saints! The great things that Christ doth in the world towards his Churches, are wonderful, and the great esteem his Saints have of him, they account all things as dung and dross for the excellency of the knowledge of Jesus Christ.

And he shall be wonderful eternally hereafter in the highest Heavens, and there he will be the matter of the wonder of all the Angels and Saints; and the matter of the admiration, and the praises that God shall have to all eternity, it shall be from what the Angels and Saints do see in Jesus Christ; therefore surely he will be wonderful in Heaven.

And then wonderful, when the understandings of the Saints shall be elevated to the highest pitch that they are capable of: sometimes we do wonder at things, because of our ignorance; ignorant people will wonder almost at anything; at the works of Arts and Sciences, they wonder, because they know but little, but now that, that the most understanding man in the world shall wonder at, certainly it hath some great excellency in it: Now Christ shall not be the wonder of the Saints only while they are here in in this world, but when they shall be in Heaven, and have their understandings enlightened and enlarged to the height that possibly they can be enlarged to, and yet even then Christ shall be their wonder, and they shall wonder at Christ more than they do now abundantly: Certainly that hath real excellency in it indeed, and great excellency, that the more understanding a man is, the more he shall admire at it: perhaps poor people they may wonder at some men for their parts, yet if they had any great understanding themselves, they would see such a man's parts had little in them; but if a man had such parts, that the more any man came to understand him, the higher in degree their understandings were, the more they should wonder, certainly this man had a great deal of excellency in him indeed: So it is in Christ, that when the Saints shall be elevated to the height, they shall so much the more admire at him.

Further, In Heaven Christ shall be wondered at forever; many things are wondered at for the present, I but the wonder quickly ceases; we use to say of strange things, they are but of nine days wonder, but Jesus Christ is not only a wonder at first, when the soul comes first to embrace Jesus Christ: It is true, poor sinners at their first embracing Jesus Christ, for the very novelty of those things they see in him, they do admire at them, they never did understand such things before; but the truth is, if that grace be true, thou

shalt not only wonder when thou comest to Christ at first, at the excellency in him, but the longer thou continuest a Believer, the more thou wilt wonder; and when thou comest to Heaven, after thousand millions of millions of years, thou wilt wonder as much at him as thou didst the first moment; those men that have made profession of Religion, and seemed to come to Christ, they wonder at first hearing of the Gospel, like the stony-ground, that received the word with joy, Oh how wonderfully are they affected at the first hearing of the glorious things of the Gospel! But now mark, their wonder quickly ceases, and their joy ceases within a little while; they do not now see so great excellency to admire at it, neither have they so great joy; but where there is true Faith, there the soul doth not only wonder at Christ, at his first coming to Christ, but still more and more to all eternity.

And now my Brethren, me thinks that all wonders in the world should lie by a while, upon this wonder of Christ's being presented to you; and as we read in Dan. 6, of one that came in a vision, and said, Gabriel, make this man to understand the vision; so shall I call to a Gabriel? No, to Jesus Christ, to the Immanuel, he that is the great wonder; Oh blessed blessed Redeemer, make these souls to understand these things, to understand somewhat of this wonder; we have many wonders of our own, and we tell this and that news, but O that Christ would but show himself now to your souls, that you may understand somewhat of this wonder, that your hearts may be forever taken off from wondering at anything in this world: I have seen, saith David, an end of all perfection, but thy Law is very broad: So we may say, and the heart would say that were brought to Christ, Oh Lord, I have seen an end of all the great things in the world, but Jesus Christ is very great and glorious indeed, it is he that hath darkened all the glory that there is in the world, but now I may say of all these things, as it is said of Daniel,

in chap. 12, ver. 10. None of the wicked shall understand, but the wise shall understand these things that are spoken of Christ; the wicked they will not understand, those that God hath not given unto Jesus Christ will not understand, but they will be content to part with Christ for anything for all this: O detestable wickedness that there is in the heart of man, that after this that hath been revealed to you about Christ, so much of his glory held forth for the wonder of the world, that after this yet thou shouldest prize thy base lusts before all the good and the glory that there is in Jesus Christ: certainly that man or woman must needs have the Angels in Heaven, and all the Saints to acknowledge the righteous judgment of God in the condemnation of them, that hath lived under the Gospel, and hath heard what a wonderful Savior is come into the world, if such a one should yet go away, and prize a base filthy lust before all the good and glory that there is in Jesus Christ; take heed of this: certainly if it be so, if any of you be found at the great day still going on in the ways of known fins, this will be your charge,

You lived in such a place wherein you heard that my Son was the great wonder of the world, and glorious things were shown you, to allure you to believe in him, and yet he was nothing in your eyes, but your own vile lusts were more glorious in your eyes: O just and righteous is the condemnation of this creature forever; certainly the sin of unbelief, the sin of rejection of Jesus Christ must needs be a dreadful sin, because Jesus Christ is so great a wonder as you have heard.

SERM. IX. THE SIXTH SERMON ON THE EXCELLENCY OF CHRIST.

And his Name shall be called Wonderful. – Isa. 9:6.

Now we come to the Application of all, which is the work of this exercise.

First, Certainly Jesus Christ is little known in the world, if this be he, this great wonder of the world: Oh how little is Christ known! Christ is but a mere Notion and Imagination to most people in the world; you heard the very sound of this name, and how Christ came into the world to save sinners; but I appeal unto your consciences, when were your hearts taken with the admiration of the glory of God shining in the face of Jesus Christ? Hath Christ been made the greatest wonder in the world unto you? Some of you have seen many wondrous works of God, some of you perhaps in the Seas, or abroad in other Countries, or if not there, yet you have seen the Heavens, and the Earth, at which you many times wonder; but when did God dart light into your spirits, to cause you to see so much of Jesus Christ, as made him to be the great wonder of all his works? Certainly that soul knows not God nor Christ savingly, that knows him not as the wonder of the

world; it is impossible that such a poor creature as man is should come to understand such great mysteries of godliness as are in Christ in any measure, but must needs admire at the glory of that great work, and say with acclamation, Oh the height, and depth, and breadth, and length of the glory of God, his Wisdom, and Mercy, and Truth, and Power!

Many Notes of Trial there may be of Faith, but I know not any one more familiar than this is (at least negatively, it must needs be a true Note) that is, that there cannot be Faith without it, namely, if the heart hath not been taken up with the wonder of Christ, so as all the wonders in the world have been darkened in the soul in comparison of Jesus Christ.

Secondly, If Christ be so great a wonder, then O how vile a thing is it for the hearts of men to prefer any base filthy lusts before Jesus Christ? When God hath manifested him in that wonderful way unto the children of men, and so much of his glory in him, yet that their hearts should be taken off from him, and every base lust to be preferred before him, Oh how just must the condemnation of such be forever! We may take up that complaint that there was in Psal. 106:7. Our Fathers understood not thy wonders, saith the Psalmist: So the truth is, as our Fathers did not, so few there are that understand the wonders of the Lord in Jesus Christ; and therefore everything is preferred before him; with what infinite indignation must God needs look upon that wretched soul, that shall prefer every base lust before Jesus Christ? I remember a speech of Chrysostom, speaking of that Text, That our vile bodies shall be made like unto the glorious body of Christ, saith he, were all the world turned into tears, yet they were not sufficient to lament the misery of that soul that forsakes Jesus Christ: his heart was so much taken with the excellency of Jesus Christ, that he thought it impossible to lament the misery of the creature that should forsake him: and

so St. Paul having his heart filled with the glorious Mystery of Christ, he breaks forth with this dreadful curse, He that loveth not the Lord Jesus Christ, let him be Anathema Maran-atha, as if St. Paul should say (having his spirit filled with the glory of Christ) Oh what shall God manifest so much of his glory in his Son, and shall base wretched vile creatures prefer their lusts before him, and have their hearts taken up with other vain things, and not love the Lord Jesus Christ? Let that soul be cursed with a bitter curse, saith Paul; such a soul doth deserve indeed to be cursed with a bitter and an eternal curse, that shall hear so much of Jesus Christ, and how God hath revealed himself in that wonderful way in his Son, and yet that soul shall not be willing to forsake a base lust for all the good there is in Jesus Christ; let that soul be cursed with a bitter curse: It deserves above all creatures to have the most bitter curse to be upon it to all eternity: certainly the more glory there is in Christ, the more dreadful will the condemnation of wicked men be, This is (the) condemnation, that such glorious light is come into the world, and men chose darkness rather than light. How many hear of Christ, and mind little, but only have a noise, they hear some strange things of Christ, and let them pass by, and think there is little reality in what they hear, but the only real comfort is in satisfying of the flesh in the lusts of it. In Act. 13:41, we have an excellent Scripture for the reproof of such that hear the Gospel, and mind it not; Beware therefore, lest that come upon you which is spoken of in the Prophets, Behold ye despisers, and wonder, and perish, for I work a work in your days, a work which ye shall in no wise believe, though a man declare it unto you: It is spoken concerning Christ, as appears in the verse before, And by him all that believe are justified from all things, by which ye could not be justified by the Law of Moses: Now then it follows, Beware therefore lest that come upon you, which is spoken of in

the Prophets, Behold ye despisers, and wonder, and perish; as if he should say, you hear the Gospel about the glorious way that God hath to reconcile sinners to himself, to justify sinners, but in the meantime your hearts do close with your own Conceits, and your own ways, with the Law of Moses, and think by your own good meanings, and your own good works, that you shall do well enough, and shall stand before God; but saith the Apostle, Beware lest that come upon you which is spoken of in the Prophets, Behold ye despisers, and wonder: you perhaps, when you hear such things declared unto you, you account it strange doctrine, and you stand and wonder what the meaning of those things should be; but as you wonder, so you do despise; you condemn it as a strange thing that you were not wont to hear heretofore, and as a thing you cannot understand the reason of; this is the usual guise of carnal hearts, when they hear any doctrine, though there be never so much of God in it, and of the Mystery of the Gospel that is revealed in it, yet if they understand not the reason of it, if it appear to them as a new thing, they wonder indeed, but they despise withal, and condemn it, and slight it, and pass it over, as they did St. Paul's Doctrine, What will this babbler say? He brings us news of a strange God, and the like: so these are things that people are not acquainted withal, and so they cast them off, and despise: but mark, saith the Text, Take heed, beware lest this come upon you, that you shall behold and wonder, and despise and perish too, for I work a work in your days, a work which you shall in no wise believe, though a man declare it unto you: there shall be the great Counsels of God revealed in your days, and in your Congregations, there shall be revealed those Counsels of God, whereby God intends to save many souls; and here and there God will make known these things to save poor souls, but you in the meantime being conceited of your own understandings, or your own

Civil Righteousness, that you are not so bad as others, and that you are in a good case, and in a good condition all this while, and upon a conceit, you hear, and wonder, and despise, but you shall perish, and shall never come to believe those great things that God in your days shall reveal for the salvation of the souls of others; and this is a most dreadful curse that is upon the hearts of many men and women that hear the great things of the Gospel; as it is said in the second of the Acts, that they spake the wonderful things of God, and yet there was some that did but mock; this is the condition of some, that their spirits secretly despise and contemn those things that they should adore; such things as upon the hearing they should even fall down upon their faces, and adore God in the beholding of them, and yet I say, slighting of them, and resting to their own ways, and conceits, here is the curse of God upon their hearts, that though they hear them, yet they shall not believe them, I work a work in your days, a work that you shall in no wise believe, though a man declare it unto you, saith the Holy Ghost, this Scripture is very much fulfilled in Congregations where the Gospel comes to be preached.

Thirdly, But further, in the third place; If Jesus Christ be so great a wonder, certainly then the misery of mankind is very great, it follows from hence; if there be such need of so wonderful a Redeemer, Oh the dreadful breach that sin hath made between God and man, that required such a wonderful work of God to make it up! This is that that God would have you have a right understanding of, and have serious thoughts about it; God would not have sinful wretched man to think the breach between God and him is a light matter, a little thing: No, when the Lord hath sent his Son into the world, and hath declared him to be thus wonderful: when the Lord shows what a wonderful glorious work of his there is in his Son for the

saving of mankind, he thereby doth declare unto you, and would have you know it, that the breach that your sin hath made between God and your own souls, it is a wonderful breach; certainly were the Misery of man no other but such as the power of Angels, as the power of any mere creature could help out of, Jesus Christ had never come into the world, there had never been such a wonderful work of God to redeem man; But now when you hear that the way of God to redeem man is so wonderful, you have cause to lay your hands upon your hearts, and say, Oh the depth of misery that my soul is fallen into! Oh the desperate disease of my soul, that must have such a wonderful cure! Oh that ever the great and infinite God should work so wonderfully for the salvation of such a poor wretched creature as sinful man is! My Brethren, we do not sanctify the Name of God in the great thing that God would be sanctified in, except we have right apprehensions of the dreadful breach our sin hath made between the Lord and our own souls, that so we might have right apprehensions of this wonderful work that God hath done for the salvation of man-kind; this is the reason why God so many times doth bring sinful creatures into so great straights, into the very gulf of despair oftentimes before he reveals the saving knowledge of Jesus Christ unto them: It is, I say, because the Lord would have his name sanctified in this wonderful work of redemption by Jesus Christ, that the sinner might be prepared to stand and admire at the wonderful glory of God in Jesus Christ; And there is nothing in the world that God looks so much for as this, to be sanctified in these wonderful things that he hath done for man-kind in Christ; and if we have but slight thoughts of the breach that our sin hath made, certainly we cannot but have slight thoughts likewise of the work that God hath done to deliver us from our sin: Thou thinkest thy sin to be a light matter, but know, that when thou hast sinned against God, there must be the

most wonderful work of God to reconcile thee to himself, that ever God did from all eternity, or will do to all eternity; this is the greatest wonder, his sending of Jesus Christ into the world; know therefore the depth of thy misery by this; if God should have devised as it were from all eternity how to have manifested the wonderful misery of man-kind, no greater could be found than this wonderful work of his in the redemption of man-kind. This is a third.

And then Fourthly, Is Jesus Christ the great wonder of the world? Hence then all Believers have exceeding cause of rejoicing in the hearing of what Christ is, what a wonderful Savior they have, Let the children of Zion rejoice in their King: Rejoice in this,

First, That God hath so honored you, as that he hath wrought so wonderfully for your salvation; certainly, as thy redemption is, so art thou; that is, there is some reflection of the glory of thy Redeemer upon thee; how hath God honored thee before his Angels? And how honorable shalt thou be hereafter, when it shall appear to all the world, that the Infinite God did so gloriously work for the saving of thy soul? God looks upon all the Kings of the Earth as worms, Yea all the Nations of the earth as the drop of the bucket, and the dust of the balance, as nothing, less than nothing: You see how meanly God values all the Nations of the Earth: But when he speaks of his Son, that is thy Redeemer, His Name shall be called wonderful, saith he, he is wonderful in the eyes of God the Father; thou that hast such a wonderful Redeemer as this is, certainly thy condition must needs be comfortable.

But Secondly, The main comfort that Believers may have from this glory of Christ, as hath been opened to you, is this, that hereby they may see Jesus Christ as a full object for their souls to rest upon, whatever their

condition be; thou hast an All-sufficient Savior, thou hast an object that thou mayest venture thy soul, thy eternal estate upon, for he is a wonderful Redeemer; conceive thy misery to the uttermost that possibly can be, suppose thou seest the guilt of all thy sins before thee, and apprehendest thy soul bound over to eternal death for thy sin; suppose thou seest the justice of God coming out against thee, to require satisfaction for thy sin; the curse of the Law, that likewise brings thee under it, and thou seest the bottomless pit even ready open for thee, and the horrible vile iniquities that thou hast been guilty of, presenting themselves unto thee with all the aggravations of them; suppose all this, And thou standest now before the great God, ready to receive the sentence of thy eternal estate. Now these things may make thy heart to shake, and indeed they will where they are seen really; But in the midst of such a sight, if God do but give thee a sight of thy Redeemer that is so wonderful, here is enough to draw forth Faith, yea to beget Faith in the soul; let this be but presented, whatsoever thy misery be, yet know, here is a wonderful Redeemer, who cannot only cure ordinary diseases, and deliver in ordinary troubles, but can wonderfully deliver, and no cure can be too hard for him; Oh therefore thou troubled soul! That dost apprehend the evil of thy sin, and the dreadful danger that thou art in: Oh that thou couldest but see this wonderful Redeemer before thee! Thou wouldest see him to be an object for the most vile wretchedest sinner that ever lived upon the face of the earth to rest upon; And because God the Father accounts wonderfully of his Son; therefore it is that he would not have us only to believe in his Son in ordinary cases, but in extraordinary cases; you that are believers, and hope you have any part in Christ, know, that God expects that you should sanctify his Son as a wonderful Redeemer; now, if you can only believe in Christ in an ordinary way, when your condition is ordinary, and

your straights not very great, this is not to sanctify Christ as a wonderful Savior. Now let this be but laid to thy heart when temptations are strong, and when thy heart is ready to sink in any extremity; It may be temptation comes and tells thee thy condition is extraordinary, who was ever so left of God as thou art, then do but lay these truths upon thy heart, that have been revealed in the opening of the wonderfulness of Christ, and even say thus to thy soul, well, but oh my soul! Thou hast heretofore believed in God, but hast thou sanctified the Name of Christ, as wonderful? Hast thou believed in Jesus Christ, as in him whose Name by God himself is called wonderful? Thou hast, thou thinkest, believed in him as a Savior, as a Redeemer, but hast thou believed in him as thus wonderful in his Natures, in his Person, in his Offices, in his endowments, and in all the great things that he hath done, in the glory of the Father that shines in him? Hast thou sanctified his Name in all those particulars wherein Christ hath been made known to be wonderful? Certainly Believers do not sanctify this Name of Christ, except there be some kind of proportion between their Faith, and all these glorious things that are revealed of Jesus Christ: It is he that is a full object for thy soul to rest upon in all straights whatsoever, when the men of the world shall be at their wits end, they having their ordinary help fail them, yet thou that art a Believer, and knowest what Jesus Christ is, and the glory of God that appears in him, thou needest not be at thy wits end, for thou hast him whose Name is wonderful, to be the object of thy Faith.

Thirdly, The consolation to Believers from this title of Christ, is in this; That certainly, if there be such a wonderful Redeemer, that God himself doth glory so much in, and account him so wonderful, then it must needs follow, that God doth intend wonderful things for the Saints; no wise man that hath abilities, will in a wonderful manner busy himself about a trifle:

certainly if the Lord doth thus work for man-kind in his Son, if the Lord provide such a wonderful Savior for the children of men, we may fully conclude, that God hath wonderful thoughts to do great things for man-kind; the thoughts of God for the good of man-kind are very great, and very glorious, they are some high things, some glorious things that God doth aim at for man-kind. Oh raise up therefore your thoughts! Let all that are but men raise up their thoughts, and think, surely there is some great happiness for the children of men; God hath revealed it from Heaven, when he hath told us that there is such a wonderful Redeemer come into the Earth: But Oh you Believers! Do you in a special manner raise up your hearts, and expect glorious things? And though you have but little from God for the present, yet conclude, that God hath wonderful thoughts about you that are the members of Jesus Christ; and there must come a time, that there must be wonderful things bestowed upon you, or otherwise God should lose the honor of all the wonderful things he hath done in Christ, and that he will never do: God will at length bring every believer to such a height of glory, as before Men and Angels it shall be declared by the glory of your souls, that Jesus Christ was a wonderful Redeemer; such glory thou mayest have, we cannot tell the particulars; If we should go to open the happiness of the Saints, what it should be in Heaven, we should quickly be swallowed up; but one would think that this one thing should be enough to fill the heart of the Believer with joy, I shall have so much happiness from God one day, as must declare before Men and Angels, that Jesus Christ was a wonderful Savior, such glory as God himself will glory in.

Oh look here! Look upon this poor wretch, that a while was such a vile wicked creature, and a child of wrath, and of perdition in its self, and look now what a height of glory this soul is raised up to, and now give your

testimony whether my Son be not a wonderful Redeemer; this will be the condition of every poor believer that lives, and comfort yourselves in exercising your Faith in this.

Whatever I am now for the present, though but a lump of clay and filth, yet I being a Believer, Christ being mine, my condition must be such one day as God the Father will say before men and Angels, behold the wonderfulness of my Son, in what I have done for this soul; and that may be enough to satisfy the soul for the present, that God will show himself wonderful in thy good, and thy salvation; so that it may be said of every particular believer, thy estate shall be such one day, as if there were no other saved in all the world but thyself, yet Jesus Christ will manifest himself wonderful in thy salvation; for indeed that is that that he aims at, to be wonderful in the salvation of his Saints, in bringing them unto glory, and that is the comfort of all Believers from this title of Christ's being wonderful. But now then as thy comforts art great from this title, so thy duties should be some way proportionable too; thou shouldest therefore honor God the Father of Christ, as a wonderful Savior: — Labor therefore first to search into this deep mystery of the Gospel:

Oh what a shame is it that those that do profess themselves Christians, should understand so little of Jesus Christ! This is that that God expects: I say, that we should study the Gospel, search into the Gospel, that we may see more of Christ; the more we see, the more still we shall wonder, for Christ is an infinite depth, and the more we search into him, the more we shall see cause to wonder: In the first of the Ephesians, mark what a prayer Paul makes for the Ephesians, in the 17th and 18th verses, he told them before, that he did not cease to give thanks for them, making mention of them in his prayers: to what end? That the God of our Lord Jesus Christ the

Father of Glory, may give unto you the Spirit of Wisdom and Revelation in the knowledge of him.

He doth not only pray, that they might have some knowledge of him, but that they might have a Spirit of Wisdom and Revelation in the knowledge of Christ; and this from the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, and from the Father of Glory.

Mark what titles he gives to God when he prays for them, that they might have the knowledge of Jesus Christ; it must be the God of our Lord Jesus Christ that must do it, and the Father of Glory.

God doth never show himself to be the Father of Glory so much, as when he gives the knowledge of Jesus Christ to a soul, then God doth make himself to appear indeed to be the Father of Glory.

And further, The eyes of your understanding being enlightened, that ye may know what is the hope of his calling, and what the riches of the glory of his Inheritance in the Saints, and what is the exceeding greatness of his power to us-ward who believe. And in the third of the Ephesians, from the 14th verse to the 20th. For this cause I bow my knees unto the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, of whom the whole Family of Heaven and Earth is named, that he would grant you according to the riches of his Glory, to be strengthened with might by his Spirit in the Inner-man, that Christ may dwell in your hearts by Faith, that ye being rooted and grounded in love, (All this now is but a preparation to what he would desire further, and that is this) That so you may be able to comprehend with all Saints, what is the breadth, and length, and depth, and height, and to know the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge, that ye might be filled with all the fullness of God: This is a most admirable Scripture, surely the Spirit of Christ filled the heart of Saint Paul; and such kind of Scriptures as these, are mighty strong

Arguments to evince the Scripture to be the Word of God: when we read such passages as these, that have a spirit in them, beyond the spirit of any man; certainly it was beyond the spirit of any man to express himself in such a manner, That he bowed his knees unto the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, that they might comprehend with all Saints what is the breadth, length, depth and height, and to know the love of Christ which passeth knowledge, that they might be filled with all the fullness of God; and that is that which I would especially observe, that Christians should not content themselves with a little knowledge of Christ, but they should labor to comprehend what is the length, breadth, depth, and height, they should labor to dive into the Mysteries of the Gospel, as it is said of Moses, when he saw that wonderful work in the wilderness, saith he, I will now turn aside and see this great sight; you have it recorded in the seventh of the Acts, and 31st ver. There appeared to him in the wilderness of Mount Sina, an Angel of the Lord in a flame of fire in a bush: When Moses saw it, he wondered at the sight, and as he drew near to behold it, &c. He had a sight of it at a distance, and yet so much, as he wondered at it, and then he drew near, and the Lord spake to him: So it should be with us, we have some sight of Christ, but is it not at a distance? We hear a Minister speaking of Christ to us (the great wonder of the world) and it may be at the hearing we are ready to think, there is somewhat in Christ beyond what we have apprehended heretofore; I but I beseech you Brethren, let it not pass away so; those things that have been spoken concerning Christ, God will require an account of; and know, it is a dangerous thing to have the glory of Jesus Christ to pass by any soul, and to do it no good: If we had been preaching to you of Moral Virtues, or any deep discourse about any point, save about Jesus Christ, there had not been so much danger of letting it pass without

profit; but when God sets before you the glory of his Son, know, there is a great deal of danger upon the hearing of such things without profit; therefore you had need say upon the hearing of such things, as Moses said, That you will draw near, you will go and pray over these again; and beseech the Lord that he would reveal these things unto you: Pray with David, O Lord, open mine eyes, that I may see the wonderful things of thy Law: By Law there is meant those things that were revealed in the Word of God; and surely upon our hearing what God hath revealed in his Word, we have cause to pray with more earnestness, Lord open our eyes that we may see the wonderful things of thy Gospel; but mark, When Moses drew near, Then God spake to him, and revealed himself further to him: If Moses had stood wondering at this sight, and went no further, it may be he had not had God revealing himself so clearly to him; but when he draws near, then God speaks to him: So if your hearts be taken with what you hear of this wonderful Savior, and then you draw near, and take pains in your closets by meditation and prayer, to see what is the meaning of this wonder: Why Lord shall I hear of such things, and not understand them? They are things that do nearly concern me, and shall I not understand them? If you labor to draw near, God will speak and reveal further of his mind to you: But further, of this Text in the Ephesians, We must labor to comprehend the heights and depths, and to know the love of Christ which passeth knowledge.

You will say, these are too wonderful things for us to know.

Nay, The Apostle prays that they may know that which passeth knowledge: Though the fullness of the glory of it passeth all knowledge, yet still there may be so much of the knowledge of these things, as may help you to sanctify God's Name, and make your hearts spiritual; for saith the Text, That ye may know the love of God which passeth knowledge, that ye

might be filled with all the fullness of God: It is a very strange phrase (for the creature to be filled with God) and had we it not in Scripture, we should not have dared to have used such an expression: But here it is to be filled with all the fullness of God: This phrase is a great deal higher; but how comes this to pass? By comprehending the height, and depth, and length, and breadth; that is, by understanding Jesus Christ, and the Glory of God in him, by this means doth the soul come to be filled with all the fullness of God.

What is the reason that Christians are so empty in their spirits, in their conversations? But because they know so little of the Mystery of the Gospel: If thou didst but understand the Mystery of the Gospel, but how the Lord makes known himself in the face of Jesus Christ, this would fill thy heart with all the fullness of God; those Christians are the Christians filled with excellency indeed, that do comprehend the height, and depth, and length, and breadth of this wonderful work of God in Christ: There is nothing sanctifies the heart so much, as the knowledge of Christ in a right way.

Seneca hath such an expression concerning the Heavens: Oh the Heavens are a wonderful spectacle, and a spectacle fit for a reasonable creature to be employed about! Though we should get little benefit by knowing the Motions of the Heavens, the Sun, Moon, and Stars, yet the beauty and excellency that is there, and the wonderful work of God in the Heavens, it cannot but take a rational creature: Now, if the wonderful work of God in the Heavens be such, as it must needs take a rational creature: Oh what is the wonderful work of God in Jesus Christ! Therefore let us make it the chief of our study, to study the Lord Jesus.

Luther hath an expression to the same purpose, O saith he, I vehemently, I extremely am displeased with myself, and displease myself, yea (saith he) I hate myself, because I cannot get that great benefit, that great work that there is in man's Redemption, because I cannot get it to be transfused into my very bones and marrow; I would fain get it in there. Saint Paul, in Gal. 1:15,16, said, he was separated from his Mother's womb, and called by Grace, and had Christ revealed in him. O blessed is that soul that the Lord hath separated for himself, that Jesus Christ might be revealed in it, that is a blessed soul: — You know how Paul accounted the knowledge of Christ, The excellent knowledge, the excellency of knowledge, and accounted all things dung and dross in comparison; and so David, in Psal. 119:27. Make me to understand the way of thy Precepts, so shall I talk of thy wondrous works: When you come together, you can be talking of this News, and the other News, but were your hearts filled with the knowledge of Jesus Christ, you could not but talk of the wonderful things that God hath done for your souls in Jesus Christ.

And as we are to labor to search that we may know more, so to give God the praise of this his wonder that he hath done; In Psal. 107:8. Oh that men would praise the Lord for the wonderful things that he hath done for the children of men: It is meant there I confess of the wonderful works of God's providence; but surely if God be to be praised and magnified for his wonderful works of providence, much more for the wonderful works that he hath done for the soul in Jesus Christ. And so in Psal. 86:9,10. You have an expression there to the same purpose: All Nations whom thou hast made, shall come and worship before thee, O Lord, and shall glorify thy Name, for thou art great, and dost wondrous things: Oh that this Scripture were fulfilled, that all Nations might come and worship the Lord, and glorify

God upon this ground, because God is great, and doth wonderful things; The wonderful things of God in his works of Creation and Providence, are nothing so much regarded of God himself, as the wonderful things he hath done in Christ; and therefore the Lord expects that the Saints should glorify him more for that, than for anything else: And the truth is, God rejects all the glory that he hath from his creatures, except he hath it, because of the wonders that he hath done in his Son.

And as we should study Christ, and praise and bless God, and have our hearts enlarged for Jesus Christ: So this is the duty of believers, to whom God hath revealed Christ as wonderful, that in their conversations they should hold out the wonderful Glory of Jesus Christ; thou shouldest so walk before men, as to manifest to all the world that thy Savior is a wonderful Savior.

And thou shouldest manifest it by thy wonderful change; that soul that hath part in Christ, whose Name is wonderful, honors Christ in this, If he doth manifest that since he came to know Jesus Christ, there is a wonderful change made in him; what a change is there made in this youth, or child, young-man, or neighbor, or friend! Not long since what an ignorant sot was he? But since he went to hear the Word, Oh the understanding in a little time that such a one hath got in the Mysteries of the Gospel! Such a one was not able to go into God's presence to express himself in prayer any otherwise but upon a book, but now, Oh what a spirit of prayer hath God given to such a poor wretch, that was so ignorant the other day! Now, O how can he pour out his soul before the Lord! Such a one that not long since was a profane and loose liver, and sensual and base in his life and conversation, now oh how holy, how heavenly, how spiritual, and would not commit the lest known sin, if he might gain a thousand worlds for it! Such a

one that was false in his service before, now how trusty! One may trust one's life, and all that one hath with him now; such a one that heretofore was a swearer, oh how doth he reverence the Name of God! Such a one that was a froward passionate spirited man or woman, now how meek and gentle are they! What a mighty change is there in the spirit of such a servant, or wife, or husband, or neighbor! And such a one that was altogether for himself, and proud, and haughty, but now, oh how humble, and submissive! Now he can deny himself of anything: As we read of Christ, that when he commanded the winds and the waves, the Text saith, all people wondered at him: So when the winds of thy passion are up, if thou canst but bid them be still, all would wonder at it: Oh how comes there so great a change! Such a one that was impatient before in any suffering, now whatever he suffers, how like a Lamb is he, and opens not his mouth! Now in the midst of afflictions, and pains, and troubles, he can lie rejoicing and praising God; And such a one, though he hath never such strong temptations to draw him on the other side, yet now he can resist the strongest temptations; before, if a companion did but hold up his finger, he must go, but now I say he can resist strong temptations, and oh how he accounts it his glory and happiness to suffer for Jesus Christ: Now this doth manifest Christ a wonderful Savior. As it was the speech of a Heathen, seeing the Christians suffer with so great patience, he cries out, Of a truth, the God of the Christians is a great God, that doth enable them to do such great things: So thou must so walk in thy life, that thou must manifest that Jesus Christ is a wonderful Savior.

And be ashamed to complain of any difficulty in any duties that thou art set about; thou art set about such a duty, and oh thou complainest they are hard, and difficult, and tedious! Is it for thy Savior that thou doest it? Thou

shouldest be willing to go thorough fire and water; and in this one thing the wonderfulness of the change of a soul doth appear as much as in anything, That those things that before were accounted burdens, now the soul accounts them as a privilege, and the joy of its heart; others cannot do so: Now the Gospel makes such a change, and in this change of thy heart, and of thy life, Jesus Christ is held forth in the world to be a wonderful Savior; but now, if thou canst do no more than those that are strangers to Jesus Christ, what honor hath Christ in thy life and conversation? One passage or two more.

If Christ be a wonderful Savior, hence then everyone that hears of Christ, should think it to be a dreadful thing to miss of Jesus Christ: Oh then let all souls to whom Christ is made known, make after him! Oh thou wretched soul, that hast not yet understood the way of God towards man-kind, now labor to know it! If the Lord hath wonderful thoughts for the saving of man-kind, then let thy thoughts be such: And after all this shall my soul perish eternally? Shall I be cast away, notwithstanding God hath wrought in such a glorious and wonderful way for the salvation of souls? Must I perish at last for all this? Thy heart should make towards God, and be encouraged in this, because the way of salvation is so wonderful: why, may not thy soul come in likewise and be saved? There is not the worst of you all, but here is help in this wonderful Savior to help you, and redeem you; had you but hearts now to come in and to fall down before the Lord when you get alone in your closets, and say, Lord, I have heard that there is a wonderful Savior come into the world, and hath done wonderfully for the redeeming of man-kind; Oh that he might be wonderful in my salvation also! That I may be among the number of those that may to all eternity be admiring at thy glory in Jesus Christ; many of you rejoice in this, that God hath wrought

wonderfully to preserve you sometimes out of dangers, I but what are all the wonderful works of God towards you, except you have your part in him whose Name is called wonderful?

And last of all, Let us long for that time when Jesus Christ shall appear in all his glory; he doth appear now to the souls of his Saints very wonderful, as he is set out in the Word; but there is a time when Christ shall come and appear in all his glory in another manner than we are able to set him out: After the blowing of the seventh Trumpet that you read of in the book of the Revelations, then is the Mystery finished, and what is the finishing of it? In chap. 11, then is the voice heard, saying, The Kingdoms of this world are become the Kingdoms of our Lord, and of his Christ, and he shall reign forever and ever: Then shall the Lord Jesus Christ come and appear in all his wonderful works to the children of men, and to be admired in the Saints; then shall be fulfilled the Scripture we have in Joh. 14:20,21. Mark what Christ promises there to his Disciples, At that day ye shall know that I am in my Father, and you in me, and I in you: he that hath my commandments, and keepeth them, he it is that loveth me, and he that loveth me, shall be loved of my Father, and I will love him, and will manifest myself to him. — At that day you shall know it: It seems his Disciples understood but little of this Mystery before, but saith Christ, there is a day that you shall know that I am in my Father, and you in me, and I in you: And be of good comfort, all believers, there is a time coming that you will see Christ more wonderful than now you do; you do now see Christ to be wonderful, and your hearts are taken in some measure, taken off from all the Creatures, to admire at Jesus Christ; in Act. 3:11,12, when the people wondered at the cure that the Apostles wrought upon the lame man; mark at the 12th ver. When Peter saw it, he answered unto the people, Ye men of Israel, why marvel ye at this? Or

why look ye so earnestly on us, as though by our own power or holiness we had made this man to walk? The God of Abraham, and of Isaac, and of Jacob, the God of our Fathers hath glorified his Son Jesus, &c. As if they should say, Why do you wonder at us? Know, that the God of Abraham, and of Isaac, and of Jacob, hath glorified his Son Jesus; it is he that you are to wonder at: The Saints have their hearts taken off from Creatures, from men, from instruments, and they look upon him, that the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob hath glorified, even Jesus Christ; and he is the matter of their wonder. But dost thou wonder at Jesus Christ now? Know, Christ will come ere long in another manner to be admired at by his Saints in all his glory; Christ was wonderful when he came with sin, and when he comes without sin he shall be more wonderful; he shall come in all his glory with his holy Angels, to make good all that he hath promised, and to bring with him all that he hath purchased, and then we shall see him as he is. — Now we see Jesus Christ but thorough a glass, and yet our hearts are taken with him; and we wonder at him now, but oh how shall we wonder when we come to see him as he is! When we shall behold his face in glory; we see now the Lord Christ in his Ordinances, but as in a picture; As at the first, when there are treaties between one Prince and another about a march, the first sight that they have of one another, it is but by a picture, and if they be delighted with but seeing the picture one of another, much more will they be delighted and enamored with the person, when they come to see it its self: so it is with the Saints, here all that the Saints can see of Jesus Christ, that makes them so wonder at him, and to account him to be the chiefest of ten thousand, all is but by seeing of him by a picture; Jesus Christ is in Heaven, and he sends us his picture in his Ordinances; so St. Paul saith, in Gal. 3, concerning the Ministry of the Word, that Jesus Christ had been evidently set forth

crucified among them. Now are your hearts taken with the sight of Christ, when you see him as it were in a picture? Know, as Christ said to Nathanael, Because I said unto thee, I saw thee under the Fig tree, believest thou? Thou shalt see greater things than these. So thou shalt ere long see Jesus Christ as he is; We are now the Sons of God, but it appears not what we shall be, for when he shall appear, we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is.

And thou shalt not only see him, but so see him, as he shall never go out of thy sight; thou hast but a little glimpse of him now for the present, and thy soul rejoices in that, the time is coming when thou shalt see him, and thy eyes shall feed upon him forever; the Lord Christ shall go up and down the Heavens as the wonder of the Angels, and all the Saints shall be following, wondering at him to all eternity; The luster of the deity shall be shining thorough the humanity of Christ, and men and Angels shall stand gazing and wondering at the glory of Jesus Christ to all eternity: Oh let us comfort one another with these sayings, and in the expectation of the glorious appearing of Jesus Christ. And those that shall long for the glorious appearing of Jesus Christ, upon the seeing of him here, have a good evidence that they do belong to Jesus Christ, and shall be partakers of the wonderful things that Jesus Christ hath wrought and purchased with his own blood.

And thus we have opened to you and applied this glorious wonder of Jesus Christ; His Name shall be called Wonderful; he is wonderful in the Word, Oh that he may be wonderful in your hearts, and in your lives.

PT. III. THE EXCELLENCY OF THE SOUL.

Monergism Books

SERM. X. THE FIRST SERMON ON THE EXCELLENCY OF THE SOUL.

I have endeavored to show somewhat unto you about the Excellency of the Name of God, and likewise the Excellency of Jesus Christ, and what he is, that so you might have right apprehensions of God and Christ. Now in the third place, I shall desire to show you somewhat about the Excellency of your own Souls: And to that end attend to Matth. 16:26.

F*or what is a man profited if he shall gain the whole world and lose his own Soul? Or what shall a man give in exchange for his Soul?* – Matth. 16:26.

Our Savior going himself to suffer, tells his Disciples what they must expect in the following of him, If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross and follow me. These are the terms, saith Christ, upon which you must follow me, you must be willing to deny yourselves, and to take up your cross, to suffer hard things if you follow me. Christ would have his Disciples know the worst at first, and not please themselves in a fools Paradise, thinking that by following of him they should get great matters to themselves in the world; no, saith he, expect no

such matter, but deny yourselves, and take up my cross. But this may seem to be hard, it may be our cross may be the loss of all, the loss of our lives, and must we take up that? Yes, saith Christ, in the verse before my Text, be not solicitous what your cross is like to be, only be willing to take it up. And the truth is, the more willing you are to take it up, the better will it be for you, and you will get nothing by seeking to shift for yourselves, For whosoever will save his life shall lose it, and whosoever will lose his life for my sake shall find it. It may be when you meet with sufferings in the world, you will think to shift this way, or that way, but you will get nothing: If you would save your lives by forsaking the truth, it is the only way to lose your lives: But if you be willing to lose your lives for my truth, you shall save them; or what if by forsaking me and my truth, when you meet with suffering, you should save your lives, and your estates, and live bravely in the world, do you think you are any gainers by this? You are infinitely mistaken: If you cast up the account, you will find that you have gotten nothing all: For what is a man profited if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul? And thus you see how the words come in.

These words that I have read unto you, are of exceeding serious consideration: And indeed they should be as Thunder in every man's ears. Some Scripture that a Minister may preach on, may concern some particular person in a Congregation more than others: But here is a Text concerns everyone that hath a soul, Man and woman, high and low, old and young, What shall it profit any one to gain the whole word, and to lose their own soul? — I have read of one that gave counsel to John King of Portugal, that he would repeat this Text to himself, and spend one quarter of an hour in the meditation of it, What shall it profit a man if he gain the whole world, and lose his own soul? And that he would make the words of this Text to be the

close of his prayer continually, What shall it profit a man to gain the whole world, and lose his own soul? This was wholesome counsel; and certainly the tight meditation and understanding of this Text would be of admirable use to every soul. You have in the words these two things plainly hinted.

First, That there is in every man a soul, a spiritual substance, besides what is visible and sensible.

And secondly, That this soul of man is more worth than all the world, it hath that excellency, that if a man gains all the world, and loses that, when he hath cast up his account, he may put his gains in his eye, he shall find himself a miserable creature.

We might make more divisions, or subdivisions of the words, but I will content myself only with those two things, and speak chiefly to the latter. Now to make way for that, I will speak a little of the former, What is a man profited if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his soul? His Soul.

Every man hath a soul, a rational spiritual substance beyond that that is visible or sensible; in Job 32:8. But there is a spirit in man, and the inspiration of the Almighty giveth him understanding. There is a spirit in man besides the bodily substance that you see, there is a spirit in man, such a spirit as is capable of the inspiration of the Almighty to give understanding, &c. And in Gen. 2:7, it is said, That God formed man of the dust of the earth, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life. Here is another manner of man's-creation, then of other creatures; God did but say of other creatures let them be, Let the earth bring forth creeping things &c. And it was so: But when he comes to man, he forms man out of the dust of the earth, that is for his body, and for his spirit, he breathes into his nostrils the breath of life. I have read of a people that would not be persuaded that there was any difference between beasts and them: And truly there is

somewhat to do to persuade carnal hearts of any great difference between a beast and them in relation to God, or to another life: But certainly there is a spirit in man, there is somewhat beyond that body of thine that is visible, which doth infinitely concern thee to look to.

For first, We see that there are actions in men that are beyond that which concerns the body at all: And therefore surely there is a spirit in man, besides what the body is; the highest actions of men are such as do not concern the body, as thus, The knowledge of the heavens, the knowledge of Angels, of spirits, what hath the body to do with such things? The knowledge of the mysteries of the Gospel, and the conversing with them, they are abstracted notions from all kind of bodily substances; the knowledge of God and Christ, yea the very knowledge of Mathematical notions, many notions there are in Arts and Sciences that are abstract from all bodily things; certainly then there is a spirit in man beyond that bodily substance that doth appear common with the brute beasts.

Yet secondly, There is a power in man to curb his body, to deny himself of that which is most suitable to the body, saith Paul, 1 Cor. 9:27. I keep under my body, and bring it into subjection. Surely there is somewhat in man that is above the body, that hath so much command of the body, as it appears the spirit of man hath to beat down the body, If thou beest a man given to thine appetite, when thou sittest at the table of a great man, put a knife to thy throat, a man is able, to curb his appetite; though the body hath never so strong a desire to such and such things, yet the soul of man is able to curb his body and deny it: If thy right hand offend thee, cut it off, or thy right eye offend thee, pluck it out. There is a power in man to deny the body that which it desires never so much, which a beast cannot, that cannot deny that which is suitable to his sense every way, except there be some stronger

sensitive thing to take him off: But man is able to deny his sense, when there is no sensitive object before him to take him off: By that dominion that the soul of man hath over his body, he is able to curb his body, and to deny his body, therefore surely there is a spirit in man.

3. Again, That which the Scripture makes the chief actions of man to consist in, which have any reference to God, is such things that are done by somewhat beyond the body. Whatsoever a man doth, if it be but only the body that is exercised, and sense, it is not acceptable to God. Bodily exercise profiteth little, saith the Scripture, and 1 Cor. 13:3. What if I give my body to be burnt? A man may give his body to be burnt: there all the senses may concur in it, and yet if there be not a spirit in man to act this upon any higher ends and grounds, than anything that is bodily can reach unto, it is worth nothing, it is not regarded.

Fourthly, There is a spirit in man beyond this bodily substance: for when this bodily substance is decaying, moldering away, there are many thoughts in a man about an eternal estate, and more fresh and lively sometimes when the body is moldering away, than ever there was before; there are no creatures but Angels and men that take any cognizance of an eternal estate, that take any thoughts about what is to come hereafter. Now we say, Nature doth nothing in vain, surely God would not have put such kind of workings in man about another condition, after this body shall molder away, but that there is somewhat that doth concern some other part of man besides that bodily substance of his.

Fifthly, and then lastly, There is certainly a spirit in man beyond his bodily substance: for we know that there are real pains and torments upon a man's spirit. The burdens of conscience in the reflex act that a man's conscience hath upon himself summoning of him to appear before the great

God: Though a man's body be in never such health, and hath all outward accommodations about him, as music, good cheer, friends, estate, yet there is that horror and torment in his spirit, sometimes through the consciousness of the guilt of sin, that he is not able to bear: nay were there not somewhat beyond this bodily substance, certainly this could never be; verily then there is a spirit in man, and hence therefore you see that there is somewhat doth concern you all beyond your present, outward, and bodily condition. Let no man think that he hath provided well for himself, when he hath provided money, and house, and lands, and good cheer, and clothes, and such kind of things; do not think that thou art happy in that: for these are things that concern thy outward man, there is still another substance in thee that thou art to look after, that takes little notice of such things as these are.

Neither do you think that you have provided well for your children, when you have provided an estate, an inheritance, somewhat to leave them, know, that there is another substance in your children, besides that outward bodily substance you look upon. Do you see a fine feature, comely parts, comely countenance, and your children finely clothed? I but know there is a spirit in that child besides that bodily substance that you are to look to: Certainly man is very far fallen from God, that none scarce takes notice of his own spirit: We do not only naturally live without a God in the world, so as to know little of that infinite divine Spirit that is the first being of all things; but we live without the knowledge of our own spirits, of our own souls: Truly few men there are that know their own souls. As a man by his eye sees things that are without him, but he doth not see his own eye; so by the soul we come to understand many things without us, but yet how little do we understand of our own souls? Well might the Psalmist therefore complain, and say, in Psal. 49:20. Man that is in honor, and understandeth

not, is like the beasts that perish. God did indeed make man at first in honor, but now he is become like the very beasts, he doth mind little or nothing more than the very beasts themselves, he blesses himself if he hath but content for the body for a while, as if there were nothing else concerned him; I appeal unto your consciences in this thing, whether the uttermost sphere of your thoughts have been any further than merely within the compass of bodily content: If you should come to a beast, and talk to it about Trades and titles of honor, and Arts and Sciences, and such kind of things, why what is all this to a beast? Give a beast hay or corn, and such kind of things that are suitable to it, and it minds that more than it doth any high notions that you are able to tell it; and truly thus it is with sensual men, even as the Atheist who saith in his heart, That there is no God; so a kind of Atheism there is in their hearts to say they have no souls, that there is no difference between them and the brute-beasts; hence it is that they savor spiritual things so little. Tell carnal men of the excellency of the Name of God, Tell them of Jesus Christ, how wonderful he is, of the wonderful mysteries of the Gospel, and of the things of eternal life, they are dry things to such a one, he savors them not: Tell him of money, and meat, and drink, and sports, and clothes, and such kind of things, they are suitable unto him, there is some savor in them; but for the great things of the Kingdom of God, and of eternal life, there is no savor at all in them; and thus far is man fallen from God, and lives for the most part, as if so be he were capable of no higher good, but merely to eat and drink, and live for a while here like a beast: Thus doth the Devil gull and deceive most of us: Now my brethren, this is a work that I have undertaken, and it concerns as much the Ministers of God to show unto you what you are yourselves, what God hath made you, as to show you what God is, and what Christ is, that you may come to

understand yourselves; you can never come to know your reference unto God, until you come to know what God hath made you; this is therefore my scope in this Scripture, to show unto you what God hath made you, and that you have souls within you, and souls of exceeding great worth (I will not say infinite, for none is infinite but God himself) but more worth than all the world, than all the creatures that God hath made, except the Angels in heaven: The souls of the children of men are most excellent creatures; did but a man or woman consider seriously that they have souls in them beyond their bodies, it would raise them up a little.

But this next Point that is the main and principal, Did they but know the worth of their souls, it could not but raise them very high above those poor empty vanities that they have minded all this while: Therefore there is in man not only a soul, but that that is more worth than all the world, that if it should be lost, that man that gained the whole world, would be a great loser in his bargain.

Know therefore this, that there is not the poorest man or woman living, nay not the poorest child that lies begging a crust of bread at your door, but this child hath a soul in it that is more worth than heaven and earth, this poor ragged tattered child that lies in rags, I say, crying at your threshold, and begging a piece of bread, it hath a soul in it that hath greater excellency than the Sun, Moon, and Stars, than all the Heavens, than the Sea, than the Earth, put all the creatures in the world together, that are under Angels, the spirit of this poor child hath more excellency in it, than all these things, and that is the thing that I am to make out unto you.

Why natural life hath more excellency in it than any creature that hath no life. I remember Austin saith of a Flye, because it hath life, that it hath more excellency in it than the Sun its self, because though the Sun be a glorious

creature, yet it hath no life in it; life in the meanest creature hath a greater excellency than anything else that hath not life.

But now the soul hath the highest natural life that is, and capable of the highest happiness that any creature is capable of, and therefore more excellent than all the world; But that we shall come too in its order.

The excellency of the soul may be discovered, first, In the relation it hath to God, God doth challenge a peculiar relation to the spirits of men; and therefore in Heb. 12:9. God is called the Father of spirits, Shall we not much rather be in subjection to the Father of spirits and live? As if God did not so much look after, and regard your bodies, the outward man, but he is the Father of spirits. And in Zeck. 12:1. There is likewise an expression to the same purpose, That God did form the spirit of man within him: God accounts it a special part of his glory, that he makes the spirits of men; he is the Father of spirits: But now I shall not enter into that controversy of the Generation of the soul; thus far these Scriptures with others do evidence, that God hath a more special hand in the producing of this spiritual substance, than he hath in other Creatures.

2. And further, The soul is only under God's command: No Creature can have power over the soul of a man, he may force his body, but his soul cannot be forced by men or Angels.

3. Yea, And it is under the power of no Creature to inflict evil upon it: Fear not them, saith Christ, that can kill the body, and can do no more; there is all they can do, they can but kill the body, fear not them, but fear him, who after he hath killed the body, hath power to cast the soul into Hell, yea, I say unto you, fear him, saith Christ. So that it appears by the Text, that there is no Creature can do hurt to the soul; the Devils themselves they cannot do it; they can propound objects before the soul, but except the soul

do consent, they cannot force it; it is only God that hath power over the soul, therefore saith Christ, fear him, that is, fear God that hath this power; all other creatures, this is all their do, as we may say, they are able to kill the body.

4. But further, The excellency of the soul of man, in reference unto God, appears especially in the large extent of capacity that it hath to receive the Image of God, and its ability to work according as God doth work himself, and to enjoy communion with God, and to receive the communication of those choice excellencies that God hath to communicate; these things show the excellency of the soul: the large extent I say of the soul in the capacity it hath of good (of divine good.)

As First, It is that that is capable to have the Image of God stamped upon it; Whatsoever the body hath, it is but in way of reflection from the soul; we know those Princes that are great and rich Princes, except necessity compels them, do not use to stamp their Image upon Leather, or Brass, or Copper, but upon the choicest metals, upon Gold and Silver: So when God would have a Creature upon which he would stamp his Image, he doth not choose a mean Creature, the brute beasts, or any sensitive Creature, but he chooseth the most excellent of his Creatures, Angels, and the spirits of men, that are, one as Gold, and the other as Silver, and the great God stamps his Image upon these two, and only upon these two; these are the two Principal Metals, Gold and Silver, Angels and men's spirits, upon which God did stamp his Image in their first Creation.

Secondly, Not only to have the Image of God upon them, but they are able to work as God himself works; No other Creature is able to do so, but Angels and men's spirits: And this is the principal thing that shows the excellency of the soul, it is able to understand the first being, God himself,

and to make God to be the last end of all things; what is God's work, wherein the very happiness, as I may so say, of God himself consists, but in the understanding of himself, as the first being, and the working unto himself as the last end, and the enjoyment of himself? That is God's own happiness: Now of such excellency is the soul of man (however by sin it is depraved) that it is capable of the understanding of an infinite eternal first being; it is capable of working towards this first being, as the last good of all, which is the same way and kind of working, as God himself doth work.

Thirdly, And it is capable of enjoyment of the communion with God himself; What is God's happiness, but to enjoy himself as the only good? Now the soul of man is capable of the enjoyment of God, of having communion with the infinite first being of all things, and so he is capable of living the same life that God himself lives; for so the Scripture saith, That the Heathens were estranged from the life of God; so that it appears then, that believers are not estranged from the life of God, but do live the life of God in the enjoyment of communion with himself: For indeed there could be no communion, except there were living the same kind of life; as thus, A man and a beast cannot have communion together, why? Because they live not the same life one with another, their lives are of different kinds: so, were it not that the soul were capable of the same life that God lives, it could not be capable of communion with God.

Fourthly, And further, The soul is of such a nature, as it is capable of the communication of the choicest excellencies that ever God did, or will communicate unto any: Certainly there are very glorious excellencies in God, in the infinite fountain of all good, in the infinite first being of all things; and this God being an infinite good, doth take infinite delight in the communication of his goodness; Now I say, the souls of men are of such a

large extent, as they are some way capable of the enjoyment of any good that God hath to communicate, which he hath revealed in his word; yea, and the truth is, when we hear of God's communicating of himself to his Son, that hath a human soul as well as a body, we cannot but conceive that a human soul is of that large extent, as it is capable of the highest and excellentest good that God hath to communicate to any Creature. We cannot but think that the soul of Jesus Christ hath as much of God's goodness communicated to it, as ever creature had, or can have; now the soul of Jesus Christ is of the same nature with our souls, as his body; he took the same kind of flesh as we have, only there was no sin; and so the soul, it is the same kind of soul that we have, only it was not sinful, as ours are: Now, if the soul of Jesus Christ be capable of the highest good that God the infinite good hath to communicate to any creature, then the souls of men and women are also: howsoever you have looked after your souls no further, but only to be serviceable to your bodies, to get meat and drink, and be as it were salt, as the Philosopher saith of the Epicure, that the soul serves for no other end to him, but to keep his body from stinking; yet know, whatsoever thou art, though now a sinful wretched vile creature, and art deprived of the chief excellency that thy soul is capable of, yet that soul of thine that thou hast, is capable of the highest good thing that an infinite God hath to communicate: Oh that God by your owning of this, would a little but raise your spirits to think that you have been deluded and deceived all this while: this is the excellency now of your souls, in reference unto God.

Fifthly, And yet there is in the next place A further reference that your souls have to God, and that is the contiguity, as I may so speak, with God himself: that is, of all things that are here in this world, the soul of man it is that that is next unto God himself: Next to God, you will say, what do you

mean when you say that the soul of man it is contiguous unto God? I mean this, that God hath made all creatures for himself, but he hath made them all for himself to come to him by man; he hath made all these inferior things in the world for man, and man for himself, and so God comes to attain the end of all things in this world by man, so that man is next unto God: God would have the glory of all the creatures in the world, but how? By man: saith God, All these things that I have made, I will have them be in subjection to man, for so they were in their first Creation; and as I shall appear in all other of my works, so shall this creature honor me, and fear me, and admire me, and magnify me, upon the taking notice of, and receiving in that good that there is in any creature: All the goodness there is in the creature, it comes to me, but how shall I have the glory of it all? Why, I will make a creature that shall be as it were between me and other creatures, that shall partake of the nature of other creatures, but so as he shall have a certain kind of divine Beam of my excellency, and shall be able to take notice of me and to receive in my goodness; what he doth receive in of the sweetness of the creature, he shall receive it in as my sweet, and my goodness; Incomes from me; and so he shall reflect it upon my face again; so that man's soul is like a Glass; as you see a Glass that takes the beams of the Sun that shines upon it, and casts it toward the Sun again, as upon a wall; the beams of the Sun comes into the Glass, and then the Glass can reflect it this way, or that way: So the glory of God shines in the world, and man's soul is as the glass, and when it was in its first purity, was as a clear crystal glass, and received in all the beams of God's glory, all the glory of God I say, that did shine in all his creatures, was received into man's soul, as the beams of the Sun into a glass, and now man was able to reflect the glory of these beams upon the face of God again, and to return all again to God; for

as all things that are good come from him, so all good should return again to him; but now, how comes the Lord to have an enjoyment as it were of his goodness that he lets out from himself? How comes he to have it return back again to himself? Why, the way of his returning, it is by the Angels in heaven, and the spirits of men; these are the two excellent creatures that God doth make use of to fetch in all the glory that he hath from all his creatures, that they in an active way should reflect it all upon the face of God again; certainly the soul of man is of an excellent nature then, that is contiguous with God himself, next unto him; It is no matter whether a man be rich or poor, learned or unlearned, yet he hath a soul that is capable of this.

Yet further, For the excellency of the soul, as it is excellent in relation to God, so in relation to the Angels. It is of the same kind of nature that they are of, they are spirits, and so is the soul of man, yea it hath the very same name with God himself, God is a Spirit, and so is the soul of man; it is of the very same nature with the Angels, and so is able to converse with them as well as with God himself; but for the way and manner of converse with those spirits, that is little revealed in the word, and therefore we can say little of it.

And further, The excellency of man's soul, it will appear in the excellent endowments of it: Look upon the soul of man in his fallen estate, and what admirable endowments some men have, as in the excellent knowledge that some men have of Arts and Sciences, the knowledge of the heavens; it is a very glorious thing that they are able to ascend up in their understanding, and to know all the motions of the heavens, and can tell you to a minute of an hour what kind of motions there will be, as appears plainly by eclipses: The arts of Navigation, that they can compass the world up and down that

way: If it were but in these sensible things that we see so much art in, as in these mighty buildings, which shows that a man out of a deal of rubbish can raise and erect such a building as this is, this shows the excellency of man's soul; and if there be so much excellency in it naturally, that it can do such things, then what can it be raised unto, and enabled unto by a divine power? What can it do when it is enlarged by grace, and made partaker of the Divine nature?

And further, The excellency of the soul appears in the immortality of it: Fear not them that can kill the body, and can do no more. Certainly if the soul were mortal, as the body is, then that man that kills the body, kills the soul too, and therefore we may fear a man not only because he can kill the body, but because he can kill the soul; but saith Christ, Fear not them that can kill the body, and can do no more. The soul is as an Eagle, when a man dies, that gets out of the Cage, and so it flies away; saith Stephen, when he was to die, Lord Jesus receive my spirit: Why, if so be that his spirit had died with his body, he need not have said, Lord Jesus receive my spirit. And so St. Paul, I am in a straight, and know not what to do, whether to live or die, but he thought it was better for him to be dissolved, it was not to be destroyed, it is but a dissolution, he rather desired a dissolution, that he might be with Christ, which is best of all: Certainly, it was this that made the straight, If I die, I shall be with Christ immediately, and if I live, I shall enjoy some communion with him, and likewise do a great deal of service for him: If Paul had thought that his soul and body should have died both together, certainly he would have desired to have lived, rather than to die; for when he did live, his soul did enjoy communion with Jesus Christ, and he did do abundance of service for him: Now is it possible to think that a man that did so much service for Christ as ever man did, and that enjoyed

so much sweet communion with Jesus Christ, that such a man should be willing to die? Certainly no, but that he knew that upon the dissolution of his body, his soul should enjoy further communion with Jesus Christ, than it could do here: It is an immortal substance, it runs parallel with eternity; of such an excellent nature the soul of man is.

And then further, in this appears The excellency of it, that it is the measure of all other kind of excellency. The soul of man is the measure of all other kind of excellencies, as thus, look how far anything may be subservient for the good of the soul, so far that thing hath an excellency in it; and if it be not subservient for the good of the soul, it hath no worth and excellency in it; as thus, Suppose a man have a great estate in the world, great comings in, many friends, many places; now there is some excellency you will say in these things: but are these subservient for the good of thy soul, that thy soul can enjoy communion with God so much the better? Then these things are good to thee; but if so be that these things hinder the work of thy soul, and do not help it forward in the service that it is most capable of, and made for, there is no excellency in these things. And indeed I know no one better sign that a man doth understand the true worth of his soul than this: What doth he account to be the measure of the excellency of all the things of this world? Thou wouldest fain have an estate, and outward things in abundance, as other men have: Why thou sayest they are the good creatures of God, I grant it, they are so; but now wherein dost thou think the excellency of these creatures doth most consist? Certainly if thou comest to know the true worth of thy soul, thou wilt say, God gives me these outward things, and blessed be his Name, by a more large portion of these things am I enabled to do more large service for God; my soul is freed from incumbrances in the world, and they do help forward the work that my soul

is specially concerned in, viz. the service of God, and therefore I account it a greater good to enjoy these things, than to be without them: now if thou comest to reason in this manner, it is a sign that God hath shewn thee what the true worth and excellency of thy soul is.

But that I might draw to a conclusion, This is that that above all things will demonstrate the worth and excellency of the soul, The great price that was paid for it. That Jesus Christ should be willing to lay down his life to purchase the pardon of the sin of thy soul, to deliver thy soul from eternal misery, this shows the great worth of the soul; We are not redeemed by silver and gold, saith the Apostle Peter, by any of these corruptible things, but by the precious blood of Jesus Christ. According to the price that is paid for one, you may know the worth of such a one: Suppose there were divers men that were taken captives, one is but an ordinary Mariner, you will say perhaps forty pound will redeem such a one; but suppose the other be a Gentleman, or a Knight, a Noble-man, there must go five hundred, or two or three thousand pounds for their redemption, according to the excellency of the man, so must be the price of his ransom: So my brethren, when we consider the price of men's souls, that were taken captive by sin, what was paid for them, it was a price that was more worth than ten thousand thousand worlds; certainly the soul is of an excellent nature: Indeed it cannot be imagined that Jesus Christ would have taken man's nature upon him, and died an accursed death to have saved the whole world from being dissolved; Suppose it had lain upon this, that heaven and earth must have been dissolved, except Jesus Christ would take man's nature upon him, certainly Jesus Christ would have suffered heaven and earth to have gone to nothing, rather than to have done as he did: But when Jesus Christ saw that these immortal souls by their sin were brought into such a condition, that

they must perish to all eternity, except he come and take their nature upon him, and lay down his life, and die an accursed death, saith Jesus Christ, rather than such precious souls which my Father hath made capable of enjoyment of so much good from him, and bringing glory to him, rather than these should perish, I am content to come and die, and suffer the wrath of my Father; surely the price that was paid for souls, doth hold forth the great worth of them: In the death of Christ we may read in large characters the worth of a soul.

And my brethren, Even the body its self, because it is as the case of the soul, it is a very excellent thing. Of all the corporeal things that ever God hath made, the body of man is the most excellent thing, therefore David in Psal. 139, speaking of his body, saith, ver. 14. I am fearfully and wonderfully made, marvelous are thy works, and that my soul knoweth right well. And then ver. 15. My substance was not hid from thee, when I was made in secret, and curiously wrought in the lowest part of the earth. When I was curiously wrought, the word in the Hebrew signifies Embroidered; the body of man is Embroidery; and hence in Gen. 2, it is said there, that God formed man, and here in Psal. 139. God did embroider him: And therefore Gallen that was an Atheist a long time, when he came to see the Anatomy of a man's body, he cried out, Now I adore the God of Nature. Now the Lord hath wrought the body so curiously, because it is the case of the soul, and that being such an excellent creature, must have a suitable case. As if you have a curious Watch, you will not put it into an ill-favored dirty leather case, but will have a curious silver case for it. Now because the Lord did make a curious piece, the soul of man, which was the master-piece of God's creation, next to the Angels, therefore he puts it into a very curious case; this shows the excellency of those spirits that are within

us; howsoever they are now defiled with sin, yet thus they were made at first. When we are speaking to men about their own excellency, one would think that then they should attend.

I have spoken of God and Christ's excellency, they may seem to be things above you: But now I am speaking of your own excellency, what you are, and what you are capable off. Oh remember this you poor people and others, for (as we shall show afterwards) you have souls as excellent as the greatest men in the world. And there is nothing to the contrary, but you may have that spiritual substance of yours filled with so much good as is infinitely more worth than ten thousand thousand worlds, if you have hearts to look after it.

SERM. XI. THE SECOND SERMON ON THE EXCELLENCY OF THE SOUL.

For what is a man profited if he shall gain the whole world and lose his own Soul? Or what shall a man give in exchange for his Soul? – Matth. 16:26.

I shall add one thing more, which shows the excellency of the soul in the relation that it hath to God, and that is this,

That it is satisfied only with God himself, there is nothing can fill the soul of man to satisfy it, but God himself. For the true object of man's understanding, it is not this truth, or the other truth, but truth in general, and the highest truth, and that is God; and the object of this soul, it is not this or that good, but good in general, the highest and the chiefest good, and that is God: Let all the creatures in the world present themselves before the soul of man to be the portion of him, Mans soul would say, these are not the things that can satisfy me; saith Austin, Lord thou hast made us for thyself, and our heart is unquiet till it comes unto thyself, and this is the excellency of man's soul, it is above all creatures; it is a virtue in the soul of man to have a holy kind of pride, to think all creatures in the world to be too little to be

the portion of it, and God takes this well, he likes it well, that we should know our own souls, so far, that we should have this kind of pride of spirit, as we may so call it, or rather a right elevation of spirit, to look upon all creatures in the world, as too low, and too mean to be the portion of one immortal soul.

Many other things were delivered about the excellency of man's soul, that so you might know something of your worth, that you are too good to be slaves to the Devil, and it is good for you to know your own worth in this thing, that so your hearts might be elevated above those bare things that you sought to have your happiness in; all those that ever have had true wisdom, have accounted souls to be very precious. I remember Sozomen the Ecclesiastical Historian saith of the Martyrs, that they suffered torment in their bodies, as if they were other folks bodies, and not their own, they looked not upon them as any part of themselves, but on their souls as themselves; and so you find it in Scripture that it is the soul of man, that is a man's self. Compare for this, my Text in Matthew, with Luk. 9, where you have the same speech of our Savior setting out the excellency of a man's soul. In the one it is, What will it profit a man, if he gain the whole world, and lose his own soul? In the other it is, If he lose himself; this is all one, the losing of a man's soul, and the losing of himself: for a man's self it is his soul, as for the body it is but the case, it is but the outside, and so indeed some of the Heathens accounted their bodies. Anaxarchus, when he was beaten in a Mortar to death by the Tyrants, he calls to them, Beat, Beat as long as you will, you beat but the outward part of Anaxarchus, it is but the vessel in which he is.

The Devil himself hath high esteem of souls, the Devil cares not, so be it he may gain men's souls, what they have for their bodies; the Devil doth not

envy any wicked man to prosper in this world, to have a healthful lusty body, and to have stature and strength, and beauty; But now, if he sees that there be any means for the good of their souls, he envies that, may the Devil have but their souls, he cares not what they have other ways. But we come to the application of this first point in my Text, Of the excellency of man's soul.

And the first Use is this, Surely then we ought to look upon every child of man with some reverent respect and honor; there is not the poorest child (as I told you the last day) that lies crying at your doors for a crust, but hath a soul in it more worth than heaven and earth. And the consideration of this should make us look upon the meanest child, servant, the poorest body, with an honorable esteem and respect; however the glory of their souls be darkened for the present, yet they have still in them such souls as are capable of a kind of infinite good, more than all the other works that ever God made, except the Angels; do not look upon your servants that are under you with scorn and contempt, do not use them doggedly, as if they were brute-beasts; Remember, though you be a Master, a Mistress, a Governor, you are a Governor of one that hath an immortal soul, more worth than all the world. A good man, saith the Scripture, is merciful to his beast, and surely then a good man will be merciful to one that hath an immortal soul, and it may be an immortal soul better than his Governor; how many have more respect to Dogs, to brute-beasts, than they have to servants and children, and poor people, who have immortal souls? I have read of the Turks, that though they be noted for most cruel people to men, as you heard of their cruelty to those in the Gallies, yet they are very pitiful to brute-beasts, and therefore they will give alms and stipends out of charity, to maintain brute-beasts withal; and there is a story of a youth that abusing a

bird that had a long bill, was like to have been stoned to death in the street, they did so hate cruelty to those kind of creatures, though they be cruel to men. Many have this Turkish disposition, that are dogged and cruel to those of their own kind, to those that have immortal souls together with themselves, though pitiful even to brute-beasts. This is the first Use, Look upon all that have these souls with an honorable respect, considering they have that that is of so much worth.

And then secondly, If man's soul be of so much worth, how can we look upon many people, but have our hearts raised in the meditation of the dreadfulness of God's Justice upon men for sin? Thus, God hath made man an excellent creature, and given to everyone a soul more worth than the world; but now when we look upon some people that have lost the beauty of their souls, and now have no other use of their souls, but it may be all their days to be employed in scraping of kennels, and raking in the dust-heaps in your streets, in attending upon horses and swine; and this is all that they have to do in their lives: Oh what a low condition is man fallen into, that hath no other use of such a rational immortal substance that God hath given him, but merely to make him serviceable all his days, to tend swine, beasts, horses, scrape kennels, and such kind of things as these are!

But you will say, It is lawful for men to be employed in these, and poor people must be employed in them.

That is true, It is lawful to be employed in such things, but now, when men and women have such poor and mean employment, and have no higher thoughts but merely to get bread by such employments, and their souls busied all their days about nothing else but those things, this shows the woeful fall of man, and manifests a dreadful fruit of God's Justice upon the children of men for their sin, Certainly, Man that was made in honor is

become like the beast that perisheth in this regard: And when we see the condition of men to be so low, so base and vile as they are, so beneath the excellency of a rational and immortal soul; Oh let us raise our thoughts to the meditation God's divine Justice, it is a fearful fruit of the justice of God upon man for sin; what, is this the creature that hath an immortal soul made by God more worth than ten thousand worlds? That lies scraping from morning to night in a kennel, and hath no other thoughts for any higher excellency, but only if it can get a lump of bread to live by, there is all they have to do, as if they were born for no other end? Oh! Think then, is this the creature that hath such an excellent soul? Surely sin hath made a great breach between God and man, and hath brought man-kind into a very low and mean condition, and yet worse are those than these that have no other use of their souls than to be drudges to the Devil, and slaves unto their lusts, but of this we shall speak to more afterwards; but now I only mention it, as to give a hint to the meditation of God's justice upon man for his sin.

Thirdly, If the soul of a man be of so great an excellency, then certainly it must needs be an honorable work for to be busied about souls, an honorable employment for God to set one man or more to look to, and tend the souls of others: Oh! What a difference is there in the employment between working in Wood and Iron all day long, or scraping in the dust heaps (as before) and in an employment of attending upon souls! To be used by God as the instrument of converting of these souls, and bringing of them to their former excellency in which they were made, yea and to raise them to a higher excellency than ever they had in the first Creation! If we prize men's employments by the subject of their employment, then certainly this is the most glorious employment that any Creature in the world can be capable of, what is the reason you account a Gold-smith a better trade than a Black-

smith? But because of the subject that the one works about rather than the other; one works upon Iron, and the other upon Silver and Gold; therefore one is a more honorable Trade than the other: Now, if the subject upon which they work makes one to be more honorable than the other; what Trade in the world can be so honorable as the work of the Ministry? That works altogether about immortal souls, in bringing them to God, to live to God, and to enjoy communion with him: why do we account a Physician a more honorable Profession, than a Horse-leech? One looks to the bodies of Beasts, and the other to the bodies of Men; If there be such a difference between the body of a Beast, and the body of a Man, that he that is employed about the one is accounted honorable, and he that is employed about the other is accounted low, then certainly the employment of the Ministry must needs be honorable, for it is about souls.

The Magistrate looks unto your peace, the Lawyer to your estates, the Physician to your bodies, and the Divine to your souls; though outward respects may be given more, and should be to the Magistrate, yet certainly the employment about immortal souls, must needs be the honorablest in the world: It is the honor of the Angels, in Psal. 91, to take care of the bodies of the Saints: If it be the glory of Angels to take care of God's people, what glory is it that God puts upon the Ministers of the Gospel to look to souls? And truly, in this thing God hath put more glory upon Men, than upon Angels; for God hath not made it to be his set ordinance that Angels should convert souls, but he hath made it so that men should be made use of to convert souls by preaching the word; and let all the Angels in Heaven show an employment so honorable as this employment is. You would account it a great honor to have the Body of a Prince to watch over; Surely there is no immortal soul but is more precious than all the Princes in the world; and if

the Lord should give unto you the care of all the Creatures, except the souls of men, it were not such an honorable work as to give you the care of any one immortal soul; saith the Apostle, in 2 Cor. 4, the beginning, Let a man esteem of us as the dispensers of the Mysteries of Christ: Let them esteem of us; it is true, Ministers of the Gospel should be willing to lie under the feet of any to do good to their souls; but because we know that it is a great hindrance to the work of their Ministry, when brutish carnal spirits have low and mean esteem of their work; therefore we find that the Apostle would ever be setting up the honor of this work, Let a man esteem of us as the dispensers of the Mysteries of Christ, and in 1 Thes. 5:12,13. We beseech you brethren, to know them which labor among you, and are over you in the Lord, and admonish you, and to esteem of them very highly in love for their works sake; And so in Heb. 13:17. Obey them that have the rule over you, and submit yourselves: for they watch for your souls, as they that must give account: that they may do it with joy, and not with grief; for that is unprofitable for you. Oh it is a sad thing! If one that God sends to watch for the souls of people, shall be forced to return his account to God with sorrow of heart, and say, Lord, thou that knowest all things, knowest what desires I have had, and what endeavors to do good to the souls of this people, how it hath been my study, my prayer, to find out what might be most profitable for their souls, how willing I was to venture my life in seeking to do good to their souls; but Oh Lord! I have spent care, and study, and strength, and even almost my life in vain; little good do I find done to the souls of this people; Lord, they reject thy word, they contemn it, they mind it not; there are other things that their hearts are upon, to follow the lusts of their flesh, as if so be they had no immortal souls to look unto; I say, if any faithful Minister of God shall go to God and make his moan thus unto God with

grief and trouble of heart, it will be very ill for you; it will be a fearful moan in the ears of God against a people, when any Minister shall justly make this to God against them; therefore saith the Apostle here, Obey them that have the rule over you, and submit yourselves: for they watch for your souls, as they that must give account, that they may do it with joy, and not with grief. Consider, so far as any have charge of souls, it is a heavy burden that is upon them, a heavy weight; surely, whosoever should take charge of so many thousand souls as belongs to this Congregation would have weight and burden enough upon his shoulders, you should pity them that have this charge over you. I remember Chrysostom in his writing upon this very Scripture, saith, He wonders how any of these that are here said to watch over men's souls, how any of them could be saved, because the charge is so great that is upon them: And I have read of one being called to the work of the Ministry, would by any means avoid it, and professes that he would not for all the world have the charge of a soul one day upon him. Certainly it is a great work, and requires very much seriousness and diligence to have a soul committed to one. If a man had a precious Pearl committed to his charge, that were worth ten thousand pound, that he must look to it, and keep it, he would hardly be able to sleep quietly after he had so great a charge committed to him; And truly, if men are careful that have but beasts committed to them, as Jacob said concerning his Uncle Laban's cattle, that he looked to them so as that he endured the frost in the night, and the heat of the day; much diligence and care then should they have, that have the charge of souls: But we let that pass.

Yet in the fourth place, If souls have such excellency, then certainly those who have most soul-excellency, are the most excellent people; we may judge here who they are that are the most excellent upon the earth, The

Righteous is more excellent than his neighbor; perhaps his neighbor is richer than he, hath a comelier body than he, but yet he is more excellent, why? Because all excellency must be judged by that that is most proper to the Creature, and that that is the chief part of the Creature; as if you would judge of the goodness of a knife, you will not judge by the haft of it, whether it be good or no, but you will judge by the metal of the knife, you judge by that wherein the chief of the knife is; so, if you will judge of the excellency of a man or woman, you must judge of his excellency by the excellency of that that is most proper to him: Now, for Sense, for the body, why the brute-beasts they have sense, they have flesh and blood as well as we, only we differ in these rational immortal souls that God hath given to us; therefore such, whose souls are filled with divine excellency, they are to be most honored, they are indeed the Lords and Ladies of the world; therefore the Scripture speaks of those, whose out-sides were mean enough; in the latter end of the 11th of the Hebrews, that wandered in sheep-skins and goat-skins, yet they were such as the world was not worthy of them. Indeed, a man of understanding is of an excellent spirit; we read of the Ark, the outside was of Badgers-skins, it had a poor and mean outside, but within were the Cherubim's, and Gold was within; And so, many have very mean outsides, but within there is a great deal of excellency; and others that have brave outsides, and well clad without, yet if you look within them, oh what vile souls have they! The heart of the wicked is little worth, saith the Scripture; Perhaps his Land may be somewhat worth, and his House, but his heart is little worth; As many a man that hath perhaps a hand full of sores, yet may have a fine embroidered Glove upon it; and a dunghill may be strewed with herbs, and in the winter time filthy dunghills you know are covered with white Snow, that in a fair frosty day look as glistering as the

Snow that is upon a fine Meadow, but still nothing but filth: So it is with many a man that hath a fine outside, covered over it may be with a great many outward excellencies, but within their spirits nothing but carrion, nothing but abominable stuff that is filthy and loathsome in the eyes of God; as a sore leg may have a fine stocking or boot upon it; and so a sore putrefied soul may have a brave outside upon it. But that God that is a Spirit, that looks unto Spirit, and those men that know what spiritual excellency means, if they see a man or woman have a filthy, defiled, corrupt soul, they cannot but esteem of them accordingly. Whatsoever the body, or the outside be, those are the most excellent in God's esteem, and the holy Angels, and the Saints, that have the most excellent souls, for that is the best part of man.

But fifthly, If the soul of man be so excellent, Oh let us bless God for our souls, bless God, I say, that hath given unto you these immortal souls that are of so great a worth: Oh what cause have every one of you to bless God that he did not make you a Toad, a Dog, a Snake, that he did not make you any vile brute creature, but that when you were before him in the common lump out of which God made his creatures, that he would rather choose you to be one that should have an immortal soul, so precious, rather than to be a brute creature? Bless God, I say for this, for by this means,

First, You are looked upon by the Angels themselves, with honor, and with respect, till such time as the Angels certainly know your Reprobation, and that you be sent down to hell: Though you be wicked for the present, and your souls be defiled, yet the Angels know nothing but that these souls, though now much fallen from God, may be such as may live with them to enjoy eternal communion with God together with them, and therefore they look upon you with honor.

And the providence of God it is more towards you, than towards any other creature in the world. Doth God take care for Oxen? Saith the Scripture: True, the providence of God it is over all his works, there is not the least worm that stirs without his providence. I, but doth God take care for Oxen? That is, as if the Holy Ghost there should say, the providence of God over other creatures, it is nothing in comparison of that it is over the spirits of men, over those that have immortal souls: When God looks upon the creature, that he hath given an immortal soul too, why saith God, My Providence shall in a special manner be over this soul: And certainly the thoughts of God have been from all eternity working towards those that have immortal souls, in a more special manner than towards any of his other creatures; how ever you think of God, yet that is certain, God hath had his thoughts towards you one way or other from all eternity, and intends to fetch out a great deal of honor to his name from you one way or other, and therefore his Providence is towards you; God observes you, and marks you what way you take, his eye is upon you, for he intends to bring some great glory out of you, God will not lose his creature fully, you may lose your own souls, but God will not lose the glory that he might have from you, but he will have glory from you one way or other.

And if God hath given you immortal souls, you have cause to bless him, because whatsoever you are now, yet you are such as are capable of all the good that ever Jesus Christ hath purchased, and therefore it is a happy thing for one to have an immortal soul, because they are not out of capacity of receiving that good that the Lord Christ hath purchased for his people; the brute beasts are not capable, they are capable of no higher good, but to eat and drink, and live here a while, and have their senses to be pleased, and there is an end of them, but know, whatsoever thou art, thou art capable of

all the good that ever Christ hath purchased, and therefore thy condition is a great deal better in that respect than the condition of all other creatures in the world. And thou having a soul within thee, God hath made thee for eternity one way or other, and he intends for to have thee to live to all eternity in one condition or other: Now it is I say, a happiness to be made such a creature, as that God should have thoughts about from all eternity.

It may be you will say, It were better that it were otherwise with us.

I confess such is the condition of some through their sin, living and dying in it, that it were better ten thousand times that they had been Dogs, or Toads, and Serpents, I but that is but through thy wickedness, but it cannot be said of the vilest alive, for there is none of you, but for ought Angels or men know, may live eternally to the praise of God's grace in Christ, you have such kind of natures as are capable of it. Now it is true, if you should die in your sins, then it might be said at that instance when you die in your sins, that it had been better that you had been Toads or Serpents, or anything in the world: But were not this a sad thing for a man that hath such an excellent nature, to live and die so that they may wish hereafter that they had been Toads or Dogs? How many are there that are willing, so they may live like a beast, to die like a beast, I but that thou canst not bring thyself to die like a beast, thou must be infinitely worse, or infinitely better than the brute beasts. But bless God that thou hast a nature capable of so much good, whatsoever thou art in other respects, though God hath made a great difference between thee and others that are of the same kind in thy outward estate, God hath made a great deal of difference between poor and rich, between a poor Alms-body that lives in so mean a condition, and between a Noble-man, a Prince, an Emperor; I but this difference is made in the outward estate and body, but there is no such difference made in their souls,

thou hast as precious a soul within thee, that is naturally as good as ever any Emperor had in the world, so Philosophers say of the souls of men, men's souls are equal, and one is not better than another by nature, what they are better by is afterwards, by education, or by common gifts of the graces of God, but by nature all men are equal. And therefore that wherein man's excellency is, is in his soul, thou art as high as any Emperor in the world, and therefore it is that the Scripture would have no difference made between the souls of men, in Exod. 30:15, you shall find there by that Scripture, that God would not have difference made of the souls of men, it is said in the 14th verse, Everyone that passeth among you, that are numbered from twenty years old and above, shall give an offering unto the Lord; God would have an offering from every one of them: Now mark what he saith in the 15th verse, The rich shall not give more, and the poor shall not give less than half a shekel when they give an offering unto the Lord to make an atonement for their souls; There must be the same atonement made for souls, both for the rich, and for the poor. And as we spake the last day in opening the excellency of the soul, it appears by the price that was paid for it; so here they are equal in this, that the poor man's soul must have as great a price paid to save it, as the richest man in the world. And therefore bless God for thy soul in this, that he hath made thee equal with the Kings and Princes of the world in that that is thy more noble, and more excellent part.

And bless God for soul-mercies above all mercies; If the soul be so excellent, then I say, bless God that hath granted thee soul-mercies, though he hath denied thee bodily-mercies, it is no great matter; as suppose, If so be that God should take away the sight of thine eyes, yet if he opens the eyes of thine understanding, of thy soul, thou art happy: Suppose that thou art lame in thy body, yet if thou canst walk in the ways of God's

Commandments, and run there, thou art a happy creature: It may be thou wantest food, I, but if God feed thy soul with spiritual Manna, feed thee every day with food from heaven, and take care for the feeding of thy soul, thou art not so miserable as thou thoughtest thyself; thou hast tattered clothes, I but if God hath provided the righteousness of his Son to be a garment to cloak thy soul, every time thou appearest before him, thou art a happy creature in that, therefore when thy heart is ready to murmur, that God hath denied thee bodily mercies that he hath granted to others, think with thyself, I but hath not God recompensed me in soul mercies? I make no question but there are many souls that bless God that ever they have lived to this time, though they have suffered hard things for their bodies, many that have lost, and been plundered of all, yet bless God that they have lived to the time wherein there was so much plenty of the food of souls: Oh those truths of God that have been revealed unto us since those times, but had those that had the power before, had the power still continued, we had never had such truths made known unto us, they account all recompensed in soul-mercies, in Eph. 1:3. Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ. Mark what the Apostle saith there, his heart is filled with this, Blessed be God, and the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ; Wherefore? That he hath given us good trading, and good incomes, that hath given us food and raiment, we are to bless God for this, I but the Apostles heart was above this, therefore saith he, Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly things in Christ, they are the blessings indeed that we have cause to bless him for, spiritual blessings, soul-mercies; as for bodily-mercies, we know that the Heathens and Reprobates have had as great a share in as any in the world;

but blessed be God, though we be denied these outward bodily favors, yet we have spiritual blessings. Oh thanks be to God, and the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ. And this now would be a good argument that you do know the worth of your souls; if you can be blessing of God for spiritual blessings in Jesus Christ, above all blessings, and account yourselves rich enough, if you have the riches of spiritual blessings.

And then further, Oh if the soul of man be so precious, What great pity is it that God should not have the honor of men's souls, of such a noble and excellent creature; it is great pity that there should be any creature under the Sun that God should not have the honor of; that God should not have honor from every pile of grass, from every bit of bread that is eaten, from every stone in the street: But now that God should give to mankind such an excellent spirit, a soul more precious than all the world, and yet that God should not have the glory of this, Oh this is an evil thing under the Sun indeed, this must needs go to the heart of God; for the truth is, God hath his glory from all other creatures by the soul of man. As for other creatures, he hath his glory but passively from them, but for man's soul he doth expect to have his glory actively from that: that man by his soul should come to know this God, the infinite first-being of all things, should fear him, and worship him, and serve him, and have communion with him, and praise him; and therefore David in Psal. 103. My soul praise thou the Lord, and all that is within me praise his holy name. And again, he concludes, My soul praise thou the Lord. And so in Psal. 104. Now upon the consideration of what hath been said of the excellency of our souls, we should lay a charge upon them, that they do honor God, and serve God: What a sad charge will this be to many a man at the great day, when God shall say, Haddest thou been

made a Dog, I never had had so much dishonor as I have had, I should have had more honor if I had made thee a Dog, there I should have had my honor passively, and no dishonor from thee? But now, thou being made an immortal soul, as it was capable of honoring me, so of sinning against me; the more excellent a thing is, the more capable of evil it is, as well as of good; no creatures, but Angels and men are able to sin against God. Oh it is pity that God should not have the honor of thy immortal soul. God had more honor from Nebuchadnezzar, when he was driven out among the beasts, than when he sat upon the Throne as a King.

And then further, that should have been another Use, to have labored to persuade you to take heed of dishonoring these souls of yours. God hath put a great deal of glory and excellency upon them, do not you dishonor them; and many ways should have been said how men do put dishonor upon their souls; only for the conclusion; Oh that you would but learn to love your own souls: To love them. It is a strange exhortation you will say to exhort men to love their souls: Oh, that you would but do it, Psal. 22. David calls his soul his Darling, the souls of men should be indeed their Darlings, not their bodies. It was a speech of a Courtier to his friend, saith he, I love you as mine own soul; Oh saith he, then you love me not at all; if you had said you had loved me as your body, then I should have thought you had loved me, but I see no love you have to your soul; It was the prayer of the Apostle St. John in the Epistle that he writ to his host Gaius, I suppose you that know Scripture, are not unacquainted with it, in his third Epistle, Beloved, I wish above all things that thou mayest prosper, and be in health, even as thy soul prospereth.

I shall close all I intend for the present with this Scripture; it seems that Gaius was a holy man, but a man of a weakly and sick body, and therefore

St. John writing to him, he prays thus, Above all things, I desire that thy body may but prosper, as thy soul prospereth. As if he should say, O Gaius, thou hast an excellent gracious soul, endued with admirable graces of the Spirit of God, full of God thy soul is, though thy body be weakly: Oh that thou hadst but as good a body, as thou hast a soul. It seems Gaius had more care of his soul a great deal, than of his body: but now my brethren consider this, Would not this be a curse to most men for one to pray thus for them, Oh Lord, give them such bodies, as they have souls? It were as much as to say, Lord, Let that body be blasted, let it be filled with diseases, let it be filled with rottenness, let it consume away, let it be a noisome and loathsome body, for his soul is so; The souls of most men are filled with diseases, are noisome and loathsome in the eyes of God. It is a happy thing, my brethren, to have better souls than bodies, that was the happiness of Gaius, and so it would be your happiness, if you could say so; you have great care of the bodies of your children, I, but have you a greater care of their souls? If you have, it would be an excellent sign that God hath made you to understand what true excellency means. It is a great question among Divines, and among Philosophers too, about the propagation of the soul, how it comes in, whether by the Parents, or immediate creation; truly there is one argument that it is not like to come in by the Parents, because we see that there is scarce any Parents that have any care of the souls of their children, but altogether caring that their bodies may be fine, and that they may be brave; and as they look at their children, so they look at themselves, they love their bodies to the uttermost, to make provision for the flesh, but no further. What a deal of do would there be, if when any of your children goes abroad, or husband, or wife, If you should hear that they have gotten a fall and broke their legs or arms? But now when you go abroad, and fall

into sin, and get a wound to your souls, as every sin it gives a deadly wound, yea such a wound as only the blood of Jesus Christ is able cure it; and there is nothing made of all this, as if we were nothing but lumps of flesh: Oh have a care of your souls, and labor to love them, and make them to be your Darling; you had need have a care of them, for as they are precious, so they are tender; as it is with Watches and curious Instruments, those that are most curious are the easiest hurt, the very air will put them out of temper; and so the souls of men, because they are things so excellent, they are things of a very curious nature, and a little thing will hurt them. As a little thing will hurt the eye, for that is a more excellent member than your finger or leg; so the soul is a more excellent part, and therefore it is that that is most in danger to be hurt and mischiefed, yea and to perish, and if your soul perishes, your body will follow after, what will become of that if your soul be lost and perish? But the only way to love your bodies well, and aright, it is to love your souls.

SERM. XII. THE THIRD SERMON ON THE EXCELLENCY OF THE SOUL.

For what is a man profited if he shall gain the whole world and lose his own Soul? Or what shall a man give in exchange for his Soul? – Matth. 16:26.

I shall speak something unto a Use that was mentioned the last day, and that was this,

If God hath given unto us such precious souls, Oh then let not us dishonor our souls: Dishonor them, Why, how may a man dishonor his soul?

1. Why first when he lives idly, and makes no use at all of it, any more than if he had but the soul of a Brute. Psal. 24:5, speaking of him that had not lift up his soul unto vanity, I remember the old Latin Arius Montanus turns it, He that hath received his soul in vain. And indeed most people do receive their souls from God in vain, or to no purpose, they make no more use of them than the Philosopher said of the Swine that had his soul only as salt to keep the flesh from stinking; there is all the use many men make of their souls, only to keep their bodies from smelling, and from corruption.

Secondly, We dishonor our souls when we employ them about low and mean things unworthy of them, and make them to be the chief things that we employ them about; It is the misery of man so to do, that I spake of before, and it is the sin of man so to do: How many men that have such precious immortal souls as these are, know no higher good to employ them about, than to be it may be all day or night in shuffling a pair of Cards, or casting of Dice, or at Tables? There is the highest good that they know how to employ their souls about. What a poor mean low thing is this, what a dishonor to such a soul as this? If so be any of you have servants that are of good breeding, good parentage, that are of excellent parts, that have lived long with you, that have skill in your Trade, if you should set them to do nothing but pick straws, they would account it a great dishonor put upon them. Truly what do you with these precious immortal souls of yours that are so much worth, even more than the world, but employ them in such poor things, even to pick straws as it were? If a man should have pearls, that every one of them were worth a Kingdom, and he should know no other use to make of them than to stop holes in Mud walls, one would think it, as to be great folly in him, so a great dishonor put upon those pearls that are of so much worth; why your souls are more worth every one of them than all the Pearls and Kingdoms in the world, and for you to do nothing else but spend the strength of your souls about gathering of a little dirt together here in this world, it is a great dishonor to your souls.

We have a story of Domitian that was a great Emperor, and yet he had such a low and mean spirit, as that he would spend the greatest part of his time in catching of Flies. This is recorded of him as an argument of the lowness and meanness of his spirit, unworthy a man of so great a dignity: Oh so our souls that God hath made so high and put such glory upon, what

are they busied about in most people? I remember Gregory Nyssen, he tells of some, and among others of Origen, to be of that opinion, that the souls of men were made altogether at the first Creation, and lived glorious spirits till they sinned against God, and all those that sinned against God were thrust into the bodies of men, as into a prison, and those that did not sin, they live still with God in glory. And Jerome, as I remember in his 32nd Epist. speaks of that opinion that did prevail; and we find Plato, though a heathen, he speaks of the souls of men, and thought that they were made altogether before their bodies, if not from eternity. These men they thought the souls of men so precious, as that they could not come into the bodies of men but for their faults, as a punishment to them, because they saw how meanly men's souls lived while they were in their bodies, and therefore thought it impossible for such a precious soul as a man had, to come to live so meanly, were it not for God's anger punishing the soul for some sin or other: Oh do not dishonor them by employing of them about unworthy and low things.

Thirdly, Do not dishonor them by defiling of them by casting filth, and dirt upon them. Would not a Prince account himself dishonored, to have the filth and dirt of the street to be cast into his face? Certainly, when thou doest defile thy soul by sin, when thou doest sin, thou doest as vile an act as casting dirt in the face of a Prince. There is no Princes body upon earth so excellent as the soul of the poorest and meanest man, no filth in the world so vile as the filth of sin, and by thy sin thou doest cast this filth upon thy soul, and so doest all besmear it, and defile it. You love to have clean and handsome bodies, and are loath to come into company all besmeared and besooted: Oh but how often do you go into the presence of God most abominable and loathsome! Oh do not put that dishonor upon your souls!

Fourthly, Do not dishonor your souls by making them drudges to your bodies, by making them to be Caters to provide for the body, and to satisfy the lusts of the flesh; I have seen (saith Solomon) servants upon horses, and Princes walking as servants upon the earth. This was an evil Solomon thought, but to see our base vile bodies to be set up, and our souls to be brought under, and servants and slaves to this body, Oh how vile is it! If you should see a great Prince to be made a slave to some Scullion-boy, you would account it a great leaving of his condition, and dishonor put upon him, but while thou makest thy soul to be a slave to thy body, it is worse a great deal. Seneca, though he were but a Heathen, yet hath this notable speech, I am greater, and born to greater things, than that I should be a drudge to my body, and the slave of my body: A Heathen thought himself too great, and born to greater things than that ever he should bring that soul of his to be a drudge and slave to his body. And indeed did we know our souls, we should think so, and we should never make them drudges to our bodies, merely to satisfy the lusts of the flesh; and yet how many men and women are loath to die, only upon this ground, because that then they shall have no more satisfaction to the lusts of the flesh? Oh what dishonor is there put upon this precious and excellent soul in this? But much more dishonor when thou makest it a drudge and slave to the Devil? It is an evil to have our souls to be slaves to our bodies, but a greater evil to be a slave and drudge to the Devil, that the Devil should have command of them, and carry them up and down as he pleases. I remember, it is reported of Theodosius, and another Emperor that did use to call themselves the vassals of Christ; but as for those precious souls now to be vassals to the Devil, Oh this is too great a dishonor that is put upon them.

Fifthly, Again, you dishonor your souls by grudging the time and cost that is spent upon them; how many men and women think the time is lost that is spent upon their souls more immediately! They must indeed sometime pray, and sometime hear the word, but the time, and all the charge they are at for their souls, they look upon it even almost as lost, and so grudge it, and so would fain be about something for their bodies; speak to them about praying in their families, they have business, and what is all their business for, but only for their bodies? Indeed we should rather turn our plea the other way, and be loath to spare time for our outward estate, rather than for our souls, those immortal souls of ours; it is a wonder, how any one that knows the worth of his soul, can find in his heart, but upon mere necessity, and out of duty, to spare time for his outward condition. The soul is dishonored when the time and cost that is bestowed about it is grudged, as if it were merely lost, and cast away.

Sixthly, Again we dishonor our souls when as we lay not up provision for them against an evil day, this is a dishonor put upon them.

Seventhly, And lastly, you dishonor your souls, when as you think to satisfy them with anything but God himself; if you should have any of your friends that are of quality come to your house, if you should set a bowl of swill before them, and think to satisfy their hunger that way, they would think it a great dishonor to them. Now if you do think to satisfy your souls with anything here but God himself, you do as it were bring bones to set before a Prince. It was a speech unworthy of a man which we read of in the Gospel concerning rich Dives, Soul, Soul, take thine ease, thou hast goods laid up for many years. Soul, Soul, eat, drink, and take thine ease; Why, what had that to do with eating and drinking? How unworthy was this, I

say, of one that had an immortal soul thus to speak: Oh this is a great dishonor that is put upon the soul.

Now then learn we in a right way to put honor upon our souls, and to love them, and make them our Darlings; and manifest your love to your souls,

First, By having your thoughts often upon them; we manifest our love to a friend by having our thoughts run upon him: Oh let your thoughts run much upon your souls, I am thus and thus in regard of my outward estate; in regard of my body, through God's mercy I have all my limbs and senses, and comfortable provision for it: Oh but my soul, how is it with thee? Be often conferring with your souls, as you know one friend loves to confer with another: Can you say you love such a friend that is your next neighbor, and never spend any time in conference together, scarce ever speak one with another? Certainly so it is with the souls of men, they think but little of the terms that their souls are in with God, of what conditions their souls are in, whether good or bad, and the day is yet to come wherein many a man hath spent one half hour in conference with his soul, to know how terms do stand between his soul and the Almighty God: Oh love your souls by thinking on them, and thinking often what should become of them.

2. And further, love them by making them Empresses of your bodies, by keeping your bodies under them: Those that the Scripture sets out unto us which have had the most precious souls, they have ever more beat down their bodies, and kept them low: You know Paul that was one of the most precious spirited men that ever lived upon the face of the earth, yet saith he, I beat down my body, I beat it black and blue, lest after I have preached to others, I myself become a Reprobate; he did not think his happiness to consist in pampering his body, no, but he beat it down, and therein he

shown his love to his soul, in that he made his soul to be Emperess as it were.

It is the speech of a learned man upon those words, Subdue the earth, that is thy body, and all earthly things, to that spiritual part of thine, thy soul. If one should tell you what the ancient Martyrs, and worthy Instruments of God that were precious men in their time, how hardly they used their bodies, it would hardly be believed by you; but this is certain, there was never any that knew the true worth of their souls, but they made them the Empresses of their bodies. Ambrose said of Valentinian, No man was ever such a servant to his Master, as Valentinians body was to his soul; Bring your bodies down, and therein you will show the greatest love unto your souls.

3. And further, Adorn your souls, labor to put comeliness and beauty upon them as much as you can, and therein you will show love and respect to them: Adorn them with those graces that may make them amiable and lovely in the eyes of God himself, in 1 Pet. 5:5. Be clothed with humility. Those that understand the Greek language, know it to be a word that signifies a dress that Gentlewomen use to have upon their heads with ribands, such as they did use to wear in those days, and so they thought themselves very comely, and the Apostle alludes to those kind of dresses. Oh humility is the finest dress for a woman in the world, and so for men too. The finest clothes that you can put upon you is the clothes of humility; and so any grace of God's Spirit it is the clothing of the soul: Oh therefore show your love unto your souls by laboring to deck and adorn them with such clothing as this is.

4. And show your love to your souls by providing for them, while God affords means, labor to understand the want of your souls, and be willing to

be at any charge and cost for the good of them: If your head ache, or you have any little pain in any of your members, how do you seek out, and are willing to be at a great deal of charge that you may have ease for your bodies? Now seek out for your souls, the one is a sign that you love your bodies well, and the other will be a sign that you love your souls as well.

5. And then show love to your souls in the excellency of them, in things that are suitable to them, in conversing with God and Jesus Christ, with the mysteries of the Gospel, and with heavenly things.

6. Shew your love to them in laboring to bring them to the attaining of that end that they were made for, the uttermost happiness that they are capable of; then indeed you show true love to your souls, when as your care is to bring them to the attainment of that end that God made them for: Certainly when God made a creature of so much excellency, he did intend a glorious end for it: And let this now be your great care, and manifest your love to your souls, I say, in this, by laboring to attain the end that God made them for. But this shall suffice for the first point, of the preciousness and excellency of our souls.

We come now to the second, and that is the main Point indeed in the Text, that is,

That the loss of this soul is a most dreadful loss.

Skin for skin, yea all that a man hath will he give for his life; Even the Devil himself could say so. The loss of bodily life we account a great evil, and therefore the Scripture calls Death by the name of the King of Terrors; and is it so great an evil to lose a bodily life, to have the soul and body but separated? Is the face of a bodily death so ghastly? Oh how great an evil, and how ghastly is the face of the eternal death, and the loss of the immortal

soul? This Point my brethren, is a Point of exceeding great concernment to understand; we shall therefore,

First, Inquire what we mean by the loss of the soul, or when may the soul be said to be lost?

The second thing, Wherein doth the dreadfulness of the loss of the soul consist?

And then thirdly, I shall discover to you some aggravations of the evil of the loss of the soul.

Fourthly, And then we shall come to apply all together.

For the first then, What doth Christ mean when he saith, What profiteth it a man, if he gain the whole world, and lose his soul?

First, You are to know this, That we are not said to lose our souls, because they shall be annihilated, and cease to be, the ceasing of the soul to be, that is not the loss of the soul, the ceasing indeed of our bodily lives is the loss of our lives, but it is not so with the soul, for the soul of no man or woman shall be lost so.

Yea, and this would not be the greatest loss for the soul to cease to be. There are two degrees of evil that are beyond the evil of ceasing to be; to be miserable, to be in pain and torture, is worse than not to be, and to be sinful, is worse than to be in pain; and therefore the ceasing to be, is not the greatest evil: What is the loss of the soul then?

First, The loss of the soul it is first in the privation of it of all the good and excellency that the soul is capable of, the privation of the true good that the soul was made for.

Secondly, It consists in its departing and wandering from God: As a sheep is said to be a lost sheep that wanders up and down in the wilderness; so that is a lost soul that wanders away from God the fountain of all good.

Thirdly, It consists in the subjecting of it to that misery and evil that is contrary to what good it is capable of.

And then fourthly, and lastly, in the succorless and helpless condition that it is brought into; we use the phrase of Lost to all these things; when a man hath lost his estate, we account such a man as a lost man; and when a man is brought into a great deal of misery, that heretofore was in a great deal of happiness, we account such a man to be a lost man; but especially when a man is succorless and helpless, when he hath no way to help and relieve himself, then he is a lost man indeed: And according to the degrees of these four things then a soul may be said to be lost. And here for the present every man and woman's soul in the world by nature is a lost soul.

First, Every man and woman, as they come into the world are deprived of the glory and excellency that God did endow the souls of men withal in their first creation, we are all deprived of the glory of God, saith the Scripture.

And secondly, All our souls do now naturally wander away from God, continually depart, and wander from the infinite glorious first-being of all things; Thou that art an old man or woman that hast lived many years, and God hath not revealed himself in working the true work of conversion in thee, to change thy estate, know, that thy soul hath been departing and wandering from the Lord all the days of thy life, to this very present, thou art like a lost sheep, wandering up and down in the wilderness, and in danger to be destroyed every minute of an hour by some wild beast or other; though it is true, thy soul is not made a prey to the Devil so as to destroy thee utterly, yet thou hast been in danger all the while thou hast been wandering from the Lord to be made a prey upon by the Devil, and utterly to have been cast away.

Yea, and thirdly, There is a great deal of misery upon thy soul, if thou knewest it; as, contrary to that light that he hath set up in thy understanding, there is blindness in thee, there is error in thee; contrary to that holiness that was at first in thy heart and soul, there is nothing but sin and wickedness, all the spawns and seeds of all kind of sin is in thy heart; there is a great deal of that evil that is contrary to what thy soul was made withal at first, there is enmity in thy soul against God himself.

Yea, and fourthly, Thy soul is in a succorless, helpless, shiftless condition in respect of what thou art able to do, or what all the creatures in heaven or earth are able to do for thee; let all the Angels in heaven, and men in the world, join together to seek to do good to thy soul, they are not able to deliver thy soul from that evil that now it is in, and that it is in further danger of. And this is the reason of that phrase that you have in Luk. 19:10. The Son of man is come to seek and to save that which was lost. We are all lost sheep going astray, and Jesus Christ came to seek and to save lost souls; Souls deprived of the glory of God, Souls wandering away from God, Souls filled with evil, Souls succorless, and helpless in regard of any power in any creature in heaven and earth to save them: Christ beholding how such precious souls were every one of them lost, if he had not come to save them, he was pleased to come from heaven to seek and to save souls thus lost.

Now though souls be for the present in a lost condition, yet there is a further loss of the soul than this; for if the soul be neglected here, it will be lost forever; there are many that are lost now for the present, and yet afterwards Christ finds them, and there is joy in heaven at the finding of them; but there is a loss that shall be eternal, and that loss is more dreadful than the former, yet the former hath the degree of it, but that the perfection

of the former: Now the loss of the soul in hell consists in these three particulars.

First, The full and perfect eternal rejection of the soul from God, and from all good in him together, with the fullness of all kind of evil that the soul is capable of; this is the condition of a lost soul that perishes.

Secondly, And then in the next place it consists in the making of this soul to be perfectly sensible of the loss of that good, and of all the evil it is possessed withal, making of it perfectly sensible of it: Here men and women are in lost conditions, but they know it not, they are not sensible of it: But God will bring the soul into such a condition, as it shall be made perfectly sensible of the loss of all the good that it might have had, and of all the evil that is upon it.

Thirdly, And then lastly, It shall be in such a condition, so succorless, so helpless, as is not only beyond the power of Angels, and all men to help it; but I say, so succorless, so lost, as that God's mercy, and all the good there is in Christ shall never save it, and as God hath set and ordered things, can never save it.

Now then these things being opened to you, you will understand what this Text means: When you read this Text you think there may be truth in it, and in general you will assent unto it, but if you come to understand but these things, then indeed you cannot but all subscribe to it and acknowledge: Oh it is indeed a dreadful thing the loss of the soul. But now because it is a point of so great moment, I will not satisfy myself merely in telling you these things, but endeavor to open them unto you, what the evil of this loss is, that if it might be, by presenting this before the souls of men, they may see more the danger that they are in, and how the Devil hath gulled and deceived them all this while: It may make many souls to be at a stand, if

they come to know what this loss indeed doth mean. Now I shall endeavor the opening of this in the three last particulars that I named.

First, For the rejection of the soul from God so as to be deprived of all the good there is in God, and that it is capable of; Now for the understanding of the evil of this, we must inquire what is that good that the souls of men are capable of, or else we cannot come to understand what an evil thing it is to lose it.

Now for the good that the soul is capable of, I will but only name some heads unto you, for in a Treatise that some of you have in your hands, of Moses looking to the recompense of reward, there are the principal heads of the good and excellency that the soul is capable of, and shall be blessed in heaven eternally with: And the apprehending the loss of these things, will discover much, The first part of the evil of the loss of the soul. I will but in a very brief way present them unto you.

Why the Glory of God upon the soul, the Image of God, the Life of God, the Divine nature that the soul is capable of: Now for the soul never to live the Life of God, nor to have his Image, nor any of the Glory of Gold upon it, this is a fearful evil to those that know the excellency of these things; of the blessed vision of God in heaven, to see him that is the infinite first-being of all things, to see him as he is, to see him that hath all excellency in him, and to see all the good there is in God, as the good of the soul. The soul is capable of the understanding of the mind of God, to have all the glorious Counsels of God about his works and ways that he hath had from all eternity to be revealed unto, so far as concerns it, and as any way may make it happy: To live to see what the ways of God have been from all eternity, and what they shall be to all eternity, and that for the good of this soul, that it may be forever in his presence, and to stand and look upon his

face, and see him as the portion of it, Oh this must needs be a glorious thing: Certainly if the presence of God put such a glory upon the heavens, it must needs put abundance of glory upon the soul that shall stand immediately always in his presence: To have eternal communion with God, that is, to have the embracement's of God, embracing the soul, and delighting himself in it above all other his works, but only the Angels and his Son; delighting, I say, himself in the soul, and embracing it, communicating and letting out himself in all his luster and glory when he shall have enlarged the soul to be able to the uttermost to receive in that glory that he hath to communicate: And for him to converse with the souls of men to all eternity in a familiar way, as one friend with another; and for the soul to be letting out its self again to God, for that is in communion, there is God's letting out himself to it, and its letting out its self again to God; now, I say, it is the greatest delight to what God hath in himself, his Son, and Spirit, and Angels, the letting out of himself to the souls of men (those that shall be saved:) And on the other side, it must needs be an infinite delight to the soul always to be letting out itself upon God, as now, what delight do men take in eating and drinking? Now if there be such delight from the humor in the palate meeting with a piece of meat in the mouth, because of the suitableness between one object and another? Oh what delight must there needs be when this immortal precious soul being enlarged to the uttermost with all excellency shall then meet with an infinite God, the infinite first-being of all things as the most suitable object to it, and so be letting of its self forth to God, and God letting of himself forth to it again.

Again, the good that the soul is capable of with God, it is to have a union with God, for the soul to be made one with God, to be united so as to be

made one with him: He that is joined to the Lord, is one Spirit, saith the Apostle; and saith Christ, in Joh. 17. Father, I will that those that thou hast given me, may be one with me, as thou and I are one. Spiritual things do most unite one to another; there may be a thousand beams of the Sun united, and almost into one point, because it is of a more spiritual nature: so when the soul shall be made one Spirit with God, it being a Spirit, and God likewise a Spirit, there will be an exact union one with another: And so the more spiritual things are, the more they communicate one to another; as in nature, the more corporeal a thing is, the less it communicates its self; the earth doth not communicate its self with any creature; the water communicates itself more than that, and the air more than that, and the fire more than that; the Sun, that is less corporeal than any of these elements that we have here, and therefore that communicates itself more than the element doth: Now God being a Spirit, and the souls of men spiritual, Oh what a communion will there be of each to other!

And then further, the soul is capable of fruition of God; union, and communion, and fruition, what is that you will say? That is to have God not only to be united to it, but to have a kind of possession of him, to have the use of all that there is in God that can make me happy, to have the full use of it when I will; then a man doth enjoy a thing, when he can have the use of such a thing when he will: Now the souls of the Saints shall enjoy God, that is, shall have the use of all that glory and good there is in God that can make them happy, when they will, and shall have as much use of God as they will; surely they must needs be happy that shall thus enjoy God: If a man had the fruition of the world, that he could have the use of all the good things in the world, when he would, you would think him happy; but this is the happiness of the souls of the Saints, that they shall have such a fruition

of God, that they shall have all the use of God that they will, and when they will.

And further, Fruition hath this in it, it hath a reflect act; A man, though he hath a great deal of riches given him, yet if he doth not know this, or if so be that he doth know it, and yet have not the comfort of it, he doth not enjoy it; such a man, though he be born to a great deal, yet if he have not the reflect act to know that he hath it, he doth not enjoy it: So we enjoy but little of God now, because God, though he be the portion of a gracious heart, yet the heart doth not know this fully: But knowledge, when it shall be perfect, then the soul shall perfectly know what good there is in God, and how far my soul may and is happy in the enjoyment of this God; I shall know how to make use of God to the full, and shall have continually the comfort of all that good there is in God.

And yet further, the presence and communion with Jesus Christ that the soul shall have, besides that of God the Father, it shall be with him, where he is: It is a blessed thing here to follow the Lamb whithersoever he goes, but to be always with him, to have always fruition of him, and to have communion likewise with all the Saints and Angels, and all the blessed spirits, that is a blessed thing indeed. I remember I have read of Cato, when he was about to die, Oh blessed day, saith he, for now I shall go to the souls of wise men, and Philosophers; and so upon that ground he did account the day of his death a blessed day, because he should go to have communion with the souls of Philosophers and wise men: But how blessed is it then for our souls to have communion eternally with Angels and blessed spirits? You are come to an innumerable company of Angels, and the spirits of just men made perfect. When a soul is converted, it comes to have some kind of communion with innumerable company of Angels, and with the spirits of

just men made perfect: It hath the assurance of it here, and shall have the enjoyment fully and perfectly hereafter.

And then the continual exercise that the soul shall be busied in, to be forever blessing, and magnifying, and praising and worshipping of God, and receiving in from God, and letting out its self to God: The eternal Sabbath that it shall keep, and then the eternal rest that the soul shall have, when it comes to God, it comes there to its Center, there it hath perfect peace and rest, and can never have trouble further.

Yea, and it shall live in God; not only God live in it, but it shall, I say, live in God, as (though the similitude comes short of it) the fish swimming in the Sea; so the soul shall be swimming in the infinite Ocean of the excellency of the great God. It is said of John, that he was in the Spirit on the Lord's Day; so the soul shall live in God: Our life is hid with Christ in God: But our life shall be plain and apparent, not hidden, but apparent before Angels, and all the rest of the blessed, and so our lives shall be after another manner than now they are. Now to open every one of these things would be very large, so that it suffices now only to present them to you, to show in a short view the good of the soul in the full enjoyment of God, and what it shall have from him, that so you may see what the loss of the soul means. Now if these things be true and real, Oh what a dreadful thing is it for a man to lose his soul, for a man to come to lose all this good, that others that have souls like unto him shall come to enjoy, and that he might have enjoyed as well as others! If there were no more in the loss of the soul but this, to be cast away from the good that it is capable of, it might show unto us this loss to be very dreadful. It was a speech of Austin long since speaking of that place where Dives did desire Lazarus to come with one drop of water to cool his tormented tongue, saith he, If there should be but

one drop of heavenly felicity let into Hell, it would quench all the fire of Hell presently: And Chrysostom hath such an expression, that he would rather suffer thousands of years in pain and torment in Hell, than he would lose that good that he might have in the enjoyment of God; he accounted *paena damni*, the loss of God to be the greater, and it were a good sign of a soul that did understand its own excellency, and what good it were capable of, to fear as well the loss of God, and what good it might have in God, and to account that as great an evil to it, as pain, and horror, and torment: Why, when we come to express the wrath of God to you, and the evil that sin deserves, we speak of Hell fire, and so the Scripture doth; If we would set out the great evil of punishment (when we speak to men and women that are led by sense) we would tell them of their bodies being thousands of years in scalding Lead, and kept alive there, and this would startle and amaze them; but certainly the evil of the souls rejection from God, and being cast off from the good that there is in God, it is as great, if not a greater evil; and a good sign, I say it were, that God is going to show what our souls are to us and the true excellency of them; If we begin to be affected with the loss of God himself, and the good we might have in God, not only afraid of Hell, because of fire and torment there, but afraid of having our souls lost, because of being deprived of such infinite good, as otherwise we might come to enjoy with God: A gracious heart hath more thought about losing the good that there is in God, than of the pain that he should feel in Hell.

To set it out a little but in this resemblance, of the eye being deprived of light: An eye that hath beheld the glory of the Heavens, and of the Creatures, though it should never have any pain, but only there should be such an ill humor, so as to take away all light from it; why what hurt is here

to the eye? It is but only the absence of a good thing, the eye feels no pain; but what man in the world but would rather be willing to have his eyes to see, and not to be blind all his life time, than to have the enjoyment of thousands of gold and silver? Now if the bare absence of the sight of a man's eyes be so great an evil, and he would rather almost endure any pain, than to have his eyes deprived of the light, then certainly the absence of God must needs be a most dreadful evil to the soul: when the Sun shines in its luster, how beautiful is it? And how pleasant to that it is at midnight, when it is dismal dark? Why what is done? It is only the absence of one Creature, one Creature is here now, and shines gloriously upon us, and at midnight the Creature is gone: so what a mighty change and alteration would there be in the soul, if it should be deprived of the presence of the Lord? If the Lord who is infinite in glory be present with the soul, and shine upon it to all eternity, Oh how glorious will it be but God's withdrawing himself, fully and everlastingly from the soul, Oh what a dismal night of darkness will there be! And therefore it is a most dreadful thing for the soul of a man to be lost in regard of this first particular, in regard of the privation of that good that it is capable of.

SERM. XIII. THE FOURTH SERMON ON THE EXCELLENCY OF THE SOUL.

F*or what is a man profited if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul?* – Matth. 16:26.

Now for the second Particular, Namely, wherein consists the eternal loss of the soul; it is this; when the soul in Hell is so possessed with sin, as to be contrary unto God eternally: I say the soul cast away from God is possessed of all the evil of sin, so as forever to hate God, and to abhor him, and to blaspheme him, that is one particular of the condition of a lost soul.

As every soul here by nature is deprived of all that good in which it was created, and secondly, as it doth wander from, and is at enmity against God: so when the soul is lost eternally, then it is perfectly against God, and doth hate and blaspheme God forever: Thou that art a wicked man, thou wilt sin, but when God hath cast thee away from him eternally, then, as I may say, thou shalt have thy belly full of sin, thou then shalt be fully given up unto sin, Rev. 16:11. And they blasphemed the God of Heaven, because of their pains and sorrows: Now that is spoken of the beast, of Antichrist; but if men here blaspheme God because of pains, what shall they do that are damned

in Hell? They that shall have the vials of God's wrath poured out upon them? But you will ask, how doth it appear that for the wicked to be given up to sin is such an evil unto them, whereas here it is their delight to commit sin? To which I answer, though they love sin, and though sin be their delight here, yet hereafter, when they are cast off from God forever, then they shall not find that delight in sin, as now they do: as to give you it in an example, put a fish into a pot of water, and the fish doth swim, and play, and delight therein, because it is the proper element of the fish to be in the water; but now, if you do but put fire under that pot of water wherein the fish doth play and take delight, why then that which was before the delight and element of the fish, thereby becomes its pain and torture: so, though sin in this life is delightful unto wicked men, because it is their proper element to be in sin in this life, yet hereafter sin shall be their pain, because then there shall be mixed with it the wrath of God, which will make it pain and torture. Again, the loss of the soul consists in this, when the soul is fully possessed of all the evils that are contrary to all the good it is capable of: Thus shall it be with the lost soul eternally:

That as the Saints shall be enlarged and made more capable of good, which they shall enjoy to all eternity: so, those that are wicked and lost souls, which shall be opposite to God, shall be enlarged in their capacities, and be possessed, and made capable of all contrary evils.

First, To be cast under the eternal curse of God, I say, to be eternally under the curse of the Almighty.

Secondly, To have all the faculties of the soul to be filled with the wrath of God, to have the understanding to be filled with what may increase torment in that, and for the conscience, to have the worm gnawing, which never dieth; and to have the thoughts employed, and running upon those

things that will be so hideous unto them, and to have the will continually crossed by God himself, and to have the heart sinking under the wrath of the infinite God in despair forever. Brethren, the soul of man, it is a very large vessel, and because we know but little of the large extent of our souls, therefore it is that we are so little sensible of the loss of them, or of the pain and torment they are capable of, or liable unto: But as the soul is larger than the body to take in comfort; so is it larger than the body likewise to take in pain, misery, and wrath: we should be sensible of such an expression as this; to have the body in all the members of it to be filled with fire, so as to be all on a hot fiery burning coal, and that to all eternity; this you would think could not but be an extreme misery: But the souls capacity is far larger than the bodies: And to have the soul filled in every faculty of it with the wrath of God, it is far greater pain, than to have the body in such a condition, which is the condition of a lost soul. Further, it doth consist in having the power of God stretched forth to bring evil and wrath upon it, and that to the utmost, Rom. 9:22. What if God, willing to show his wrath, and to make his power known, endureth with much longsuffering the vessels of wrath fitted unto destruction? (As thus)

First, The infinite power of God put forth in enlarging their natures, that they may be the more capable of evil.

Secondly, The infinite power of God put forth to uphold their natures, that they be not sunk down with those dreadful evils that God hath to put upon them.

Thirdly, The infinite power of God to let out upon the soul, whatever it can bear to make it miserable, so as not to be annihilated therewith, which it shall bear forever. And further, A lost soul is in this condition also, to be continually under the stroke of God's justice, that when it hath lain under its

pains thousands of thousands of years, saith divine Justice, I am not yet satisfied. Now that that is required, is, that the soul should lie under the wrath of God, until such time that God may have as much honor by punishing it, as he hath had dishonor by its sinning against him, and that must be forever; because God can never have so much honor by the punishing of it, as he hath had dishonor by its sinning against him: (And then) As the soul should have had eternal communion with God and Christ, &c. it being lost, it must have communion instead thereof with the Devil and the damned spirits in Hell: And if this be the condition of a lost soul in Hell, as it is, then what shall a man gain in gaining the world, if he lose his soul? But further, to make this misery appear to be misery indeed, There is required a perfect sense of all these evils: for a man or woman may be in a lost condition, as many are now, but they do not understand it, and therefore are not sensible of it.

But that soul that is lost eternally, the Lord shall so far enlighten its understanding, as may make it sensible of all its evil; certainly many this day are in such a condition, as did they but understand the lost condition they are in, it would make them tremble: But now, when the soul is eternally lost, it shall then perfectly understand what its lost condition is, and then the thoughts of its mind shall be so busied about its misery, as that it shall not be able to ease itself one moment, but its thoughts shall be busied about its condition, so far as may make it miserable; And the Lord is able to make a creature as sensible of misery as he pleaseth. For this is the propriety of God, to make a creature as sensible of all the evil that is upon him as he pleaseth; and if so, then when all these evils come upon the creature, and the Lord intends to make the creature fully sensible of it; then certainly it must needs be miserable indeed. Further, then this loss of the

soul consists in this, That it must have nothing to support it, when the burden of the wrath of the infinite God shall be thus upon it; (as also) there shall be no mixture of any good to bring relief or ease, nor any intermission of time; it must not be one moment of time out of this condition of misery, but must be in it continually to all eternity.

Further, In this doth its misery consist, because God will keep all the faculties of the lost soul in their utmost activity, whereas now it is not so with us; for if misery and pain be upon us here, after a while our activity and sensibleness of it is partly gone: But the Lord will make such souls as are eternally lost, as perfectly sensible of this its misery every moment, as ever it was the very first moment that it went into that misery. Then,

Lastly, In regard of the irrecoverableness of the lostness of the soul when it is once lost.

The soul, when it is departed from the body, and once lost, then all the power of God can never help nor recover it; but then the stream of God's wrath shall carry it with that mighty force, as that it shall not be able to all eternity to have the least actings of its self towards its deliverance forever.

Secondly, There shall be no Mediator between God and the lost soul, none to mediate for it: Now, had not we a Mediator between God and us, we were all certainly lost; but now for the soul that is once lost eternally, Jesus Christ will never tender up any work of mediation for such a soul; that is certainly gone and lost irrecoverably. And then further, the gates of mercy will be forever shut against such a soul.

Now for the further opening and setting forth the dreadfulness of the loss of the soul, there are divers aggravations wherein the misery of it doth further appear.

The first aggravation is this, If the soul be thus lost, then the body is, and will be lost also: It will bring the body into the very same lost condition of misery that it is in its self, so far as it is capable of misery; and that upon these two grounds.

First, Because the body all the time a man doth live in this world, it was the only or most immediate instrument that the soul had to work and to sin by: And certainly God must needs hate that body, and curse it, that did belong to the soul, because it was the only instrument of the soul to sin by.

Secondly, Miserable must the body also be, because when such a lost soul shall be united unto the body, the very extremity of the soul must needs bring misery upon the body also; as thus, When Christ had the apprehensions of his Fathers wrath and displeasure in his soul, how did it work upon his body even so as to cause even clodders of blood to fall from him? Now, what caused this pain in his body, but the terrors of God in his soul? And if it was so with Jesus Christ, that had but sin imputed unto him, then certainly the body of a damned creature must needs be in very great and dreadful torment, to which this soul is united. If a holy man cried out, Thy arrows stick fast in me, and thy hand presseth me sore, there is no soundness in my flesh, because of thine anger, neither is there any rest in my bones, because of my sin. I say, if the anger of God caused this misery unto David's body for his sin, what misery will that be when all the faculties of the soul shall be filled with the wrath of God to their utmost capacity? O then, I say, what dreadful evil and pain will there be unto the body united unto such a soul!

The second aggravation of the loss of the soul, it is this, That when it comes to be in this lost condition, then it comes to be in the deadfullest and most miserable condition that any Creature is in, except the Devils

themselves. The Scripture tells us, it is an evil thing to have riches kept for a man's hurt: But O then what an evil is it, and will it be, for a man to have an immortal soul for his hurt? This is the condition of a lost soul.

The third aggravation of the loss of the soul, is this, It will have none to pity it, in that its miserable lost condition it is in.

If a man in this world should lose his estate, or any great loss, he would have many to pity him: if a man lose by fire, then he may obtain a gathering, whereby his loss may be partly made up, or he relieved; or if you lose your children, you have your friends to pity you, and to condole with you: But that man that shall have his soul lost, he shall be in such a condition, as that he shall have none to pity him.

True, we are all lost by nature, but in that our lost condition we have God pitying us, and Christ pitying us, and the Angels looking upon us with pity, and Saints pitying us; But hereafter, if lost, none shall pity that soul in that condition, when its loss is eternal. God shall not pity it, but then the blessed God shall look upon it as an object of his eternal curse: But no pity shall he have of souls in that their lost condition; neither shall Jesus Christ pity them: True, Jesus Christ came to seek and to save those that were naturally lost, but ye have done what in you lay to frustrate the ends of Christ his coming: and as Christ shall not pity you, so mercy itself shall not pity you; but be so far from pitying of you, as that it shall plead against you.

And Angels they shall not pity you, because they shall be taken up in blessing and praising of God for his works, and righteous judgments upon you:

Neither shall the Saints pity you, though it be thy Father, out of whose loins thou camest; or though it be thy Mother, out of whose womb thou camest; yet they shall not pity thee, though thou art lost, and lost eternally,

but shall rejoice at it, and bless God for his justice upon thee: therefore miserable is the condition of a lost soul.

The fourth aggravation of a lost soul, is this, It will prove unto most that are lost, an unexpected loss: There are very few that have any apprehensions of the loss of their souls, but they think they may go on in sin, and yet do well enough.

It may be thou hearest a Minister speak of the loss of the soul, but thou flatterest thyself, and thinkest thou shalt do well enough; but at length, before thou art aware, thy soul may be lost, and that unexpectedly; then it must needs be dreadful, because it is so great and unexpected: As (for example) if a Merchant should hear that his stock at the Indies were there safe and well, and afterward upon an instant there doth come news unexpectedly that all is lost and gone, Oh how doth it damp him! And O consider how it will damp thee hereafter, though now thou dost flatter thyself, If thy soul should be lost eternally? I say, it will be a dreadful loss in regard of the unexpectedness of it.

A fifth aggravation is this, It will prove to be a dreadful loss, because the loss of every soul that shall be lost, will prove to be a willful loss: This is a great perplexity to a man in this world, when as he doth see he is undone, and that merely through his own willfulness; and this will be the aggravation of the souls loss, that one day it shall plainly appear unto them, that it was through their own willfulness.

Ye will not come to me, saith Christ, that you might have life; and ye will not endure to hear of the danger ye are in, of being lost eternally: Oh how willful must the loss of those souls be, that will not give ear to hear of the danger their souls are in, of being thus lost? And O how willfully do you run on in wicked courses, which God hath given command unto the

contrary in his Word, and how do you willfully cast off the means that God hath appointed for your salvation? But know, ye perish willfully, if ye willfully reject or neglect to improve the means that God hath given for the saving of your souls: I say, that man or woman that shall willfully cast off those truths of God that should save them, that man or woman doth willfully perish:

Well, but you will say, you do not sin willfully, but you are overtaken with sin. To which I answer, that the sin which a man doth do, which outward carnal motives would be a prevailing means to him to persuade him not to do; yet all that is in God's Word given to persuade to the contrary, doth not; he sins willfully, and if he perish, he will be found to perish willfully.

It may be you will further say, you are ignorant, and therefore if we did know better, we would do better; I answer, yet it is willful, because you are willfully ignorant; and therefore your loss is willful.

The sixth aggravation of the loss of the soul, it is this, because the eternal loss of the soul will be a great loss for a little matter.

For a man to venture the loss of his soul for the gaining of a Kingdom, he would think it something, but yet the Text tells us he would be a great loser; but if so great a loser to gain a Kingdom for his soul, O then how great an evil will it be for a man or woman to lose their souls for trifles! You do not got the world for your souls, but perhaps you do venture the loss of your souls for the getting of a groat, or six-pence, or two-pence, or it may be upon the fear of the displeasure, or anger of your Master or Mistress; you will venture the loss of your souls in telling a lie to excuse you, or it may be for the satisfying of a base lust one quarter of an hour, thou wilt venture the eternal loss of a precious soul, more worth than ten thousand worlds.

Did you never go into the place where condemned persons were, and ask them what they are there for? Why, it may be some of them will say but for a small matter, it may be the undue gaining of two or three shillings, and now my life must go for it: So many lose their souls, even for trifles, for nothing, for a base lust, which is worse than nothing; the consideration of which will make it the more dreadful.

Seventhly, The loss of the soul will be very dreadful upon this consideration, because many will lose their souls, that are very nigh to the saving of their souls: I say, the nearer a man or woman doth come to the saving their souls, and yet lose them; the loss of the soul upon that consideration will be the more dreadful to them; and it is thus with many that have many good workings in and upon their hearts, so that they are in a very good forwardness unto the everlasting salvation of their souls, and yet there doth come some lust that doth drive them back again: The loss of the souls of hypocrites therefore will be dreadful to consider: I that was in so fair a way to salvation in the use of means, and content to leave so many evil ways, and yet that I should have one that I would not leave, and for this have I lost my soul; I that was contented to take up so many duties, and yet by my hearts embracing of one sinful lust, to lose my soul; as Herod heard John the Baptist gladly, and he reformed many things, and yet he had one sin that he would not part withal: Those that are the nearest the salvation of their souls, and yet lost at last, this will be a great aggravation of the misery thereof.

An eighth aggravation of the loss of the soul, is this, The consideration that they have lost their souls, and that so, as that they have nothing in lieu of them; they shall not only lose their souls, but they shall even lose the thing for which they did venture the loss of their souls: As for example, if a

man should have his heart so set upon a trifle, as to lose his whole estate for it, and after he hath lost his estate for it, he should lose that thing for which he lost his estate too; this would aggravate the loss of his estate much more: Just so, if you do loss your souls for the world, or for pleasure; if your souls perish, I say ye shall both lose your souls, and that thing, be it what it will, for which you ventured and lost your souls.

And thou shalt have no more pleasure nor I content than those that did not venture the loss of their souls for it.

The ninth aggravation of the loss of the soul, is, The shame that shall be put upon those souls that shall be lost, that perish eternally: As when thy acquaintance, thy neighbors that dwelt next unto thee, that knew thee, that dwelt in the family with thee, that kept days of fast with thee, and went unto the meetings with thee, when they shall be those that shall be with God forever eternally blessing and praising of him, and shall point thee out, as with the finger, before God, the Angels, and blessed Saints, and say, Behold, this is he that was an hypocrite, that sat under the same word, and that did partake of the same means and ordinances as I did, and yet he hath lost his soul: Loe this is the man that made not God his stay. So all they that perish shall stand before men and Angels, and be pointed at by them, saying, Loe this is the man, and loe this is the woman, that made not God their strength, but did so love their sin, as that they would not by any means be persuaded to part with it, but would rather venture the loss of their souls, to enjoy their sins, and fulfil their lust, than part with their sins to save their souls.

The tenth aggravation of the misery of a lost soul, is this, When they shall see others taken up into the Kingdom of Heaven, who were as unlikely to be saved as themselves, and they themselves shut out, and eternally lost: It

may be thou that art a carnal Master mayst see thy poor servant taken up to God, and thou thyself shut out; or it may be the carnal Father or Mother may see their child saved, and yet they themselves lost; Oh this will be a sad aggravation of their loss. And thus you have heard the dreadful loss of the soul, together with the aggravations thereof in these ten particulars. Now for the Use.

Is it so, that the loss of the soul eternally is so dreadful a loss, as you have heard it is? Oh then let everyone here bless God for their souls, that their souls are not thus lost. It might have been so long ere this time; when such a kinsman of thine died, or thy fellow-servant, or when such a neighbor or acquaintance of thine died, if thou hadst but died when they died, thy soul, it may be, had been eternally lost.

This I can assure you, that naturally you are all lost, and what makes the difference between thy soul, and the condition of a lost soul, as you have heard, but only the mere mercy of God? Oh therefore now bless God for his mercy unto thee, that thy soul is not as yet a lost soul, and think thus with thyself, Lord, if these things be true, and so dreadful to hear of, Oh then what would be my misery if it should prove that I should be the person made sensible thereof, by experiencing the misery I hear of, to be the miserable condition of a lost soul?

The Scripture doth say concerning the joy and happiness of the Saints, That eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither hath it entered into the heart of man to conceive what their happiness shall be, that shall be saved. And the like may be said of the misery of the souls that are eternally lost; and the Scripture doth say, That if our Gospel be hid, it is hid to them that are lost. I beseech you therefore remember what hath been spoken concerning the condition of lost souls, and lay to heart what hath been spoken out of this

Text, lest within a little time you feel what hath been spoken to be a truth, and so be forced to cry out, True it is, I heard such a day out of such a text, what was the miserable condition of a soul eternally lost, but now I find it by experience to be true, and the one half I now feel, I could not then conceive: And know the reason, my Brethren, why we lay the misery of lost souls thus before you, it is to this end, that none of you might be thus lost: And it is a blessed thing for you to hear these things; for how many are there that have lost their souls, which till they were thus lost, never so much as heard anything about the loss of their souls, which if they had, who knows what might have been done by them for the saving of their souls? Beloved, such a subject as this cannot be spoken unto you without trembling; for certainly this subject will be much adding to the prevention of the loss, or else it will mightily aggravate the loss of your souls, if ever they are eternally lost; therefore all I have at present to counsel you to, is, to lay these things to your hearts seriously, as also to bless God for your souls, that as yet they are not in this dreadful eternally lost condition.

SERM. XIV. THE FIFTH SERMON ON THE EXCELLENCY OF THE SOUL.

F*or what is a man profited if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul?* – Matth. 16:26.

If the loss of our souls be so dreadful as you have heard, bless God that your souls are not gone, and thus lost, as hath been opened unto you: It may be thou hast lost thy husband, or thy wife, or thy child, or thy friend, or a great part of thine estate, but blessed be God that thy soul is not lost: In a great fire where men use to lose most, if not all that they have, when a man comes to view what he hath lost, and he finds he hath lost this thing that was in such a parlor, and that that was in such a chest, but if at length he comes to find that such a Jewel that he had in the house, or such a bag of gold, in which most of his estate consisted, that that is not lost, though all the lumber, all the household-stuff is lost, that comforts him in all other of his losses: So it should be here, whatever we lose, we are to be comforted in this, that our souls are not gone and lost: It is a notable Scripture, in 1 Pet. 4, ver. last. Wherefore let them that suffer according to the will of God, commit the keeping of their souls to him in well doing, as unto a faithful

Creator. As if the Apostle should say, you are like to meet with great sufferings, you may likely be deprived of all you have, of your estates, and of all your comforts, and may come to suffer much, yet commit the keeping of your souls to him in well doing, as unto a faithful Creator: Why, they might have said, but what shall become of other things? If storms, and tempests, and sufferings come, what shall become of our estates? What shall become of our livelihoods, and of our bodies? Why saith the Apostle, as for them, for your estates, for your bodies, it may be they may perish; you are not so much to look after them, but commit the keeping of your souls unto him, as unto a faithful Creator. The Apostle here exhorts them what to do in times of sufferings, and by what he doth express, he doth imply, that they should take no care for outward estate, and body; it is enough that your souls are well, commit the keeping of your souls to him, as unto a faithful Creator, we have enough if that be safe: You know in time of danger, as fires, and other times, if a man hath any precious thing, he carries that presently to some special friend, and commits the keeping of that to him; his writings and such things, wherein his estate is most: So saith the Apostle, in the time of public danger, Take care to commit the keeping of your souls to him, as unto a faithful Creator, and you are well enough. That is the first.

Secondly, If the loss of the soul be so dreadful a loss, Oh let us bless God then for Jesus Christ, without whom all our souls had been eternally lost, never a soul in the world but must have perished unto all eternity, had not Jesus Christ come into the world to be the great Savior of souls; All the Angels in Heaven, and men in the world could never have saved one soul; now Christ saw this, and his bowels did even yearn towards so many thousands of precious souls, and rather than they should perish, he was

content to come and make his own soul to be an offering for sin, Isa. 53:10, the soul of Christ was made an offering there, and what was that but for the saving of souls? We may therefore, concerning Christ, well say, as the Elders, in Rev. 5:9. They sang a new song, saying, Thou art worthy, &c. for thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God by thy blood. Oh thou art worthy! O blessed Savior! He doth not say what, but only thus, Thou art worthy to take the book, and to open the seals thereof, for thou wert slain, and hast redeemed us to God: There is infinite worthiness in Christ, and worthy he is of all the honor that we are able possibly to bring to him, had we ten thousand times more strength than we have to do it; For he was slain, and hath redeemed us to God by his blood. If there were a company of poor people upon the Sea, and in danger to be lost, their own ship through stress of weather fallen to pieces, and they upon a plank, and ready to be swallowed up of every wave, and there comes a ship by, and saves their lives, Oh how would they be affected with such a mercy as this! And bless God for his goodness, that such a ship should come by at such a time; we had all been lost if this ship had not come by just at this time: So when we read the Gospel, we read of Jesus Christ God-Man coming into the world, and standing between the wrath of the Infinite God, and sinful souls, let us then consider how infinitely we are bound to bless God for Jesus Christ; for we were ready even all of us to be swallowed up into the bottomless gulf of the wrath of the infinite God; the waves of God's infinite wrath, were ready to have covered over all man-kind, only the Lord Jesus Christ comes, and even leaps, as it were, into the very Ocean of God's wrath, into the very flames of the wrath and justice of God, to pluck out our souls, and to save them: Bless we God then for Jesus Christ, considering

that the loss of souls is such a dreadful loss, and only saved by that great Savior that is come into the world.

And then thirdly, If the loss of the soul be so dreadful, then it must needs be a dreadful evil for any to have any hand in this loss, or to be any furtherance of it: Take heed that thou hast no hand at all in so great an evil as this is; Oh how much better thou hadst never been born, than to have a hand in so great an evil! We account those miserable creatures, that have a hand in the loss of Kingdoms; to have a hand in the undoing of one soul is a greater mischief, than to be the cause of the undoing of a whole Kingdom for their outward estate: If one should be the cause of the ruin of a whole Kingdom for their outward estate, you would say that certainly it had been better that that man had never been born: Certainly thou that hast a hand in the undoing of any soul, thou wert born to do a greater mischief than such a one; if any friend of yours take a course whereby he undoes himself, and when the evil consequence of his unwise courses appears, you are ready to say, Blessed be God I had no hand in it. If people will damn their souls eternally, take heed you have no hand in it; and if any of your children, friends, servants, acquaintance, neighbors, should perish eternally, yet it will be a great mercy if you have no hand in it: People may have a hand in the loss of other men's souls many ways.

As by carelessness of the souls of those committed to their charge; they may come to be lost by thy carelessness; by thy neglect their souls may perish; and especially it concerns those that take the charge of souls, they had need look to it, that those do not cry out against them in Hell, that it was through their neglect that they are here now, and must lie here forever? Oh the cry of a soul against a man is a dreadful thing! Perhaps the souls of some of your children may be in Hell, crying out against you for the neglect

of them, that you regarded them not, you let them profane Sabbaths, you could hear them swear, and rebuke them not, or but very slightly; you never instructed them in the ways of God, and eternal life: you were the cause of the destruction of their souls, by your wicked example; they saw their Parents do thus and thus, hate goodness and good men; they saw them scorn at the Word, or neglect it, and contemn it, and upon that they did so too, and now they are in Hell for it, and cursing the time that ever they were born of such Parents: And many souls, no question there are in Hell, cursing the time that ever they came into such a wicked family, wherein they saw so much wickedness, wherein there was no worshipping of God, nor no means to come to know God, and upon that they went on securely in wickedness, and now are sunk down to eternal misery. — You may be the cause of the destruction of others souls, by drawing of them to sin; when you shall be active to draw any one to the commission of any sin, thou dost what in thee liest to cast away that precious immortal soul; And have never any of you had a hand in this? Have you never been instruments to draw others to some sin or other? Now if you have, either these that you have tempted are yet alive, or they are dead; if they be alive, know, that you are bound in conscience to do now to the uttermost for the good of their souls; to make it your great work, if it be possible, to do them as much good as ever you did them hurt; for certainly Soul -satisfaction is required of men, as well as Bodily -satisfaction: If you have wronged a man in his estate any way, although it were seven, twenty years ago, if God comes to awaken your consciences, it will not serve your turn to return and repent, that is, to be very sorry that you have done it, and ask God forgiveness, but before you can have peace, you must make satisfaction where you have wronged, if God enable you: Now, doth God stand so much upon that, that if one hath

but wronged a man in his estate, that all the sorrow and repenting in the world will never bring peace of conscience, without restitution, where there is ability? Then certainly, if one hath wronged another in his soul, and hath endangered the damnation of that, by drawing of him to sin: It is not enough for thee that thou seest this thy sin, and thou art sorry for it, and thou wilt never seek to draw others anymore, no, but thou art bound, if such be alive, to go to them if thou canst, and to seek now to do them as much good for their souls, as thou wert a cause of evil; what if this soul should perish at last by this sin, that thou wert a cause to draw them to, thou hadst need look about thee while they live, that if it be possible thou mayest make a satisfaction for that soul-wrong that thou hast done to them; and it may be such a one is dead, and so dead, as for ought thou knowest he never did repent him of that sin; now then see what a case thou art in: there is one drawn to a sin by thee, and now he is in Hell for that sin that thou wert the cause of; what a case hast thou brought thyself into now? Is it any otherwise like, but that thou must follow? Shall one be in Hell for a sin that thou wert the cause of, and dost thou think always to escape? Here is the dreadful estate that any man brings himself to, when he draws others to sin: thou hadst need to look about thee, and thy heart to be affected with that sin that hath been punished with the eternal damnation of those souls that thou hast drawn to that sin.— And not only by tempting to sin, but by encouraging to sin, by dissuading from that that is good: It may be some souls have been in a good forwardness to that which is good, they have begun to inquire after the ways of God, but have gotten into thy company, and thou hast sought to take them off; and what, will you be such fools as to believe everything that is said, and you will be melancholy and mad, and who are they but a company of simple people that do thus and thus? And thus thou hast been a

means to hinder the good work of God in others, and to draw them from the good way that they were a beginning to set their feet in, and now they begin to be out of love with the good ways of God, and thou hast been the cause of it: Now, if these souls perish, and it may be some of them are in Hell already; truly, if a man's heart were as hard as any Iron, or Steel in the world, one would think that such a meditation as this should break his heart in pieces: That I know nothing to the contrary but some may be in Hell for my cause. — And so many other ways we might name, how a man might have his hand in the loss of the souls of others; what way soever thou hast a hand in the sin of others, or keeping of others from good, so many ways thou mayest have a hand in the loss of their souls: But I intend not to stand upon this point, only consider of it, and the Lord strike the hearts of those that are guilty in this kind; But the main use that I would spend the chief part of the time in, is this,

If the loss of a soul be so dreadful, then hence is rebuked the folly and madness of most people that have no care of their souls, but through their own wretchedness and vileness they suffer their souls to perish eternally; all their care is in pampering their bodies, and making much of them, but little minding their souls, and their eternal estates: Certainly when the bodies of those souls shall meet them at the day of judgment, it will be a very dreadful meeting: When thine immortal soul shall know what it is to be lost forever, and shall be brought to join again with the body, Oh how do you think it will look upon that cursed carcass? Oh this is that carcass, that body of mine, for whose sake I must perish forever, yea and we must now be joined both together, to be fuel for the wrath of the Infinite God to burn upon to all eternity! Certainly souls are lost, and perish thick and threefold, they go down to Hell, as Bees fly to the hive in the time of a storm: There

are many ways by which the soul may be lost, though there be but one by which it may be saved.

The several ways by which men come to lose their Souls.

As first, Some there are that lose their souls by wandering up and down in darkness all the days of their lives, by wandering in the ways of sin, in the dark, and so are a continual prey unto the Devil: how many, yea and in many places, the generality of people, they go on continually in blindness and darkness, in the vanity of their conversations, knowing nothing of God, nor of their own souls; and the first time that the eyes of their souls are opened and enlightened, it is when they are irrecoverably undone; yea the first thing that many souls do ever understand concerning themselves, it is this, I am lost and undone forever; it is so with many, certainly they know nothing about their own souls, nor about God, till they come to know this, I am cast away from God, and have lost my soul forever.

Secondly, Others, they lose their souls by pawning of them away; by pawning of them, what is that you will say? Why, you know what it is to pawn a thing, when you come and receive from a Broker such a thing, you lay something else to pawn for it, and upon this condition, that within such a time you bring them such a thing that you bargain for, and if you do not bring it against that time, then you lose your pawn: Thus many pawn away their souls; when there is a temptation to any sin, and they have a mind to it, now upon the commission of this sin thou dost lay thy soul to pawn to the Devil, only upon this condition, that if thou dost repent and believe before God cuts thee off, then thou shalt have thy soul again; upon these terms most people sin, and in case thou dost not bring repentance and belief in Christ, thy soul is gone: I appeal to you, there is a temptation to sin, you know it is a sin, and there is a great deal of danger in it, well but you have a

mind to it, and you will needs have it, now you will acknowledge this, indeed if I do not repent, then I shall be damned, but before I die, I hope to repent, and so I hope that my soul shall not perish; that is as much as to say, I will lay my soul in pawn, and if I can bring repentance before I die, I will have my soul again, but if I do not, then my soul is gone; thus upon the commission of every sin, thou dost lay thy soul to pawn, the devil hath it upon such terms as these: Now how many thousands have lost this their pawn, they have not brought Faith and Repentance within their time before they died, and so the Devil hath kept the pawn, and will keep it forever: And it is more dangerous the laying of such a pawn, than the ordinary laying of pawns to Brokers.

First, There is no such pawn that possibly can be laid as this, the soul of a man: Men and women that have any wisdom, they will not lay pawns of those things that are precious to them, Oh it goes to their hearts to think, what must I lay this to pawn! I thought I should never have lived to the day to lay such a thing to pawn, I but when thou comest to lay thy soul to pawn, thou layest a more precious thing than all the world is.

Secondly, When thou layest a thing to pawn, thou dost prefix thy own time for the redeeming of it again, perhaps two, three, four months before thou bring that, that is bargained for; but when thou layest thy soul to pawn, thou canst not set any time: What dost thou know, oh Fool, but that this night thy soul may be taken away from thee?

Thirdly, Yea and further, When you lay such a thing to pawn, you make a bargain for the bringing of somewhat to redeem it that you have in your own power, or make account that you shall have in your own power to bring, you will not make the bargain to bring such a thing that you are sure you shall not have in your own power: Now, when you lay your souls to

pawn, you lay them to pawn for that that you have not in your power, nor all the creatures in Heaven and Earth cannot help you to in your need, and that is Faith and Repentance: All the Angels in Heaven, nor men in the world cannot help you to it; it is only in the hands of God, of the Infinite blessed God, against whom you sin, and whom you provoke, and yet how many do thus pawn their souls? And no marvel though men lose their fouls, because they pawn them thus foolishly and wretchedly; and that is the second way of men's losing of their souls.

Thirdly, Men lose their souls by wounding them, they give them deadly wounds, upon which the souls of most do perish.

Quest. Wounding, how you will say?

Answ. By that I mean the commission of sins against conscience; to commit a known sin, and a willful sin, oh this gives a wide gash in the soul, a most fearful wound! Every sin against conscience gives a wound that requires a salve to heal it, that is more worth than a thousand worlds; the sins against conscience, against light, against knowledge, they are deep wounds unto the souls of men; and it is not usual for such wounds to be healed, for they do not only strike at the life of the soul, but they harden the heart of the sinner exceedingly, and keep off the means that might do the soul good; thou goest abroad into company, and there thou committest a sin against thy conscience, oh thou hast given a gash to that precious soul of thine, thou hast given it a deep wound, and except thou lookest to it, and that presently, thy soul perhaps may die forever! A man that hath received a deep wound, he presently sends for the Surgeon, and if it bleeds well, he hopes the cure is more hopeful: so when thou hast committed sin, if indeed it bleed, that is, if thy soul presently be sensible of it, and affected with it, and mourn and lament, and so seek after the Surgeon, there may be hopes;

but men and women do wound their own souls by willful sins, sins against their consciences, and yet they are not sensible of them, they do not so much as bleed, but they lie in the very open Air, as it were, and are not bound up at all, Ah! Thousand thousands there are that die and perish this way.

Fourthly, And then a fourth sort there are that lose their souls by being gulled of them, by being deceived of them; Satan persuades them they are in a good condition, that all is well with them, and they need not fear, what need they to trouble themselves, these are but the melancholy thoughts of such and such kind of people; there is no such great matters required in sorrow for sin, and it is but a Lord have mercy upon us, and but, a being in Christ, and hoping in God's mercy, and the like; and thus by such kind of delusions as these are, many souls are gulled and deceived by the Devil, and so perish forever. They are like unto Jonas, that was asleep, and awakened in the midst of a dreadful tempest: so certainly these souls, when they come to know themselves, and to be awakened, it will be in the dreadful tempest of God's wrath: As Sampson; the Philistines are upon thee, when he lay in Delilah's bosom; so there will be that dreadful noise one day to these souls, the wrath of God, and the curse of the Law is upon thee, that must lie upon thee; Oh the dreadful sorrow there will be when the soul shall see, oh I am deluded and gulled! Many of you are vexed extremely, when you are gulled of any little part of your estates, but to be deluded and gulled of your souls, so as they must be lost forever, this will be extreme horror another day.

Fifthly, A fifth way of losing our souls, is, by selling of them away; selling of them away, you will say, what do I mean by that? It is said of Alexander the sixth, that was Pope, he sold his soul to the Devil for the Popedom, there was an express contract between the Devil and him, that if in such a

year he should come to be Pope, the Devil should have his soul: But now, there is a twofold selling of our souls to the Devil, besides such a kind of contract, as when the Devil shall appear in a bodily shape, and so people sell their souls to him.

First, As first, When men seek advantage to themselves by any unlawful means, seek the gain of the world, or any profits or pleasures, by cheating, cozening, wronging, swearing, or forswearing; seek I say to gain anything in such a way; there is such a thing that thou wouldest have, and that thou mayest have, if thou wilt be false in thy books, in thy reckonings, or forswear thyself for gain, I say thou dost as truly sell thy soul for the getting of that gain, as ever Conjurer did, that did contract face to face with the Devil: I would have such a gain, why, saith the Devil, (though thou dost not see him) then thou must lie, thou must cozen, thou must swear, and forswear, I will do it, saith the soul; and thus thou dost many times sell thy soul to the Devil: You that are chap-men, if one should come and offer you a little matter for a commodity that is of price, you have such a piece of ware in your shops that is worth forty shillings, and one comes and offers you two-pence for it, why you rise in disdain against it, what: offer me two-pence for that which is worth forty shillings; oh now that your hearts would rise in disdain when the Devil comes to buy your souls! You should rise in disdain, what, shall I venture the selling of this soul of mine, that is more worth than ten thousand worlds, for such a poor gain as this is? And yet many of you do.

Secondly, And then there is a second way of a man's selling of his soul, and that is when a man shall resolutely give up himself to all manner of wickedness: Thus it is said of Ahab, 1 King. 21:20. Ahab sold himself to work wickedness, that is, Ahab in a resolute way was set upon any manner

of wickedness that might serve his own turn: When a man shall be set upon this, that whatever way of wickedness may be subservient to the attaining of such and such designs that I have, I will venture upon it, I say, this man sells his soul in this case to the Devil, Ahab sold himself to work wickedness.

Sixthly, And then a sixth way of men's losing their souls, it is by being poisoned, their souls are poisoned, and so they come to be lost: now the poison of the soul it is either wicked company, or wicked errors; either of those two.

By keeping of wicked company, thou keepest in an infectious Air, thou goest from home sometimes and meetest with such wicked company, thou gettest thy bane, thy poison there, and poison works diverse ways; sometimes it will cause one to swell mightily; how many, when they come from their wicked company, come home with such swelling hearts, in such an outrageous way, swearing, and fighting, and blaspheming, and scorning, and contemning at all ways of godliness; now these have been abroad, and have gotten poison, and so they shall, and are ready to burst with it.

Now there are other kinds of poison that will not work till a quarter or half a year after: A man may go into company, and get his bane, and yet not work till a quarter of a year after: As I remember a Philosopher seeing two women that were wicked, talk together, Oh! Saith he, now the Viper is taking of poison from the Asp, and indeed it seemed to be a Proverb in Tertullian's time, for I meet with such a proverbial speech in him, as that the Viper borrows poison from the Asp: so when wicked company are infusing wicked principles, here is the poison gotten from the Asp; wicked company perhaps they come with their sweet cups, and perhaps thou drinkest down the Wine merrily, but together with the Wine, wicked things are infused into

thy spirit that are poisonful: When thou art in wicked company, and hearest the ways of God spoken against, and hearest the Saints of God railed on, and the good Word of God spoken against, and this thou drawest into thy heart, oh there is poison goes down in this cup; it is like to poison thy soul, and to be thy undoing forever.

And then there is another kind of venom, and that is wicked errors and heresies, when men drink off the Cup of Fornication, as when they are taken with the great errors of Popery, this poisons the soul; that place in the Thessalonians is a most dreadful place, even for that very error, 2 Thess. 2:11. Speaking of Antichrist, that he should come with all deceivableness of unrighteousness in them that perish, because they received not the love of the truth, that they might be saved; and for this cause God shall send them strong delusions, that they should believe a lie, that they all might be damned who believe not the truth, but had pleasure in unrighteousness. This is a most dreadful Text against those that shall drink in the errors of Popery.

But you will say, that they are learned men, and have a great deal of show of truth, with all deceivableness of unrighteousness: But how art thou deceived by them? Because thou receivest not the love of the truth, that thou mightest be saved: And for this cause God shall send them strong delusions to believe a lie, that they might be damned; to that end God sends strong delusions, that men might believe those errors, and drink in that cup of fornications, that they might be damned forever.

If it were but only that one error drunk down in the grossness of it, that is, that the righteousness that I must tender up to God for satisfaction to divine Justice, and for my eternal salvation, must be mine own righteousness, mine own works: Here is enough to poison a soul to eternal perdition; and many other ways there may be that may endanger the soul extremely, and very ill

consequences may be gathered from good principles: As for that principle of our Justification by free Grace in Christ; That it is only by Christ that we are justified, that principle is exceeding good, but from thence such dangerous venomous consequences may be drawn, as may extremely endanger; and I make no question do envenom and poison many thousand souls, upon which they draw consequences for looseness, and against humiliation for sin, and against obedience to the Law, as by Moses. All the principles and errors that are against the strict ways of God, that tend to any looseness, certainly they are envenoming principles: Oh take heed of any doctrine, of any conceits, of any opinions that do any way tend to looseness! They will certainly poison and envenom your souls, so that your very errors may be enough to damn you eternally. Many lose their souls by poisoning.

Seventhly, And there are many that lose their souls by venturing of them; there are many ventures upon which many come to lose their souls; there are four cases wherein a man may lose his soul by venturing of it.

First, As first by rashness, men that are inconsiderate and rash in their ways, that will suddenly fall upon things before they examine them, that rashness and suddenness of thine to fall upon things before thou dost examine them, and to go on in a rash way the most part of thy life, as many do; this endangers the loss of thy soul.

Secondly, And others venture the loss of their souls, by doing things that are doubtful, that their consciences mis-give them in, and tell them, Oh this is not right, I doubt I sin against God in this, and yet they will put on and venture, before they satisfy their doubts, but take heed of doing anything with a doubtful conscience, for you know what the Scripture saith, in the 14th of the Romans, the latter end; Whatsoever is not of Faith is sin. If thou

doubtest, thou must not venture to do a thing, till thou hast examined thy doubt, and there see upon what ground thy doubt is built, for if thou wilt presume to do a thing doubtfully, it may cost thee thy life.

Thirdly, A third venture, it is to venture upon God's patience; why, the Lord is a patient God, and he hath spared me so many years; all this while I have been spared, and have done well enough, why may not I hope that God will spare me still, and be patient with me still? How many wretched sinful creatures venture upon this? They perhaps have been brought up in wickedness and profaneness; God hath been patient towards them, and yet they can to their sin again and again, and live very merry lives: Now all this time thou livest upon the mere patience of God, and thou thinkest because God hath been patient thus long, therefore he will be so still: We may indeed venture upon the Grace of God in his Son, as well for sanctification as for pardon, but not to venture either upon patience, or anything else, so as to continue in our sins, though God hath been patient thus long, thou dost not know but that upon thy next venture the cord of mercy may crack, and thou mayest sink and perish eternally; that may befall thee in one day, that hath not befallen thee all thy life before; take heed my brethren of venturing upon patience, for that hath not a word of promise to strengthen it unto thee: Indeed Faith is a kind of venture, but that ventures upon the Word of God, and the Promise of God, and it is good venturing upon that, but when thou venturest upon patience, thou hast no word to assure thee that patience will hold; Thou hast no word to make this good unto thee, that though God hath been patient so many years, therefore he will be so still.

Fourthly, And then a fourth venture that men make, it is to venture upon their own lives; they are young, and they hope they may live many years yet, I know others they live to be old men, and why may not I live and have

my pleasure as well as they? And thus they venture; Oh but what if the thread of thy life should be snapped asunder, what will become of thee then! Wilt thou venture thy eternal miscarrying upon such a brittle and frail thing as thy life is? Oh it is a desperate venture, when men and women will venture thus! That if God take away my life now, certainly I must perish forever. — Now I put it unto every soul in this place, let this be the case now, do you examine what you think in your consciences your conditions would be, if you should hear a voice from Heaven saying unto you presently, this soul shall have no more time to make provision for eternity; I am persuaded that in such a place as this is there cannot but be many that would in their own consciences say, If God should take away my life now, I fear I should be lost forever; I doubt, if we could go from one to another, and lay our ears to the bosoms of men, and could but hear what the consciences of men say upon this that is now put to them, that thou shouldest die in the condition in which now thou art, and what repentance thou hast had, be it good or bad, that thy soul must depend upon, if it be not right, thy soul must perish; I say, I fear that upon such a message from Heaven, many a man's and woman's heart would ask within them, and their consciences would tell them, I am afraid I should be lost forever: Oh for thee to be content to be in such a condition any one moment, that if thou shouldest die that moment, thy soul should be damned, I say thou art a bold and presumptuous sinner, a most desperate wretch.

SERM. XV. THE SIXTH SERMON ON THE EXCELLENCY OF THE SOUL.

F*or what is a man profited if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul?* – Matth. 16:26.

8. Many do lose their souls by starving of them, that is, such as neglect the Word, that is the food of the soul, the Word of God, upon which the soul should feed, as the body doth upon any food, that neglect God's Ordinances, that care not to come to the Word, either to feed upon it privately or publicly, that think that there is no need of the Word: but if they can procure food for their bodies, and make shift to get up a living, and that that may satisfy the flesh, there is all that they look after; but for the feeding of their souls by the Word, it is that that is little minded or regarded by thousands: Oh how many that belong to this Congregation perish eternally, even that way, by starving! We pity people that we see ready to die that are starved; if we hear but of a prisoner starved, even the poorest body, we account it an in human thing in those that knew it, and did not relieve them; to see a beast to die by starving, we account it a cruel thing; and it can scarce consist with the heart of a man to see, I say, so much as a dog to

perish by way of starving: Now to see immortal souls, thousands of them to die and perish, and drop down to Hell as thick as may be, and that for want of the food of their souls, merely for starving, it should be an object of pity and commiseration. Now because we are sensual, we are only affected with such things as concern the body immediately; but for the soul, how many care not what kind of Ministry they live under? Oh the curse of God is upon them! As we read of in Psal. 106:15. He gave them their requests, and sent leanness into their souls; he gave them their requests, that is, he gave them Quails; They lusted in the wilderness, and tempted God in the desert; and he gave them Quails to feed upon, but sent leanness into their souls; we may apply it thus, unto those that seek after nothing else but Quails, but that that may feed the flesh: Oh the curse of God is upon their souls! There is leanness there, and they are starved there even unto death; whereas those that do but know what the sweetness of the Word is to their souls, and have fed upon the Word, they had rather feed upon brown bread and water all their days, so be it they may have the Word, than have the greatest delicacies in the world without the Word. I put this to your consciences, answer it as in the presence of God; if this should be put to you, can you say as in God's presence that sees and searches the hearts of men, that upon the real sweetness and good your souls have found in the Word, that if God should put it to your choice, either to live with bread and water, and have the Word, or to live with all the delicacies in the world without the Word, you would a thousand thousand times sooner choose to live with the Word with bread and water, rather than without the Word with all delicacies. Luther I remember he hath an expression, That he had rather be in Hell with the Word, than in Paradise without the Word.

Ninthly, In the ninth place there is another sort that lose their souls by surfeiting of them; their souls do surfeit with the cares and pleasures of this life, they glut their hearts with the delights, and pleasures, and cares of this world, until their souls get a surfeit and die of them; giving liberty unto their hearts to delight themselves in all outward contentment's, especially if they be lawful: Now a man or woman may surfeit their souls, and undo themselves by lawful things; as a man may not only destroy his life by eating poison, but by a surfeit of good meat, though the meat be good, yet he may surfeit upon it: so, though the things of this world, the cares, and the pleasures may be (as some things are) in themselves lawful, yet by an inordinate and immoderate letting out thy heart to lawful things, thou mayest surfeit thy soul, and it may die of that surfeit: Many men think themselves out of danger, if the things that their hearts are upon, be in themselves lawful, they are not swearers, and whoremasters, and drunkards, and thieves, as others are, and therefore they think their souls may be saved: I say, thou mayest busy thy heart only about that which is in itself lawful, and yet thy soul may take a surfeit and perish eternally.

Tenthly and lastly; Many lose their souls by forfeiting them, and that by these two ways.

First, A man forfeits his soul, as men do their Copyholds, by not tendering that homage to their Lord that is due, by which they hold their Lands, and so their Lands come to be forfeit; so dost thou; God hath given thee thy precious soul, more worth than all the world, and thou holdest it of God, but so as thou must tender up to this Lord that homage that is due to him, that is, thou must worship God: When we come to worship God, this is that we do, we come to tender up that homage that we acknowledge to be due to God for these souls of ours that he hath given unto us, that is our worship;

that is the nature of worship, The tendering up something by way of homage, to acknowledge that due respect we owe unto God, as that Lord that hath the absolute dispose of us; now by neglect of worshipping of God, of tendering up his homage, thou forfeitest thy soul, and endangerest thyself to perish eternally; and oh how few people regard any such worship of God! And though they do the thing that God requires, as praying, and coming to hear the Word, yet do they not do it as in a way of tendering up homage to that God, upon whom they do only depend; but now this is that which God requires of us, or otherwise our souls are forfeited.

Secondly, Men forfeit their souls by breaking covenant with God; however there may be some that God will not take the forfeiture of, yet certainly upon thy breach of covenant with God thy soul is forfeited: Thou dost engage thy soul to God every time thou dost enter into covenant with him; It may be said of any man or woman that enters into covenant with God, who is this that hath engaged his soul to God? Now thou engaging and binding thy soul to God in thy covenant, upon thy breach of it, dealing falsely, thou dost forfeit thy soul: And by these several ways souls are lost; and oh how many thousand souls perish with such ways and manners as these are! And therefore seeing there are such several ways of the loss of souls, let not people think themselves safe, though they do not go in some ways whereby they may come to lose their souls; for there are very many ways whereby thou mayest lose thy soul, and so miscarry to eternity.

The other Use that remains, is this, If the loss of our souls be so dreadful a thing, and there be so many ways for the losing of them, then it concerns us nearly to examine whether we be not in such a condition for the present, that if our souls should depart out of our bodies, they would certainly be lost; this is a needful scrutiny, and a most necessary inquiry: Many men

have these thoughts, what if I should now die? I have not made my Will, and my estate would go such and such ways, as I would not have it, it would be squandered away, it would be spent in Suits of Law; I, but rather let thy thoughts run out thus, what if I should now die, would not my soul be lost and perish forever? Now, though I have said we cannot set forth such a man or woman, and conclude that their souls shall certainly be lost, because we know not what God may do hereafter, but we may say this, that such a man or woman's soul in the condition it is, If God do no more for it than he hath yet done, that then it will certainly be lost: Indeed a man or woman may come to know, and certainly to conclude that they are elected, but none can come to such a conclusion, to know certainly that they are Reprobates: the vilest wretch that is upon the face of the earth, he hath not ground sufficient to conclude against himself that he is a Reprobate, and that his soul shall forever be lost; and therefore surely we cannot conclude against another, if not against ourselves. — Well, but who are they, that if God should work no otherwise upon them than he hath done, that then their souls would be lost?

First, In the first place, That soul to whom God hath not made known, and convinced it of the dangerous natural condition in which it is, if such a soul should depart from the body, it would be lost. — Only let me premise these two cautions; I do not speak of Infants, but of those that are come to years, and that live under means: — And I speak of God's ordinary way; we will not limit God, what he may do in extraordinary ways, but in an ordinary course and way of God's dealings with the children of men, that he lets live to come to years, and be under means, these following rules will discover who they are that at the present are in a lost condition; I say, such to whom God hath never revealed and convinced them of the evil of their natural

condition, in which they were born, in which they are, if God should let them so die, and make known no more to them than he hath, such a soul would be lost, and that upon this ground, because that without Faith it must be lost, that is acknowledged by all; he that believes not shall be damned, is condemned already. Now, there cannot be Faith in a Savior to save the soul, but it must needs imply that I know what a dangerous condition I am in by sin. For there is even a contradiction implied in my believing in Christ, as a Savior, and yet I not convinced of the damnable condition that I am in without this Christ.

Secondly, That soul that yet hath not made it to be its great care, above all outward things in this world, to save its self, that soul, if it should now depart from the body, would be lost: I say, if God hath not first convinced thee, and made thee sensible of that damnable condition in which thou art in thyself, and secondly, if he hath not taken off thy heart from the creature, from the things that are here below, and made it to be the great care of thy soul, for to get it to be saved, hath not made thee to be solicitous about the work of saving of thy soul; such a soul as this is, I say, if it should now depart, would be lost, for God doth not save souls, but by manifesting himself to them; he would have all to work out their salvation with fear and trembling. Certainly, though the principle of our salvation be without us, yet the Lord that made us without ourselves, will never save us without ourselves; whosoever God doth save, he doth make them solicitous and careful about the work of the salvation of their souls: Now, if thy conscience tells thee that to this day thy care hath been about many vanities, but as for having thy heart taken up with the saving thy soul, thou knowest not what belongs to this; I say, if God should work no more in thee, than he hath done, if thou shouldest now die, thou wouldest be lost.

Thirdly, That soul to whom the Lord hath not revealed the glory of the mysteries of the Gospel, that yet hath the Gospel kept hidden from it, that doth not see into the glorious work of God in the covenant of Grace, in those great counsels of God, and great things that God hath done for the salvation of mankind in Jesus Christ, that soul would be lost, if it should now go from the body, and no further work of God upon it: That Scripture that divers times you have heard named, is proof sufficient for it; If our Gospel be hidden, it is hidden to those that are lost, 2 Cor. 4:3. Now certainly, my brethren, if God hath revealed to your souls the glorious things of the Gospel, they cannot but be taking things to you, they cannot but cause much stirring, much activeness, mighty workings in your souls: when once the glorious light of the Gospel comes into a soul, I say, it cannot but cause mighty stirrings and workings in such a soul. When I see people sit deadly and dully under the means of Grace, under the preaching of the glorious things of the Gospel, I cannot but think with myself, Lord, do these people know what Jesus Christ is? And understand what the great things are that God hath done for the salvation of man-kind? Certainly did they but know the wonderful and strange works of God about the salvation of the souls of the children of men, their hearts could not but stir within them, and work in another manner than yet they have done.

Fourthly, That soul that hath no other righteousness to tender up unto God but its own righteousness, if now it should depart, would be lost eternally: Whatever man or woman it be that have lived the most unblameable in his life and conversation, that hath been the most righteous, that no man could be able to blame him for anything, yet I say, if this man or woman hath no other righteousness to tender up unto God but his own, certainly this soul would be a lost soul forever; the truth is, even the soul of Abraham, Isaac,

and Jacob, the souls of all the Patriarchs, Prophets, Apostles, Martyrs, all of them would be lost eternally, had they no other righteousness to tender up to God but their own, much more those who have only a Civil righteousness, and a mere natural righteousness, such righteousness as is attainable by the very light of nature, such a righteousness as St. Paul speaks on, in the 3rd of the Philippians, that he lived unblameably, how he was a Pharisee, and he accounted that righteousness of his conversation, to be gain, yet afterwards, when Christ was revealed to him, he accounted it but loss, for he saw that it would endanger the loss of his soul eternally, the resting upon that.

Quest. You will say, the soul that hath no other righteousness but his own to tender up to God, is that soul lost? Why, what other righteousness is there besides that which is a man's own?

Answ. To that I answer, There is a supernatural righteousness, the righteousness of a Mediator, God-Man, that is come into the world to stand between lost souls, and an infinite provoked God; and that is made over to the soul by Faith, and that soul that is saved, by the hand of Faith, doth tender up the righteousness of that Mediator, God-Man, for the satisfaction of infinite divine Justice, and the appeasing of infinite wrath, and that is the soul that is saved: but that soul that is not acquainted with such a righteousness, that hath not such a righteousness made over to it by Faith, the righteousness of the Son of God, the righteousness that is by Faith in Christ, that soul, if it should now depart from the body, and the Lord work no otherwise upon it, than he hath yet done, certainly he would be a lost soul; and that is the fourth evidence of a soul that would presently be lost, if it should now depart from the body.

Fifthly, A fifth evidence is this, That soul that God hath not made (in some measure at least) to feel the weight and burden of sin, discovered sin unto it as a greater burden than all burdens whatsoever, if such a soul should depart, it would prove to be lost, and that upon this Reason.

Because without repentance a soul must needs be lost, Except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish, saith Christ. Now repentance cannot stand with feeling sin light, much less with joy in sin: Repentance, whether before Faith or after, we will not now speak of, whether a Legal repentance, or an Evangelical repentance, yet it must be such a repentance as must be apprehensive and sensible of sin, as a greater evil than all the evils that it is liable to here in the world; It must feel sin, as it is against God, feel sin, as sin, so as to be a burden to it (the measure of it, how far, and how weighty sin should be, we do not now stand upon) but that sin should be found a great burden, yea an intolerable burden, so that were it not for an infinite Mediator, the soul could not stand under the burden, that is necessary in the work of repentance, and so the soul to come to sorrow for sin, as sin; and this is the repentance which is unto life, which cannot be except the soul doth feel in some measure the weight and burden of sin.

Sixthly, Again, that man or woman that walks after the flesh, in a course of sin, to give satisfaction and contentment unto the flesh, that makes it to be the great care and endeavor of it for to satisfy the flesh, such of you, whose consciences tell you, that the contentment of your hearts is some fleshly thing, and that in the course of your lives you walk after the flesh, certainly if you should now die, your souls would be lost; and that is clear out of Rom. 8:1. There is no condemnation to them that are in Christ Jesus, that walk not after the flesh, but after the spirit. Therefore those that do not walk after the spirit, but after the flesh, there is condemnation unto them at

the present; O! If men had but enlightened and stirring consciences, how easy would it be for men and women to see themselves in a restless condition, and to conclude, that if these things be the truths of God, then I am in such a condition, and though I do not know what God may work for time to come, yet if I should now die, my soul would be lost eternally; and so that other place, in Rom. 8. They that live after the flesh shall die; that is, perish eternally; if your hearts be after the flesh, after fleshly things, and they are the things that you mind, and if you would speak as in the presence of God, you cannot but acknowledge that the things of the flesh, are the things that do take up your hearts, that are the adequate objects of your spirits, and you think your great good and contentment lies in them; so that if so be you might but live always in this world, and have those contentment's to the flesh, as you desire, you would care for nothing else, but your hearts would be fully satisfied; this is living after the flesh; now the Scripture tells us clearly, that those that live after the flesh thus, shall die. It is your great care that the flesh be satisfied, and it is God's threat, that when you make it thus your great care to satisfy the flesh, that you shall die, so that this is a perishing condition unto you.

Seventhly, Yea further, what soul soever is but under the dominion of any one lust, that soul, if it should now depart, would certainly be lost: Not only such as live in all kind of sins, that the constant course of their lives is in every kind of sin; but if there be but any one reigning, ruling sin, if there be but any one sinful way that God hath convinced thy conscience of to be a sin, and yet because of gain, or delight, or pleasure, or honors, or respects, thou dost go on in a constant course, and way, and practice of that sin, though it be but one sin, so that thou art a slave to any one lust, certainly this soul of thine, if God works no otherwise upon it, than yet he hath done,

will certainly be lost; and that is clear out of Rom. 6:14. For sin shall not have dominion over you, for you are not under the Law, but under grace. I would reason from this Scripture, thus, what soul soever is not under grace, under the covenant of grace, and under the mercy that there is in that covenant, that soul, if now it should depart, must perish eternally; but whosoever is under the dominion of any one sin, is not under grace; for the Scripture plainly saith, That sin shall not have dominion over us, if we be under grace: If our souls be in such an estate, as they be under the grace of the Gospel, then there must not any one sin have dominion over them; there may some sin dwell there, but not reign there: there is a great deal of difference between sins being in the soul, and ruling over the soul.

Quest. You will say then, What is it for sin to have dominion?

Answ. When sin shall set up a kind of Throne in the soul, and give Laws as a King, and thou shalt obey: It is one thing for an enemy to come with violence and take possession, and hurry one on to do that one would not do, and another thing to be subject, and to yield to the laws and commandments of sin. Now sin hath dominion when it is as a King upon his Throne, that thou yieldest subjection unto it, and for the satisfying of thine own lusts, thou art willing that this sin should rule over thee: Now that you may know a little further for the meaning of this; sin and Jesus Christ cannot have dominion both together: Then thus far we may go safely, that except Jesus Christ hath dominion over you, then sin hath: But how shall I know whether Christ hath dominion? I will but appeal to you in this plain and familiar kind of expressing of myself; canst thou say as in the presence of God that seeth and searchest thy heart, O Lord, thou knowest that I have given up my heart to the Rule of Jesus Christ? I would put this to every soul here present, and I beseech you weigh it, for we are speaking of matters of life

and death, of salvation and damnation; now therefore I put this unto you, and think of it, canst thou appeal to God in the sincerity of thy heart, and say, Lord, thou art the seer and searcher of all hearts, and thou knowest, that though I have many weaknesses and infirmities, and am often overcome by temptation, yet thou knowest that I have given up my heart to the obedience of Jesus Christ, and I do give it up, and it is that that my soul desires above all things, that Jesus Christ may rule in it, that Christ may have dominion, that his Laws may be set up, and if I knew anymore of the mind of Jesus Christ, whatsoever it cost me, thou that knowest all things, knowest I would submit unto it, and if there be anything that is against the mind of Jesus Christ, if it be but known to me, thou knowest that my heart is against it, and I would rather than a world that I were delivered from the power of it; canst thou speak thus as in the presence of God? And certainly a Christian, though a weak Christian, can appeal to God in the sincerity of it, and is able to venture its self upon such an appeal to God. And if there be not this dominion of Jesus Christ, then there is the dominion of sin, and then thou art not under grace; therefore if God doth not more in thy soul than he hath done, thou shalt perish forever; and that man or woman that can sleep quietly so, hath a strange pillow to sleep upon. It is reported of Augustus Caesar, that hearing of a Gentleman that was much in debt, he sent to buy his pillow, saying, Surely there is a great deal of virtue in that pillow, that such a man could sleep on, who was so much in debt: Truly I may say so, it is a strange kind of pillow that men can sleep upon, who are in such a condition, that if God do no more for, than he hath done, would certainly perish.

Eighthly, But further, That man or woman that hath not yet had such a change wrought by the power of the Spirit of God, as is a new birth, a

resurrection from death, a new creation, that soul, if it now depart, would certainly perish. Certainly every one of you, as you come into the world, as you are by nature, your souls are in a lost estate, and in such a lost estate, as except the Lord make such a change in your heart, as is a new birth, by which you come to be born again; as is a new resurrection, by which you come to be raised from the dead; as is a new creation, by which you come to be a new Creature; certainly you perish; till this be wrought in your hearts by the power of the Spirit, you are in a perishing condition; there is nothing more plain than this in Scripture: You know what Christ saith to Nicodemus, Verily, verily, I say unto you, except a man be born again, he cannot see the Kingdom of God; Therefore it is not enough that it may be thou livest somewhat better than heretofore thou hast done; It may be when thou wert a young man, thou wert wanton, or unclean, and profane, and abroad in the fields, and in wicked houses on the Lord's day, I but now thou hast more wisdom and understanding, and now thou dost not so, this is well, and good, and this is to be encouraged; I but what is this to such a mighty change as to be born again? If so be that your bodies had no other kind of soul than that that is of sense, and afterwards a rational soul should be put into it, what a mighty change would there be in that body? Before they could only see, and hear, and feel, but now having a rational soul, they can understand, understand reason, understand the ways of men; this is a mighty change; and truly, there is as mighty a change when God puts a new life into the soul, and doth regenerate it, making it partaker of the divine Nature, and even to come to live the life of God, according as the Scripture phrase is: Now this must be in every soul that must be saved, and if the time be not come, that this regeneration is wrought, then certainly thy soul is yet in a perishing condition, God knows only what he doth intend to do

hereafter, but for the present, thy soul, I say, is in a perishing condition: The first work that God made (that is, the work of Creation) by sin was quite spoiled; Now Jesus Christ the Son of God, that is his honor and his work to rear up a new world, and that is a better world a great deal than the former world was; and the special creatures of this world they are his Saints, and the new Creation in their hearts; now this is the condition of a converted soul, it is made a new Creature, All old things are done away. Thou that livest in thine old ways, and art altogether for thine old customs, and what shalt thou do contrary now to what thy Fore-fathers did, and thou thyself hast done all thy life time? And the like; oh this is a dangerous kind of reasoning! Why, thou must be a new Creature, and all things are to become new in thy soul; thou must know; that the Old Man is dead in thee, and that the New Creature is reared up in thee, or else thou canst not know, that if thy soul should this night depart, but that thou shouldest be an undone Creature forever.

Yea, Shall I yet say further, because it is a point of a wonderful consequence for men and women to put themselves to it; I fear that there is many men and women here, that yet all their lives time have not put this question to themselves, What are the terms between God and me? Why, I hope that God will work grace in me; I but what hath God done? Is it so wrought at this present, that if I were this moment to die, I were in a safe condition, and the hazard of my miscarrying to all eternity were over? A man may joyfully go through all conditions in this world, if he were able to say, well, whatever befall me in this world, yet my condition is such, that I know the hazard of my miscarrying forever, blessed be God that is over: Oh that people would but put this question to themselves, In what estate am I now it, if I were to die this instant?

Ninthly, Wherefore then another thing is this, That soul that yet hath not gone beyond those that the Scripture doth brand and note for Hypocrites, or Reprobates, if thou hast yet no more wrought in thee than the Scripture shows that they had, then certainly if thou shouldest now die, thou must needs perish. — As now, the Scripture holds forth these examples.

Pharaoh confessing his sins, The Lord is Righteous, saith Pharaoh, and I have sinned.

Saul, I have sinned against the Lord.

Ahab, He humbled himself in sackcloth, and went softly, when the Prophet threatened God's anger against him.

The Scripture tells you of the stony-ground, which received the Word with joy.

Of Herod, That he heard John the Baptist gladly, and reformed many things.

Of Judas, He came and acknowledged his sin, and brought again the thirty pieces that he had gotten by it, and cast it down: yet these of which the Scripture thus speaks, all of their souls were lost forever, and yet I say, they went thus far; Now it concerns us very nearly to look to ourselves, and not to think we are safe upon every sleight apprehension; if the Scripture holds forth such examples that went thus far, and yet were lost, we had need be careful to examine our state. — To what end do you think doth God set down these examples of wicked men, whose souls were lost, and show you how much good they did? Certainly this was God's end, that men and women might not flatter themselves with every little good thing that they do, but that they should be serious and very solicitous in the examination of the estate of their souls, how the terms are between God and them; this was God's end in it, and this being God's end, we are to make the use of it that

God did aim at in holding forth these things in his Word unto us: Oh therefore do not satisfy yourselves with a little, do not say, if I should now die this night, and no further work wrought, yet I hope the work is so far wrought, that my soul will not be lost.

SERM. XVI. THE SEVENTH SERMON ON THE EXCELLENCY OF THE SOUL.

For what is a man profited if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul? – Matth. 16:26.

Quest. But you slay we must go further, How shall a man know that he is gone further than those whose souls are lost?

Answ. To that I would briefly answer thus; Canst thou say with David, Lord, thy Word is pure, therefore doth thy servant love it? I believe not one of these could say so. Lord God, Thy Word is a pure Word, I see a holiness and beauty in thy Word, and therefore my soul doth close with it, because it is pure; this is further than any of them went: David could say so, Saul could not, nor Ahab could not, nor Herod could not, the stony-ground, and Herod rejoiced in it, but it was not from the purity of it that they did rejoice, for then they would have rejoiced in all the Word of God, every part of God's Word being pure and holy.

Secondly, They could not say thus, That they did prize Jesus Christ for a Sanctifier, as well as a Savior: None of them did look upon Jesus Christ, that he might deliver their souls from the power of their sin, and work

righteousness in them, as well as deliver them from the wrath that is to come. Therefore though some of them would be glad to be saved from hell by Christ, yet to look upon Christ in regard of his purity and holiness, as altogether lovely, this none of them could do.

Thirdly and lastly, None of them did lift up God as the highest end of all, and give up themselves, and all that they had, or were, or could do, being empty of themselves, so as to lift up God as revealed in Christ as the highest end, so as God and Christ to be all in all to their souls; they went not thus far: And therefore do not think that it is a putting people to great straits, to tell them how far many went, whose souls were lost, and if they went no further, their souls would likewise be eternally lost. — Now then, these things being so, what remains, but that you should lay them to your hearts? Oh lay them to your hearts, and if God would but be pleased this evening to cause everyone in this Congregation to examine themselves, and call their souls into question, O my soul, how is it with thee? How do things stand between God and thee? Art thou in such an estate, as if God should call for thee out of the body this moment, that thou shouldest be saved? Oh be not satisfied in anything in the world, till you come to a resolution in these things; And if you find that these things speak against you, and your souls be cast by them for the present, do not sleight them, for verily God will make them good upon thee, these things shall stand when thy soul shall perish.

Wherefore then this is the last use about this point of the dreadful loss of the soul; Oh then let every man or woman propound this question, What shall I then do to be saved? The world is troubled with a great many questions at this day, questions that have no great necessity in them; but here is the great question, Men and Brethren, what shall I do to be saved?

And if people when they meet together would be taken up, and be asking of this question one of another, it would prevent a great many wrangling and jangling questions, that men spend their time in; oh when they are asking of you many such vain questions, answer those vain questions but thus, I but do you know how one may do to be saved? Tell me something of the way of God about the salvation of my soul; and that is that, that both Ministers and Christians should most aim at, to help one another in; they should not fill people's heads with curious questions, and specially young ones, for that is a great deceit of the Devil at this day: There was never a time wherein there was a more hopeful harvest of young ones, than there was two or three years since in England, and in this City, and because the Devil saw it was in vain to tempt their hearts to their former profaneness, he labors by all means to cause them to fall into the hands of vain jangling people, that shall fill their heads with a great many curious questions about controversies, and things that they do not understand, and so take away the very strength and life of the work of the Word upon them, when as the Scripture tells us plainly, that we must not receive the weak in Faith unto doubtful disputations. But,

Object. You will say, we must inquire after all truths.

Answ. It is true, but seasonably, in their due time; It is not for young converts, before they be settled in the main things of Religion, to have their heads filled with doubtful disputations; it is the plain Scripture, and it is as plain, if we would understand it, as Thou shalt not steal, or commit adultery; oh this hath hindered the salvation of many a soul! Now therefore this is that that I would aim at, to turn the strength of your souls into this great question, What shall we do to be saved? In Eccl. 7, saith the wise man there, God hath made man upright, but he hath found to himself many

inventions, so your books have it, but I find it translated in the old Lattin, He hath mingled himself with many questions, so they turn the phrase: Now the Lord take off your hearts from those, and give you hearts to attend to this great question, What shall we do to be saved? It was the question, you know, of the Jailor, in Act. 16:30. And it concerns those that yet have not assurance of what condition their souls are in for salvation, to ask this question speedily, and not to put it off till they come to sickness and death, and then send for Ministers and godly Christians, and say, Oh! What shall I do? How many upon their sick and death beds, that never minded to inquire before what they should do to be saved, then are in dreadful anguish, and then cry out, Oh what shall I do? Oh the distressed condition I am in! I am afraid my soul is lost forever, what shall I do? Why dost thou ask it now? Is this question to ask now when thy soul is going before the great and dreadful God to have the sentence of its eternal doom to be past upon it? Oh it concerns you betimes, you young ones, as soon as ever you come to know you have souls, it concerns you to be asking this great question, What shall I do to be saved? And we have an example of this, of a young man that Christ looked upon in love, because he was inquisitive about the salvation of his soul; the story is in Matth. 19:16. Behold one came and said unto him, Good Master, what good thing shall I do that I may inherit eternal life, and ver. 20. It appears that this was a young man; The young man saith unto him, All these things have I done. Oh it were a comely thing for young men to come to Christ, and say, What shall we do to have eternal life? And it appears that he was a young Gentleman, a man of great possessions, and he is called in the Gospel by St. Luke, a Ruler; some Interpreters think that that was meant only in the family, for the Jews had some chief in the family that did rule and govern there; but this young man he comes to Christ, and that

running, as in Mar. 10, where you have the story, and Christ looked upon him, and loved him, as in ver. 21. Oh it is a lovely thing to see young people begin betimes to inquire what they should do to be saved, and we have had great hopes of young people; but here is the policy of the Devil, when the Lord was bringing the greatest harvest of young people within this three or four years to himself, as ever was, I think, since the beginning of the world, and the Devil knowing that he could not get them to turn to lewdness and profaneness presently again, therefore he labors to put them upon turning all their Religion into questions about controversial things, which they could not be able to manage and understand, and so puts them off the thoughts of that great question, What they should do to be saved? But O labor to inquire, and to be satisfied and resolved in that question betimes.

Secondly, If you ask this question, as you are to do it betimes, so do it earnestly, do it with a great deal of fervency of spirit, as a matter of infinite concernment; so in Matth. 10:17. When he was gone forth into the way, there came one running, and kneeled to him, and asked him, good Master, what shall I do that I may inherit eternal life? He came running with a great deal of fervency and earnestness about the business; and the fervency that youth hath should be manifested in this, in being earnest in the inquiring after the way of salvation; people that are elder, they think they are well enough, and they have not lived so long, they think, as not to know how to be saved all this while, and therefore will not inquire; so that their spirits do not boil with that fervency and heat as young ones do; he came running to Christ.

Thirdly, If you do inquire, inquire sincerely, with a heart truly willing to do whatsoever God shall make known to you; we are this day about this great question, what a man should do to save his soul? I suppose many of

you would be glad to know what should be done, and me-thinks everyone is ready to ask such a question as this is: But before we come to answer it, let me speak to you as in the Name of God, do you desire to know it with a heart truly willing to yield to whatsoever should out of God's Word be revealed to you? Put this to your own hearts before we come to give any answer, otherwise what do you hear this day, if there be not such a heart as this, that you can appeal to God, and profess that whatsoever this day the Lord shall reveal unto me from his Word that I should do to save my soul, here I am, and profess to yield myself up to the truths of God, if your hearts be so framed, then we may have encouragement to come and show you what should be done.

Fourthly, And you must inquire constantly too; if you should not be satisfied at one time, never be at rest till you are satisfied, do not ask what I should do, and come to hear what you should do, and then pass it over, and let every little thing take this out of your minds again; but when you begin to be inquiring after the way of salvation, resolve that you will never give rest to your souls, till you have gotten this question answered to you. — And there is a great deal of reason that we should ask this question in such a way. For,

Reas. First, Every one of your souls are in a lost condition naturally; therefore it concerns you to be inquiring after the way of salvation.

Secondly, The salvation of a soul is the most difficult thing in the world; if ever thy soul be saved, it must cost more than Heaven and Earth is worth to save it; it is not therefore such a trifling business, the saving of souls: This I dare avouch, as in the Name of God, that the soul of the poorest girl or servant that is here, if it be saved, it must cost more than Heaven and Earth is worth to save it; therefore there is a difficulty in it.

Thirdly and lastly, There are but few that shall be saved; there is nothing more clear in the Word of God than that, that there are but few souls that shall be saved; we cannot tell (as I have said) that this or the other soul cannot be saved; we are not to enter into God's counsels concerning particular souls, but this we may say, and have warrant from the Word to say, that there are but few souls that shall be saved: Strive to enter in at the strait gate, for strait is the gate, and narrow is the way, and few there be that enter: And upon that ground Christ himself raises that exhortation, therefore strive; therefore inquire you after the way of salvation with all your might; if there should a voice come from Heaven at this time, and say, there are but few in this Congregation shall go out alive, it would put everyone to a stand; everyone would think with himself, Oh Lord! Must I die here? Why there is this voice from Heaven, that there are but few souls in the world but shall perish eternally; then certainly it is not for us to be quiet, but it concerns us to be restless in our conditions, and everyone to say, what, is it I? What, is it I? When Christ did but say that one of you shall betray me, everyone was inquiring, Is it I? Is it I? But when it is said that there shall be but few saved; the flock of Christ is but a little flock, the words in the original are two diminutives, and may be translated, a little little flock; Oh it concerns you all to look about you. But now these things being premised for the putting of you on to the enquiring after salvation with all your might: now we come to the answer of this question, What we should do that our souls may be saved?

And in the answer to this we must premise further.

First, There is nothing that any man can do, that saves him, there must be somewhat higher that what he can do; and yet God requires that he should do what he can do; Indeed what any man can do of himself, yea or by

assistance from common grace, yea we will say further, by assistance from any grace whatsoever, though it may help forward his salvation, by an ordinance of God, yet it cannot be the thing that saves him, the thing that saves him is higher than what is done by the creature, it is what is done by Christ, or what is suffered by Christ, it is that that saves the soul, and not, I say, what is done or suffered by us.

But yet now we must not make such a vain, and foolish, and dangerous inference, that therefore nothing is to be done, because the things that we do are not the things that save us; there is a great deal of evil comes from men and women's presuming to draw consequences; they think that if this be true, the other will follow, and so through the weakness of their understandings, they come to draw dangerous consequences from true positions: Why, we are dead in sins by nature, and without me ye can do nothing, saith Christ; upon this here is this consequence drawn by many ignorant people that pervert the Word to their own destruction, If God be not merciful to them; therefore why should we pray, or read, or hear, or use any means, let us lay aside all, we can do nothing, we are dead in sins, and the like: Now we are to know, that though nothing can be done by us (till God bring us into a state of grace and salvation) that is acceptable, so as certainly shall bring us to Heaven, yet if it be but that that shall stop us in the contrary way a little, it is worth our labor; If it be but that that any way may tend towards the bringing of us unto any means that may do us good, why it is worth our labor, and all our pains; but especially if we consider this, that though we are not able to do that that shall save us, yet God is pleased often to convey his strength to those he doth intend to save, through the use of those means; rather at that time when they do improve their natural abilities, than at that time when they sit idle and do nothing, and

therefore you must be up and be doing. We read in the Gospel concerning the young man that I told you came to Christ, and inquired what he should do for eternal life, Christ professed to him that he was not far from the Kingdom of Heaven, he was not so far as others; It is true, if a man abuses his doing, and rests in his doing, that sets him as far from the Kingdom of Heaven, as profane ones, and therefore Publicans and Harlots may enter into the Kingdom of Heaven, as soon as Scribes and Pharisees; But there may be many actions done by a common assistance of God's Spirit, that may bring some nearer to the Kingdom of Heaven than others; and the denial of such a thing as that is, would be an extreme boldness in any; for they are the very words of Christ to the young man, That he was not far from the Kingdom of Heaven; and therefore notwithstanding your inability, and notwithstanding the things that we do are not the things that save us, yet we have ground enough to put on men and women to do.— Now the meaning of this great question is this, What is the way that God ordinarily takes to bring men and women to salvation by? Or how should I follow God on in his way? That is a certain truth of the Ancients, Though God made thee without thee, yet he will not save thee without thee; God works upon us as upon rational creatures, and therefore it doth concern all the children of men that would have their souls saved, to observe the work of God, and to stir up what is in them to join with the work of God in the way of salvation; and certainly whatever conceits there are to the contrary, they are not only foolish, but extreme dangerous, and Satan's policy and cunning is exceedingly much seen in them.

A further thing that I would premise before I come to particulars, is this, when I speak of anything that should be done, I prescribe no particular order, knowing that the works of God are various; And sometimes God stirs

up a soul to do one thing, and sometimes to do another thing, but take them in what order you will, yet we must name them for memory sake in some order, and God expects them from you, and you are to join with God in those works, if you would have your souls to be saved.

The great Question, of what we should do to be saved, answered.

First, If you would have your souls saved, do you join with God in what he hath revealed to you concerning your lost condition, laboring to understand those truths clearly, that are delivered in the Word concerning the lost condition of souls by nature, and to work those truths upon your hearts, to be sensible of them: Those whom God intends to save, he shows unto them what this salvation is; he shows them from what it is they are to be saved, that so they may not run away with (the mere word (Salvation) and saving of souls) now God reveals this in his Word, and when he intends to save a soul, he doth by his Spirit stir it up to join with the Word of God, and work those things upon its self, so as to be made sensible of them.

As thus, the soul being solicitous how it should come to be saved, it searches the Scripture, and there it finds how we are by nature the children of wrath; there it finds that God had made man according to his own Image at first, but man hath sinned against God, and broken the covenant upon which his eternal state did depend, and in the sin of the first man all men have sinned, and are deprived of the glory of God, and now are conceived in sin, and brought forth in iniquity, so that there is a most dreadful breach between God and the soul, and that man by nature is become an enemy to the Infinite God: That now he hath the seeds of all kind of sin in him, and that all his life, while he continues in his natural estate here, is nothing else but a fighting against God, a flying in the very face of God: He finds that by sin he is brought under a most dreadful curse, the curse of the Law, and that

he is bound over by the bonds of the Law, even to death, to eternal death, as the wages of sin; these things the soul finds in Scripture; now if thou wouldest be saved, when thou findest God revealing such things, labor thoroughly to convince thy soul of the truth of them; and are these things so indeed? Is this my condition? Am I thus and thus naturally? Oh what good then will it do to me to have all the world, and be in such a condition as this is? Oh my soul! When wert thou sensible of this condition? Dost thou walk as it becomes one that is sensible of such a lost estate as this is? Oh! Labor to drink in these truths, and to work them upon thy heart, and cry to God to set them home upon thy spirit, to make thy soul thoroughly sensible of them, as he uses to make those whom he hath a purpose to save. Here's the first thing.

And yet one thing about this further, is, That you must come to a conviction, not only of your lost estate, but of your inability to save yourselves, and the inability that there is in all creatures in Heaven and Earth to save them; that thy fall from God is so dreadful, that all the created power in Heaven and Earth cannot help thee, yea and that thou thyself now art unable to help thyself to save thy soul; be convinced thoroughly of this: This was the way that Christ took with the young man, he tells him of the Law first, and then afterwards because he was conceited that he had fulfilled the Law, and done it, Christ puts him upon a duty (that might convince him to the contrary) which was required in the spiritual meaning of the Law, that forbids covetousness, and requires that we should be willing to part with all for God, when he calls for it; Go and sell all that thou hast, and follow me, and take up thy cross and follow me, saith Christ; I but the young man he had great possessions; but because he was no swearer, nor stealer, nor murderer, nor liar, he thought he had fulfilled the

Law, but Christ by putting that to him, did as much as if he should say, poor young man, thou art deceived, thou thinkest that thou are able to do what God requires in his Law, but didst thou but understand the spiritual part of the Law, thou wouldest see that thou art so cast by it, that all that thou art able to do in thy obedience to the Law, cannot be sufficient (through the sinfulness of thy heart and nature) but thou must perish if thou takest such a course as that is, to think to be saved by the Law; certainly this it is upon which thousands of souls do perish, they think indeed they are sinners, but they hope they shall do better, and they are able, they think (though not without God, God must help them) to do that that the Word of God requires of them, whereby they may come to be saved; now certainly thou knowest not thy fallen condition, and how far off thou art from God, and what thy sinful estate is naturally, that hast such thoughts as these.

But secondly, If thou wouldest have thy soul saved, break off the acts of thy sin at least; you will say, why do we speak to men to break off the acts of their sin? — why, certainly we may well speak, for God doth give men power for outward acts very far; thou canst not do it of thyself, that is true, but there is a common work of God's Spirit, that doth enable men and women for outward acts very far: Let him that stole steal no more. A man now at the day of judgment cannot say, Lord, I continued in theft, because I was not able to forbear it; though thou canst not change thy heart indeed, yet forbear the outward act thou canst: one that is dumb might say, if he could speak, Lord, I was no swearer, because I could not speak, otherwise thou art ready to say, I cannot help it, but God will find it otherwise at the great day: Certainly, if thou wouldest but put thyself upon what strength God gives thee, thou mayest as well go to a Sermon, as to an Ale-house; It is a very false reasoning of people, that because they have not true grace,

therefore God enables them to do no outward acts; therefore do what in thee lies to break off the outward acts of thy sin: Thou that art a company-keeper, a Sabbath-breaker, a swearer, an unclean person, take heed of continuing in the outward way of sinning against God, resolve this day against those outward acts of thy sin; do but do thus much, because thou thinkest thou canst do nothing, do but profess thus to God in his presence, when thou art gone, get alone, and say, Lord, it is true, I can do nothing-without thee, but here I do engage myself to join with whatsoever thou hast given me, or shalt give me to abstain from those acts of sin, which I have lived in, and this Lord I engage myself to do, as ever I expect to be saved in the day of Jesus Christ; canst thou not say these words? Express thyself but thus to God, and certainly these things thou mayest say, and that is somewhat; That man and woman that shall willfully go on in those vile gross acts of sin that are against the very light of nature, and the light of their consciences, for them to come and say, What shall I do to be saved? And yet still continue in their sins, it is but a trifling with God, and taking God's Name in vain, except it be with a resolution to go thus far.

Thirdly, Thou must labor to take off thine heart as much as thou canst from the things of the world, from these outward contentment's here, from seeking after them as thy greatest good; that that was thy chief desire heretofore, thou must labor to take off thy heart from, and possess thy soul with the one thing necessary, to conclude thus with thyself, it is not necessary that I should be rich, that I should be honorable, that I should have these and these outward comforts in the world; but it is necessary that I should look to the salvation of my soul; when God hath a purpose to save, he doth take the heart off very much from creature-comforts; Oh, if people's hearts were but taken off from the world, to seek after salvation in a

constant way, as they are at some flashes, when they hear some truths that come near to their hearts, or when they are upon their sick-beds, Oh how far might they have been gone in the way of salvation! But the thoughts of the world hath taken their hearts, and all other things have vanished and come to nothing.

Fourthly, If thou wouldest have thy soul saved, thy great care and endeavor must be to acquaint thyself with the knowledge of the Mysteries of the Gospel of the covenant of grace, of the way that God hath chalked out for salvation; let a man or woman have never so good meanings, never such good desires and affections, live never so fairly and civilly in the world, yet if they be not acquainted with the way that God in the Gospel, and in the Covenant of Grace hath revealed for the salvation of souls, they may perish for all that, God hath appointed but one way to save souls, and he is set upon it and determined, that whosoever misses that way, must perish, whatsoever good thoughts and desires they have otherwise.

SERM. XVII. THE EIGHTH SERMON ON THE EXCELLENCY OF THE SOUL.

F*or what is a man profited if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul?* – Matth. 16:26.

Quest. Now you will say, What is it in the Gospel, and in the Covenant of Grace that we must labor to inform ourselves in, that we may be saved?

Answ. First, Thou must labor to inform thyself of the absolute necessity of satisfaction to divine Justice, that is revealed in the Gospel, and that thou must come to know, I am a sinful wretched creature, my soul is in a damnable condition; now that that must save me must satisfy God's infinite Justice, I may not be saved merely by my crying to God for mercy; no, if there were nothing else but my crying to God for mercy, yea, put all my good deeds into the scale, put what I have done, what I can do, what I can be enabled to do, all my prayers, my cries, this will not do. — It is true, there is not enough in me, but will not God's mercy eke it out? — No, it is neither what thou doest, or canst do, or canst be enabled to do, and put God's mercy merely without anymore, that doth it, but it is a satisfaction to justice, a price paid for the soul; no soul is ever saved, but it is saved in the

way of a price, that is paid for it; and this thou must acquaint thy soul with, which thousands of people are ignorant of; yet they hope to be saved, but how? They will pray to God that they may be saved, and that God would have mercy upon them; and is here all? Certainly this is not the way of the Gospel; but the way of the Gospel it is that that reveals unto the soul the price that is paid for a soul, even the blood of Christ: That in Christ the great Mediator of the second Covenant, there is a perfect satisfaction to God's Infinite Justice; this indeed is a great part of the Mystery of the Gospel; this is the saving truth of the Gospel, and thou must acquaint thy soul with this truth if thou be saved. — And when thou hearest of this truth, perhaps thou canst not understand it for the present, Oh then thou hadst need go to God in secret, and be crying to him that he would reveal this truth unto thee. — But you will say, it is not our crying; — It is true, it is not merely our crying, but there is something of God further: But God hath made many gracious promises of answering our cries, and now that so he may make good his promises, he will further reveal this Mystery of the Gospel to thee, that there is a necessity of satisfaction to divine Justice for thy sin that hath brought thy soul into a lost condition.

Secondly, And further, A necessity of a perfect Righteousness; we will not speak of anything controversial about it, which way it comes to be applied; but this all will grant, that there is a perfect Righteousness that we have need of; the way of salvation is a perfect Righteousness, thou must have a surety that must have a perfect Righteousness for thee.

Thirdly, And then the way of salvation is this, it reveals an absolute necessity of the Application of the satisfaction and Righteousness of Jesus Christ; the Application of that, that it must be made thine some way, that thou must have thy part and share in it, by thy union unto Christ; and by

being made one mystically with him through Faith, so that the soul is not merely saved through mercy: Nor thus, that Christ he hath come and done such and such things, and therefore saith God the Father, for the sake of Jesus Christ I will save thee, for he hath satisfied me by what he hath done: No, but there is somewhat more; I confess it is true, in the conclusion we are saved for the sake of Christ, but it is by our union with Christ, we are united to Christ, and made one with him, and so what Christ hath done for our salvation, is tendered up to the Father as ours, we being one with Jesus Christ: so that now, if thou shouldest know thy miserable estate by nature, and thereupon inquire after salvation, and cry to God that he would be merciful unto thee; that is not enough, but the Gospel reveals further. Suppose thou comest to know more than thou canst understand by the light of nature, but yet the Gospel doth reveal to thee, that not only thou must be saved by Christ, but thou must be united to Christ by Faith; there must be a spiritual marriage between the Son of God, and thy soul; thou must have Christ to be a head, and thou a member; he thy husband, and thou his Spouse; thou must inquire after this union, and that is the way of believing, and the substance of the Apostles words to the Jailor, when he cried, what he should do to be saved, why saith he, Believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved: It must be through Jesus Christ, the great Mediator of the second Covenant, by thy believing in him, and being made one with him that thou must come to be saved.

Fourthly, And then the Gospel it reveals further as necessary to salvation, a necessity of Regeneration, of being born again, of having the Image of God renewed in the soul, by the Spirit of Jesus Christ, of being a new Creature, the want of which, if the soul should now depart, it must certainly perish under, but now if it come to be saved, it must have this revealed to it;

for in the Gospel there is held forth the great work of God in begetting that soul anew to himself, that he doth intend to save, in putting a new life into it, in sending the Spirt of Jesus Christ into it, whereby it lives, and acts, and works, being now carried on, not by its own spirit, but by the Spirit of the Son of God; this is necessary to salvation, to do acts of Regeneration: so Christ tells Nicodomus, he must be born again, and this only the Gospel reveals; and thus our souls should labor to acquaint themselves with the great things of the Gospel; and as the wise man saith concerning instruction, in Prov. 4:13. Take fast hold of instruction, let her not go, keep her, for she is thy life. So I say of these instructions that are revealed in the Gospel, keep them, for they are your lives; do not think that God, though he is infinitely merciful, yet that he will save souls any other way, for God hath set this way, and it is an infinite mercy that we are to admire at, and adore, and praise his Name for, that there may be salvation any way; and if there may be salvation any way, oh you poor wretched children of men! Know, that you should be restless, till you come to understand further that one way; Oh that we could make it to be the great business of our lives, to search into the Gospel, and find out these things, for it is through this that we come to have eternal life.

Fifthly, A fifth rule for the salvation of your souls, (If God hath put it into your hearts to seek to have them saved) you must walk with fear and trembling before the Lord all the days of your lives; the fear of God must be mighty and strong upon your spirits, if you would be saved, and you must labor to keep the fear of the great God upon your spirits; that place is famous for this, in Phil. 2:12. Work out your own salvation with fear and trembling; for it is God that worketh in you both to will and to do, of his own good pleasure. As if the Holy Ghost should say, you had need walk

with fear before the Lord, for the truth is, he hath you at such infinite advantage, as you are not able to stir one foot to do anything for the deliverance of your souls from eternal wrath, without the work of God upon you; you had need take heed what you do, that you do not provoke this infinite God that hath you under his feet, that you are able to do nothing towards your salvation if he withdraw himself from you.

I appeal to you, suppose you did so depend upon any one man in the world, that your life lay at his mercy, and if he should but speak a word you were a dead man or woman, would you not when you come into his presence come with fear, lest you should displease him? Would you say, what do I care for him? Let him be pleased or not pleased, what is that to me? You would not dare to do it: Now, shall we have less fear, because he with whom we have to do is the Lord? If we had dependence upon any man in the world, as we have upon God, we would fear him: Now I say, shall God have the less fear, because he is a God? He should have the more fear; Fear him, saith Christ, that when he hath killed the body, can likewise kill the soul; Yea I say unto you, fear him; Christ puts an I say upon that; and truly, that soul begins to be in a way of salvation, that begins to have the fear of the great God to fall upon him. Most people in the world they walk boldly, and presumptuously in the presence of God, as if God had nothing to do with them, and as if they had nothing to do with God. Alas! These go on in the ways of death and destruction: but that soul that God hath a purpose to save, he begins to reveal his glory to it, and to shine upon it, as he did upon Saul, when he did shine from Heaven in a glorious manner, and stopped him in his way when he was riding post unto Hell and destruction; he cries to him, I am he that thou hast sinned against, I am he that thou persecutest, then Saul falls down trembling, and saith, Lord, What wilt thou

have me to do? As if Saul should say, Lord, I did not know thee, but I see thee now to be a great and a dreadful God, I see that I am in thy hands to save or destroy, as thou pleasest; and therefore Saul comes with a trembling heart, and cries to God, Lord, What wilt thou have me to do? I, he was in a good way of salvation; and so when a vile sinner that hath gone on without the fear of God upon him, shall now come in trembling, beholding the dreadfulness of the Infinite God, that eternal first-being that it hath to deal withal, and now shall have his fear strike into it, this soul is in a good way of salvation, it is stopped in the way of destruction, and it is in a good way of salvation; and that is very observable further in the Text, Work out your own salvation with fear and trembling, for it is God that works in you. That is a place that many people grossly abuse, they think they need do nothing; but mark how boldly do these people cross the Spirit of God in the Text, for the Spirit of God makes this Argument, do you work out your salvation, because God works, and say they, It must be God that works, and therefore I will do nothing; Oh! If you should willfully go on in ways of provocation to God, and upon your sick-bed, and death-bed, cry, Oh Lord! That now thou wouldest be pleased to work upon my soul, as thou usest to work upon those that thou intendest to save; If God should make this answer, Thou a bold wretch, that hast provoked the eyes of my glory all thy days, and dost thou now cry to me to do it? If any of you do think that there will ever be a time when you will stand in need of God's mercy to save your souls, you had need walk with fear and trembling before this God; Now I put this to the soul of everyone here, dost thou not think, O thou sinful soul, that there will be a time that thou shalt stand in need of the mercy of God? And what course dost thou take now beforehand? Is that course that thou takest beforehand a continual provocation of God? Is that a good preparation to

that time? If there were a man that you lived near, though for the present you care not for him, but slighted him, yet if you knew that there would be a time that you must stand in need of that man, so as if he should forsake you, you would be a lost man, would you dare to provoke that man? We all know what need we shall have of the mercy of God, and therefore we had need walk with fear and trembling before him.

Sixthly, Further, If thou wouldest have thy soul saved, attend upon those means that God hath appointed to save souls, wait at wisdoms posts. Now this one direction being clearly shewn out of Scripture, will be enough to confute all that talk against doing: If God hath appointed means to save, then surely he hath appointed that we must attend upon those means. Now in Rom. 1:16. The preaching of the Gospel there is called, The power of God to salvation. Now if you would be saved, you must bring your souls under that which is the power of God to salvation. Because the Lord in the Ministry of the Gospel doth use to put forth his Almighty Power for the saving of souls, therefore it is that the Gospel is called the power of God to salvation; you cannot be saved without the Almighty Power of God, and where is that put forth but in the preaching of the Gospel? To whom is the Arm of the Lord revealed? That is, the Arm of God in the preaching of the Gospel; so you know what the Apostle saith, in Rom. 10. Faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the Word of God.

You will say, can we do anything towards our salvation? Yes, you may hear, it is the duty of us as creatures to come and hear the Word; and Faith comes by hearing: so then Faith comes by somewhat that we do, but not so that God hath tied himself to give Faith to everyone that hears, I would not be understood so: But thus, God hath appointed, that hearing should be a means for the working of Faith; It is true, it is the blessing of God in

hearing, but hearing is the way that God hath set; God indeed can convey Faith from Heaven to any soul immediately; I but where there is the preaching of the Gospel, there do I expect that these creatures that do intend that I should work Faith in them, should come and attend upon the preaching of the Gospel: Christ could have opened the blind man's eyes, without spitting upon the clay, and anointing his face, but he would have that done, and that must be the means by which he will open his eyes: So if God will have hearing the Word of the Gospel to be the means by which he will work Faith in the soul, take heed how this be neglected, Act. 20:18. Paul was sent to preach, to what end? To open their eyes, and to turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God, that they may receive forgiveness of sins, and inheritance among them that are sanctified by Faith that is in me. Saith the Lord Christ to Paul, I will send thee to open the eyes of men, and to turn them from darkness unto light, and from the power of Satan unto God, that they may receive forgiveness of sins; and this is the great ordinance that I intend for this end, and that I will accompany to those that I purpose to save at any time. Therefore when you come to hear the Word, you should come to it as the great Ordinance that God hath appointed to save souls by. Is there any soul that begins in this Congregation to be awakened, and to think with itself, Oh Lord, What shall I do to be saved? I tell thee, that every time thou comest to hear the Word preached, thou shouldest come to it with such thoughts as these; Now am I going to that great Ordinance that the Lord hath appointed to convey his power thorough, to the salvation of those souls that are appointed to eternal life; I am going to the Pool of Bethesda, and there will I wait until the Lord shall be pleased for to send his Angel to stir in my heart, and I have begun to feel some power of Christ already, which doth encourage me to hope for

further power; There is many a soul hath met with Jesus Christ, and he hath brought it from the power of Satan, to his own Kingdom of light, and why may not my soul meet with the same power of Jesus Christ? However, I am resolved, that as long as I live, I will wait upon God in the way that he hath appointed; Oh the Word it hath a great deal of efficacy for the salvation of souls, therefore if thou wouldest have thy soul saved, attend upon it for that end. I shall apply one Scripture, which may be for the preparation to what remains.— You are about inquiring how you should be saved, and we are about answering, Oh take heed that you be not found in this, like unto those wretched Jews (which God forbid that there should be any one in this place found like unto) that would fain have the Prophet Jeremiah be inquiring what the mind of God was concerning them, and they professed, that whatsoever the Lord should reveal by him, that they would do, but when it came, loe they fling off all, and it was to no purpose; the Scripture is in Jer. 42:5. Then they said to Jeremiah, The Lord be a true and a faithful witness between us, if we do not even according to all things, for the which the Lord thy God shall send thee to us. We desire thee to go and know the mind of God, and tell it us, and here we profess and call God to witness, that we will do what lies in us to perform all that the Lord thy God shall require; This was a very fair promise, and I hope there are some souls, if not generally all of you, have such a kind of disposition. Oh let his servant search his Word, and find out what should be done, and whatsoever he shall speak according to his Word, that will we do, and God forbid it should be otherwise; it were just with God that our souls should perish, if we should do otherwise; but there is a mighty deal of deceitfulness in the hearts of men; Jeremiah went, and did as they desired him, but mark, chap. 44:16, and you shall see what a different disposition there was in them, to what

there seemed to be before; first you shall find in chap. 43, they begin to wrangle at what Jeremiah spake to them, all the proud men began to wrangle at what Jeremiah spake, mark, it is all the proud men, they are proud spirits that do contend with God's Word, but mark, first they wrangle, chap. 43:2, and then they grow resolute and stubborn, chap. 44:16. As for the word that thou hast spoken to us in the Name of the Lord, we will not hearken unto thee; why, what, are these the men that called God to witness, that whatsoever Jeremiah should declare in the Name of God, they would do it? And yet now, first they wrangle at what he saith, and then they resolve, that as for what he hath spoken to them in the Name of the Lord, they will not hear it: Now God forbid that ever there should be found among any of you such wrangling spirits with the Word of God; certainly God will justify the words of his servants that they speak in his Name one day, and will make them good upon you, and they may lie heavy upon the soul that shall neglect them; but then where there is first wrangling at the Word of God, there usually grows an impudent, proud, stubborn, casting off the Word of God; As for the word that thou hast spoken unto us in the Name of the Lord, we will not hearken unto thee. Why should not we do what we have a mind to? Why should not we take our liberty on the Lord's Day, as we were wont, and follow our business as we were wont? Let them say what they will, we will do as we were wont to do, and we will keep our company, as we were wont to do; let them speak while their heart aches; this was the very guise of this people that made such a profession before the Lord, but oh the Lord forbid that it should be so with any of you.

But Seventhly, If thou wouldest have thy soul saved, thou must take heed of resting upon false hopes of thy salvation, you must rase down even to the very ground all your false hopes of salvation; there is nothing in the world

hinders the salvation of souls more than false hopes; when men dare build their eternal salvation upon every sleight and vain hope that they hold, The hope of the Hypocrite, the Scripture saith, is like the Spiders-web, spun out of thine own conceits, but every little touch is enough to strike it down again: Oh the poor things that people thus venture their souls upon! I shown you in the opening of what did cause the loss of souls, that one thing was by venturing, and their vain hopes was one; now these must be razed down; you will say, what are those vain hopes that must first be razed down? And what do you mean by razing of them down?

That I may speak plainly in this thing, that concerns the poorest and meanest, that is of the meanest capacity in the world, as well as the most able or learned (for the poorest hath a soul to save, as well as the richest, and the weakest, as well as the learnedst) if such a one should say, What are those things that are to be razed down? To that I answer.

First, Such hopes as are not Scripture-hopes, if they be not Scripture hopes, they must be razed down; Rom. 15:4. Whatsoever things were written aforetime, were written for our learning, that we through patience and comfort of the Scripture might have hope. We have hope through patience and comfort of the Scripture; how doth the hopes of those that shall be saved arise? — Why, they rise thus, either by reading, or hearing something out of the Word of God, and God darting some light, some truths into their souls through his Word, they come to receive it, and there it lies working in them, till at length their souls relish it, and they taste the sweetness of the Word, and come to have comfort in it, and so through patience and comfort of the Scriptures, their hope comes to be raised; the Scripture in raising hopes, first it works patience, it usually beats down the soul first, and speaks hard things to it, and the soul that God over-powers to

himself, it is willing to lie under the power of the Scripture, and be patient, notwithstanding the Scripture doth reveal such hard things, and puts it upon never such hard duties, the heart, I say, yields to it, and at length the soul comes to find sweetness out of the Scripture, and so hopes comes to be raised, that is, the soul sees some eternal truth out of the Word of God, the truth of God himself that is eternal, a divine truth that it dares venture its eternal estate upon, and upon this it doth raise its hope; it is able to give an account from some place of the Scripture, upon what grounds it doth hope. — I hope that God will show mercy to me, and save my soul in the day of Christ; will some say, I but what ground have you for your hopes? Now, if your hopes be right, then there is somewhat in this Book of God to be shown as the ground of this; and indeed you can have but little comfort of your hopes, except you be able to hold forth some Scripture of other upon which you build your hopes, for when you say you hope, you may not mean that you think and are persuaded that it is so, but what Scripture have you for if you will say, what Scriptures have any to ground their hopes of salvation upon? What Scriptures? A great many; I will give you but this one that many have to ground their hopes upon, Rom. 8:1. There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit. Upon this now saith a soul that God brings to himself; What doth God say in his Word (that word upon which my soul stands, and must be cast one day for eternity) that those that are in Christ Jesus, shall never be condemned? I but who are they? Such as walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit, such as the bent of whose hearts, and the endeavors of whose souls are not after fleshly things, the comforts of this world, but after spiritual things; such whom the Lord hath made to be sensible of spiritual things, and such as the Lord doth act and guide by his

holy Spirit in their ways and conversations, God saith, such shall never be condemned; then upon this I will build my hopes, for I feel that the Lord hath been pleased to work so on me, as to bring me to Jesus Christ to see him, to close with him, and to rely upon him, and I feel the fruit of the Spirit of Christ in me, that whereas before I walked after the flesh, and spiritual things I did not savor, now I find that the lusts of the flesh are mortified, and I should wrong the grace of God, if I should deny the actings, and the guiding's of the Spirit in my soul; and therefore I will build my hopes, and rest upon this Scripture. — And the more any soul rests upon any Scripture (if it rests truly) the more shall it find the power of that Scripture upon it: — Therefore you shall know the difference between an hypocrites resting upon Scripture, and one that rests through the work of God's Grace; an Hypocrite rests upon such a Scripture, and conceits that his heart is according to the Scripture; but now he doth not find, that the more he rests, the more his heart is wrought upon by the Scripture, and daily grows to be liker and liker to the Scripture, to come nearer and nearer to what is required in the Scripture; but now when a gracious heart doth rest upon Scripture, it finds that daily it doth grow nearer and nearer to the Scripture, and that works daily more and more upon it; and indeed this is the way to grow in sanctification, and to make our hearts like to the Scriptures. Fall upon several places, and let your souls rest upon them for eternity, and so you will find your hearts to grow more and more like to those Scriptures, and the power of those Scriptures will appear more and more in your hearts and conversations. This is the way of the Saints that have hopes to be saved.

Secondly, Again, those hopes that are to be razed, are hopes that are not wrought in the soul by the power of the Holy Ghost: in the forenamed

Chapter, The God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, that you may abound in hope through the power of the Holy Ghost. That hope that is right for salvation, is such a hope as is wrought through the power of the Holy Ghost: Now then, that hope that is in men and women, which is born with them, and hath lived with them all their days, that springs from the root of nature, for so that that is born with us, and grows up with us all the days of our lives, I say, it springs from a root of nature, and so the hopes of most people, they are no other but such as springs from a root of nature; come from one to another, and ask them, do you think to be saved? I, I hope so; how long have you hoped so? Ever since I can remember, I thank God; I, I thought so; it is a hope that springs out of the root of nature, and therefore you have had it always, whereas the true hope of the godly for salvation, it is a hope wrought in their hearts by the Almighty power of the Holy Ghost.

And I appeal to you now, what Almighty power of the Holy Ghost have you felt in your hearts to raise up those hopes that you have in you? — For certainly the grace of hope hath a difficulty in it, as well as any grace whatsoever; now all people almost find an easiness in that; but here the Scripture makes it to be the glory of the Holy Ghost, to raise hopes in any creature; therefore those hopes that arise from a root of nature, that are not wrought by an Almighty power of the Holy Ghost in the heart, must be razed down. — Do but put your souls to this question, I have hopes to be saved, but Lord, how are they wrought? What power of the Holy Ghost hath been in my heart to raise these hopes? Suppose there were no Holy Ghost (as they said in the Acts, that they had not so much as heard whether there were any Holy Ghost or no) yet might not I have such a hope as I have in God's mercy? Oh the hope that will bring to salvation is such a hope as is

raised by the power of the Holy Ghost. — Now if our hopes be raised by the power of the Holy Ghost, then they will have much of the Holy Ghost in them, and suitable to your hopes, so doth the Holy Ghost come into your hearts, and dwell in your hearts, and if it comes in and dwells in your hearts, then it doth enlighten your hearts, it doth act and guide you, you are led by the Holy Ghost in your way; Now, can you say, that in the course of your lives, it is the Holy Ghost that guides you, that you are carried on by the Holy Ghost, and not by your own spirits; It is true, the best of all may be acted by their own spirits, in some time of temptation, but for the course of their lives they are acted and guided by the Holy Ghost, their lives are such, as those that live by them may say, here is one that is acted and guided by the Holy Ghost; Now, can you say so? Certainly if you have true hopes for salvation, it is raised by the Holy Ghost, and if it be raised by the Holy Ghost, it doth act your lives in the ways of holiness.

Thirdly, Those hopes must be razed down that are not lively hopes, and purging hopes, I will put them both together. — That are not lively, that you have in 1 Pet. 1:3. Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, which according to his abundant mercy hath begotten us again unto a lively hope, by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead. Here is a great deal in this Scripture; First, that the hopes of the Saints are lively hopes, that is, a hope as is mightily working in them, it will not suffer their hearts to lie dead in any way of wickedness; Indeed, it may be with the hearts of the Saints, as it is with a fountain of living water, that may have some dirt cast into it, but it being a living spring, it works out that dirt; so the children of God that have some lively hopes, may have some dirt cast in by temptation; some sin, I, but if their hopes be lively, it will work it all out. — And mark, you are begotten, therefore you see that the hopes of life and salvation it is that

that is not bred with us (as I spake before) but it is that that follows from our new birth. — And this is by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead. The power and the virtue of the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead being in the soul, and putting a new life into the soul, begets it to this lively hope.

And then it is a purging hope, 1 Joh. 3:3. And every man that hath this hope, purifieth himself even as he is pure. Mark, you think, what need men be so pure and strict? Are there none of you that ever have scorned at purity, and preciseness, and holiness? If you have, consider of this text upon which your souls lies; every man that hath this hope, that is, to see Jesus Christ, and be made like unto him, he doth here in this world purify himself, as Jesus Christ is pure, that is, he doth make Jesus Christ to be his pattern in all that he doth, and aims at no less purity, than the very purity of the Son of God; he doth aim at it, he makes it his work, though he cannot come fully to it, and that very hope that is in him doth work him to this; Now what hopes you have had that are not such, must be razed down to the ground, if ever you would be saved at last.

SERM. XVIII. THE NINTH SERMON ON THE EXCELLENCY OF THE SOUL.

F*or what is a man profited if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul?* – Matth. 16:26.

Quest. You will say, Razed down to the ground, what is that?

Answ. By that I mean this.

First, You should be willing to seek to God, and that earnestly, that he would never let you be at quiet in any false hope, be earnest with God in prayer: O Lord, I see that the matter of my salvation, is a matter of infinite consequence; if I should mistake, if I should miscarry in it, it had been better for me never to have been born; O Lord! Therefore help me in this thing above all, that I may never rest my salvation upon any false hopes, that so I may not at the last be disappointed of my last hopes; be earnest thus with God, and be willing to know the worst of yourselves; Lord, if thou seest the work be not yet done let me know it, let me know it now, before it is too late; It is better to know that yet the work is to begin, while you have time to work, than to know it after when the time is gone: And then, be willing to examine your hopes, to lay them to the rule of the

Scripture, and that very narrowly: And if you find your hopes cannot stand with the Word, then resolve thus with yourselves, the work is yet to be done, the very laying of the foundation of that great work, of the saving of my soul, it is to begin: — I but you will say, God forbid this, we have not lived all this while, to begin to lay the work for the saving of our souls now, that were an ill thing indeed: — O I would to God it were not so! But this very thought that some have, that they are not now to begin the laying of the foundation in saving their souls, is that that doth destroy them, whereas, though a man or woman have lived many years, yea though they have been Professors of Religion, yet if upon examination they can find that the saving work of God is not wrought in their hearts, and upon that can conclude, Lord it is to begin, for ought I know, I must begin the work again, and better it is to begin twice, than be damned once, therefore whatsoever becomes of me, I will begin again; this were a good sign: Suppose you should begin again, and it may be you thought too ill of yourselves, for it may be there was some truth in your hopes, or hearts, that you could not see, yet there is no great danger in this, that that was good will hold, though you do not see it; it is the safest way for men and women therefore to be willing to begin often, yea and sometimes it is the best and the readiest course for people that have lost their evidences for salvation, and they can see no clear evidences out of God's Word to settle their hearts upon, for the great matter of their salvation; I say, it is the readiest way for them to do as if they were to begin again, rather than to spend time in looking out their old evidences; as a man perhaps that hath lost his evidences may have them renewed with less charge and cost than he can seek them out, and so sometimes it is with the soul when it hath lost its evidences for salvation, it may get new in less time, and with less charge, than to seek out the old. It may be thou lookest

to see whether thou hast not been a Hypocrite all this while, or formal: Suppose upon examination thou canst not find anything to satisfy thy soul, but that it hath been so, yet now, what hinders but that thou mayest this instant throw thy soul upon Jesus Christ? I but I am afraid that when I have come to Christ, I have not come rightly. — I but perhaps thou mayest come to Christ in that time that thou mayest know whether thou hast come rightly, yea or nay: — But now the best way for those that are mightily troubled and solicitous about evidences whether their estate be right or no, I say, let those, rather than spend too much time in discouraging of their own hearts, begin the work again; let such a one present Jesus Christ now as a Savior for lost man, whose grace is infinitely full, and infinitely free; and there is nothing hinders thee but that thou mayest at this very instant cast thyself upon him to be thy Savior, both to save thee from sin, and from condemnation.

I but you will say, I may presume, and who hath right to do any such thing?

To that I answer, that there is nothing can give thee right to Christ, but by casting thy soul upon him, by believing in him, that right that we have to Christ, it is by believing: It is not by any work before believing that gives thee right to Jesus Christ: So that by this you see what I mean by razing down the old foundation.

The next is, by laying the new foundation of this great work of thy salvation, and be sure thou lay that sure.

You will say, lay it sure, what is it?

Christ is the foundation, No other foundation can be laid but Christ himself; lay it there: — And then that that is next to Christ the foundation, it is the true work of Faith, and the true work of Repentance; the true work of

Faith that is next, that is the foundation of what is wrought in our hearts; Christ is the foundation first, but of any work in our hearts, the work of Faith, Believe, and thou shalt be saved: Now then, this work of Faith, thou must rightly know what it is, and the way of thy believing; and how thou dost receive Jesus Christ in thy believing; and the power of thy Faith how that is wrought; and what the work of it is upon thy heart; now thou having laid Christ for thy foundation, and understood the mystery of the Gospel, then when thou comest to believe, in this great mystery of the Gospel, thou must consider what is it that I am now to believe; why I am now to believe this, that the thoughts of God from all eternity were for the good of the children of men; and therefore he hath sent the second Person in Trinity into the world to take man's nature upon him, to die an accursed death for the sin of man: And for me in particular, the thoughts of God were thus upon me from all eternity, to send his son into the world to take my nature upon him, and to be made a curse for my sin, to pay a price for my soul, and through him (when I believe) I do believe all my sin to be pardoned, the infinite, holy, dreadful God to be at peace with me, my soul to be reconciled; this wretched sinful soul of mine to be received into mercy, into the love of God, as the love of a Father, to be made an Heir of God and Eternal life, when thou dost believe, this is the Object of thy Faith; now this is a mighty work, a mighty thing to believe such things as these are: Consider therefore what thou doest, when thou sayest thou dost believe in Jesus Christ, put that to thy soul, canst thou, O my soul, close with these things? Canst thou venture thy soul upon such things as these are? And when thou comest to believe, what dost thou? It is not that thou thinkest that these things are true, but thou dost in thy believing receive Jesus Christ according to the condition of the Gospel, that is, thy heart doth open to

receive into it the King of glory; Oh it is Christ that is the foundation of the New World that God is to raise up; It is Jesus Christ that brings in all the good, and happiness, and glory of God to the children of men, and it is he that my heart opens to receive in, to embrace, to be satisfied with all, as all the good and happiness I expect; and it is Christ that my heart opens too to save me from my sin, as well as from punishment, to unite me to God, to bring me to union with him, that I may live forever to the praise of the great God; and it is this Christ that I take into my heart to be King and Governor, and now to rule: Sin, Satan, Temptations, Lusts, shall not reign as they have done, but Christ shall set up his own Government in my soul. — Now then, upon this must needs follow wonderful and glorious effects upon the soul, the soul that doth believe such high things as these are, and doth open itself to receive Christ upon such terms, certainly, I say, there must needs be wonderful effects wrought in that soul; such things must needs work the soul up to God, to live to him in another manner than ever, and that is the reason of the Scripture expression, Whosoever is in Christ, is a New Creature, all old things are passed away, and all things are become new. For why? The Lord hath revealed new glorious things to such a soul, and the Lord therefore now acts and carries on the soul to other manner of objects than ever before it was wont to be busied about. — And such a kind of work of Faith is this, that is the foundation of the great work of salvation next to Jesus Christ himself, as the old must be razed down, so a new must be raised up.

Now when you come to think of salvation, that you hope to be saved, you must have recourse to such a kind of work upon you, as this; how have I felt the power of the Holy Ghost razing down old things? And how have I felt the power of God, even that power by which Jesus Christ was raised from

the dead, to raise such a foundation as this is? — And upon this now follows the work of Humiliation and Repentance, that is, Godly sorrow; and so to mourn, as to have the heart to be taken from its former courses and ways, and be set upon the contrary good: — Now when the soul finds such workings of God upon it (as certainly these things cannot be, and no notice at all taken of them) when the soul takes notice how God comes in with power upon it, and believes, that now surely the Lord intends salvation to me, the Lord hath laid such a ground-work upon my soul, as I dare venture all upon it, and now I have cause to hope that the hazard of miscarrying to all eternity is over. O this is that that is the joy of the Holy Ghost, joy unspeakable and glorious, when the soul upon good grounds can have hopes that the hazard of its miscarrying to all eternity is over; now, My soul return unto thy rest, saith such a one; so that that is the next thing, the razing down of the old, and raising up the new foundation.

Ninthly, If thou wouldest have thy soul saved, thou must keep thy soul under the authority of the Word, and maintain the authority of the Word, and the authority of conscience over thee; this is the way, if thou meanest to go in God's way for salvation.

First, For the Word; The soul that God intends to save, he doth reveal unto it a dreadful authority that there is in this Book of God; this is that word, saith God to the soul, wherein I have revealed my mind to the children of men: Those counsels of my will that concern the eternal good of the children of men are in this book, and all your souls are to be cast by this book, by this word, for eternity: Now this being revealed to the soul, the soul stands in awe of this word, and trembles at this word, fears the authority of it, looks upon every threatening in the Word, every command in the Word, every promise in the Word, as having a divine authority stamped

upon it, sees the broad Seal of Heaven stamped upon everything in this Book, and dares not willfully transgress against anything in the Word, and so continues in keeping its self under the dreadful authority of the Word; and that soul is in a good forwardness to be saved, that is kept under the dreadful authority of God's Word, in the constant course of it: Now I appeal to you, you would fain have your souls saved, but can you say thus? Indeed I have many sins, yet God knows, (that knows all things) that my soul it is kept under the dreadful authority of his Word continually, and this I labor to do more and more, and I am willing it should be so, I am not willing to have the authority of God's Word cast off, but I am glad that ever God did discover to me the dreadful authority that there is in his Word.

Secondly, And then the next thing is the authority of conscience; if conscience have any enlightening, it is that that will discover very much of the mind of God unto thee; there is nothing will discover God's mind more unto the heart of a man or woman, than an enlightened conscience, and it will discover it with power; a Minister speaks, and his words many times vanish in the Air, but when conscience comes to discover God's mind, it comes with power, and speaks particularly to this soul, and the other soul, and conscience (when it hath light) will be pleading of God's cause, and admonishing and plucking the soul out of the ways of death and perdition, and it will not easily be put off; you may easily put off the counsels of such and such friends, but conscience will not easily be put off, it will come with such majesty upon the heart of a sinner, that there is no gain-saying of it; conscience will not regard the vain shifts that people have, but still comes in a commanding power: Oh keep the authority of conscience, many men and women, because they cannot go on freely in the ways of sin, where conscience and the word have much authority over them, therefore they

seek to cast off the authority of the word and conscience, but know this for a truth, that that soul that hath cast off the authority of the word and conscience, is going apace to Hell, is going apace to destruction; All the while the word and conscience kept thee under, thou wert in some forwardness towards the way of life, but if thou hast once cast off that, then Oh how doth the soul grow hardened in sin! How easily are the truths of God rejected! And then it goes with greediness to satisfy the lusts of the flesh, and ten thousand to one but such a soul perishes eternally. Oh, if there be ever a soul in this place that had the authority of God's word and conscience to be over them with power, and now through the violence of their lusts have cast it off; Oh let such a one take notice of what is said unto them in the Name of God, Oh thy soul is going apace to destruction; But as for you that begin to feel any authority of the word, or of conscience upon you, Oh keep it; for this it is that will carry and guide thee in the way that will bring to life at the last.

Tenthly, If thou wouldest have thy soul be saved, take heed of sinning against the price of thy soul, against the blood of the covenant, and against mercy; take heed of these three things, take heed of sinning against Jesus Christ that paid the price, against the Gospel, that revealed the price of thy soul; Oh take heed above all things of turning the grace of God into wantonness! Let not the free grace of God revealed in Jesus Christ be turned to be a means to harden thy soul in sin, to think thou mayest take the more liberty to have the satisfaction of the lusts of the flesh, why, because Jesus Christ came to save sinners; let me say to thee, as Peter to Simon Magus, Oh Pray if it be possible that the thoughts of thy heart may be forgiven thee. If thou hast ever had such reasonings in thy heart, why, Jesus Christ came to save sinners; and the grace of the Gospel, that is free and full

enough to save souls, though they be never such great sinners, and upon that thou hast taken more liberty; Oh thou hadst need fall down before the Lord, and cry, If it be possible that such a thought of thy heart might be forgiven thee; if you look into the Epistle of Jude, you shall find a dreadful passage against such as turn the grace of God into wantonness; it is made a sign of a Reprobate, and it is as black a brand of a Reprobate as any one, to turn the grace of God (and especially that grace of God that is in the price that is paid for souls, to turn that) into wantonness is the most dreadful hindrance of saving of a soul, that possibly can be; Oh take heed of sinning against Jesus Christ the great Savior of souls, but honor Jesus Christ all the ways you can; would you fain have your souls saved? Christ is the great Savior of souls, and you had need honor him, (Kiss the Son lest he be angry) and love him; you had need love his ordinances, and all his members, and all his people; you had need give all the respect that may be to him, because he is the only Savior of souls: — And for the blood of the Covenant, take heed you sin not against that, let it not be accounted as a common thing; Oh do not prize the satisfying of your own lusts, rather than the blood of the Covenant, and all the good that was purchased by that blood; when any wretched sinner shall hear the Gospel preached to him, and yet shall prize the living in any base wicked way of sin, I say, such a one doth trample the blood of the everlasting Covenant under his feet, and the language of his heart and actions is nothing but this, whatsoever is spoken concerning the blood of the everlasting Covenant revealed in the Gospel, I do prize the satisfying the lusts of mine own heart, more than all the good that is in the Covenant; now do you think can such a soul as this be saved? Now you sin against the blood of the Covenant, when you come hand over head to the Sacrament, and thereby you come to be guilty of the

body and blood of Jesus Christ; People are mighty earnest about coming to Sacraments, now do but read 1 Cor. 11. It is a Scripture which I know you that are acquainted with Scripture, are not unacquainted with, ver. 27. Whosoever shall eat this bread, and drink this cup of the Lord unworthily, shall be guilty of the body and blood of the Lord; And what then, ver. 29. He eateth and drinketh his own damnation. When you would have the Sacrament, as the seal of the blood of Christ, and yet come in your sin and filthiness, and do not discern the Lord's body, you come to be guilty of the blood of Christ, and so to be guilty of your own damnation; and so many think to seal their souls, by eating and drinking, the damnation of their souls; for there is nothing set out in Scripture that furthers more the damnation of a soul, than to sin against the blood of the Covenant: I know some make that Scripture their damnation to themselves, that is, that they are only to be reproved and condemned for doing so, but we are to enlarge Scripture to the uttermost that may be; and seeing the Scripture hath made the sin against the blood of Christ in other places so dreadful, we may very well understand that place in the most dreadful sense that may be: Now if in case you come unworthily, you hear what the Scripture speaks, it is guiltiness of the blood of Christ, and eating and drinking your own souls damnation: — And then take heed of sinning against the mercy of God; let not mercy harden you, but let it soften your hearts; Oh that soul is in a good forwardness to be saved, that every time it thinks of the mercy of God, it finds itself to melt before the Lord, and mourn bitterly for sin, when as it applies the mercy of God to itself, I, that is a good evidence; but now when you think or speak of God's mercy, you find your hearts the more hardened in sin, Oh this is dreadful! For how can such a soul be saved, that sins against the mercy and love of Jesus Christ? For who shall hear and plead

for thy soul before God, when as thou art guilty of the blood of Jesus Christ? And what is it that shall be thine atonement before the Father? It must be blood; Without shedding of blood there is no remission of sin: And what blood must be for the remission of thy sin, when as thou tramplest the blood of the Covenant under thy feet? And when thou sinnest against mercy? What is it that must recover thee, but the mercy of God, when thou comest to God in the anguish of thy soul? Now if thy case be thus, that Jesus Christ shall plead against thee, and say, Oh Father, Father, avenge thyself upon this wretch, that hath not only sinned against thy work of Creation, but against the work of Redemption, that I went into the world to work; Father, let this soul perish eternally, that hath rejected me, and received every base wretched lust before me; now, shall that soul be saved that shall have the blood of the Covenant cry against it, and mercy itself cry to the Lord against it, Lord, avenge my cause, for I have been most abominably and cursedly abused by this wretch? When not only the Law of God's Justice, and Satan accuses thee, but Christ, and his blood, and the Gospel itself, how shall such a soul be saved? Now then, if you would have your souls saved, take heed of sinning against Jesus Christ, against the Gospel, and against the blood of God, and against the mercy of God.

Eleventhly, If thou wouldest have thy soul saved, take heed of sinning against the Spirit of Grace, the good Spirit of God, that must draw thee to Christ, and guide thee in the way of salvation, if ever thou beest saved.

Now, take heed of slighting the motions of God's Spirit, oh do not sleight any motion of the Spirit of God; how dost thou know, but when there comes in any motion of God's Spirit, it comes in to save thee at this time? Thou canst not tell but that at any time when God's Spirit doth assist his Word, thy soul may depend upon that time, so as God may say, had this soul

followed on the work at this time, it might have been saved; but upon its not following it on, it shall not be saved; doth God's Spirit begin to move thy soul, when thou art hearing the Word? Oh do not go into wicked company, and so lose all again, but get alone in thy closet, and fall down even upon thy face, and cry to God, that he would follow on the work of his Spirit, that he hath begun in thee: Oh Lord, I lived a long time in a dead-hearted condition, never minding the good of my soul, but thou hast begun to stir me, and Lord, I hope it is the beginning of thy saving work upon my soul; Oh that thou wouldest go on with it. How many upon their sick-beds and death-beds, would give a thousand worlds (if they had them) that they could have such stirrings of the Spirit of God, as sometimes they have felt? Oh now when the Spirit stirs, and temptation stirs, take heed of listening to temptation, and rejecting the motions of God's Spirit, but think of that that we read on of the people of Israel, when they were going to Canaan, they were very near Canaan, and when they were upon the borders of it, they refused to go into the Land, when God would have them, and upon that The Lord did swear in his wrath, that they should never enter into his rest: So when the Spirit of God begins to bring thee near to salvation, that it may be said of thee, as Christ to the young man, Thou art not far from the Kingdom of Heaven, O take heed of hearkening to temptation, lest the Lord swear that thou shalt never enter into Heaven. The Spirit of God, which is like unto the Dove in the Ark, perhaps it comes into thy heart once, and it comes in again, and thou sendest it out again, but take heed of sending it out the third time, lest it should never come in to thee again; but that the Lord should say, Spirit, never strive more with such a soul: Oh when God begins to stir, it doth concern you, to say with Samuel, Lord, speak, for thy servant hears. You that have been forward heretofore, and have lost the work of

God's Spirit, you had need look about you, for it is a dangerous thing to draw back; My soul, saith God, shall have no pleasure in those that shall draw back. And if the soul of God will have no pleasure in thee, how shall thy soul be saved?

Twelfthly, Whosoever would have their souls saved, let them take this course, account the preciousness of the time of your lives to consist in this, that it is a day of salvation; account it therefore a mercy of God that your lives are continued upon this reason, not because you may get great estates, and live and have your pleasures and delights, but because God hath appointed the time of man's life here in this world, to be the time to provide for his eternity; few men and women in the world know how to judge aright of the preciousness of their time, the time of their lives; and that man or woman that comes to know aright how to judge of the preciousness of this time of life, and of what doth depend upon it, such a one is in a good forwardness to salvation.

Thirteenthly, The last thing that I shall Name is this, be sure to go with those that go in the safest way, and the straightest way; many of you, you question about many things that others do, whether they need do so or no; why can none be saved but those that do so? But I appeal to your consciences, do not you think the strictest way of godliness is the safest way for salvation? Now, if it be the safest, if you did but understand the infinite consequence of the salvation of your souls, there need be no other Argument to persuade you to any strict way of godliness, but this; whatever it be, whether absolutely necessary, or no, I am sure it is the safest way; and I am sure there was never yet any upon his sick-bed that did repent him that he was too strict and too precise, but I have known many that have repented them of being too loose, and too careless: Now in a matter that is of great

consequence, you will be sure to take the safest way: If there be any people in the world that walk so as your consciences tell you they are in a more strict way than others, more holy, more close to God, more self-denying, more faithful, it doth concern you to inquire after those, and to walk after those, and join with them; surely those that go on in the safest way for the salvation of their souls, those I will make a pattern to me; I will not look what the common course of the world, and the generality of the world doth; The Scripture tells us that There are but few that shall be saved; And therefore the fewness of men shall never discourage me; be they never so few, be they never so mean, If I am persuaded in my conscience it is the safest way, that is the way that I will walk in, and surely it is the way for the soul to have comfort at the great day, when it shall appear before the great God and our Savior Jesus Christ. I beseech you consider of this, if you were all now to appear before Jesus Christ, to have your eternal estates determined of, in what men's conditions would you wish yourselves to be in? If it might be at your liberty, and Christ should say, now I am to pass the sentence of eternity upon you for your salvation or damnation; now what kind of men's estates would you wish yourselves to be in? Who would you rather be like unto? Who would you venture most upon, to be dealt withal according as your consciences do think they are most like to be dealt with? I am persuaded, if this were the case, most loose, and profane, and ungodly men, would run and cling unto those that now they scorn and contemn; unto those that walk with the most strictness and holiness in their conversations: Certainly if you would do so Then, it is your wisdom to do so Now; that which will be true then, certainly is true now; and therefore that is a good way for the helping to save your souls, to join with those that walk in the strictest and the holiest way, to do that now, that if you were to die, you

would wish you had done; and to be with them now, that if you were to have the sentence of eternity past upon you, you would wish you had been withal. But this shall suffice for what is to be said concerning that great Question, about the preventing the loss of our souls, and what we should do to be saved: — Now for the conclusion; you have heard divers things already, about the way, and direction for the saving of souls; I suppose when first the Question was raised, every one of you would be greedy to hear an answer; There was never a one in this place but would fain have his soul saved eternally; what do you mean to do now? What are your thoughts? There hath been a question, and I have endeavored in the Name of God to answer it; Now this is that that I desire of you even before you sleep, get into the presence of God alone, and give in your answer to God, what you mean to do, are you resolved upon it? Will you engage your souls now to God (this evening) that that little time that he will let you live in this world, that your endeavors shall be according to those particulars that have been opened unto you? Oh blessed be God if this be but in any one soul! But can any one think that among such a multitude as this is, but that the Lord would be pleased to dart something or other into one or more. Let me conclude at this time, as the servant of Naaman said to him, when the Prophet gave him direction what he should do to be cleansed, he began to be angry, and was loath to do what the Prophet bid him; why (saith his servant to him) My Father, If the Prophet had bid thee do some great thing, wouldest thou not have done it? How much rather then when he saith to thee, wash and be clean? So I say to you; considering what the worth of your souls is, and the danger there is of your eternal miscarrying, how if God should have said this, That so your souls may be saved, I require of every one of you that you should for forty, fifty years lie as a head-block at

the fire burning; I, and if God should have said thus unto us from Heaven, we had all cause to have fallen upon our faces, and have blessed God for his mercy towards us; but now God doth not require any such thing as this at your hands, but requires the abandoning of your lusts, and the attending upon him in his Ordinances; and he requires the keeping of your souls under his Word and Conscience, and the following of the motions of his Spirit, and the believing in his Son; such things as these the Lord requires, upon which your souls may eternally be saved; and will not you accept? Well, that soul that God intends to save, he will persuade, and the Lord persuade your souls in these things, that so you may be saved in the day of our Lord Jesus Christ.

SERM. XIX. THE TENTH SERMON ON THE EXCELLENCY OF THE SOUL.

For what is a man profited if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul? – Matth. 16:26.

Now then having done with that point, we are to come to the last thing; That as the loss is great, as in all the respects I opened, so it is such, that suppose a man to have gained the whole world in a way of the loss of his soul, yet that gain will never recompense it; Job 27:8. For what is the hope of the hypocrite, though he hath gained, when God takes away his soul? There are some men that seek the world, and yet lose both the world and their souls, they neither gain the world, nor their own souls; and some there are that do gain the world and their souls both: But there is no necessary connection between either gaining the world, or losing one's soul, or losing the world, and gaining the soul, but one may be severed from the other.

But suppose God should let a man gain what he will (though many men seek for gain by sinful ways, and God crosses them in it, they have not their gain, and yet they are damned eternally for seeking gain) but suppose a man had gotten all the world, as he would desire, and yet this man wicked and

losing his soul, he is a most miserable man: Now this is the thing that I have to do, to show unto you what a poor gain a man hath that is wicked, though he hath got the world, when he hath cast up all his reckonings, it may be said of him, as we usually say of men that have got little, They may put all their gain in their eye, and never see the worse: So certainly, if thou hast sought after gain in this world, in such a way as thou hast not provided for thine own soul, when thou comest to sum up all thine accounts, thou wilt see that very little is got: There are many ways whereby a man may come to see all the glory in the world to be but darkness: By seeing the glory of God, the glory of Christ, and the infinite consequence of an eternal estate; those three things make the spiritual man to look upon all the glittering vanities of this world, but as mere darkness, and as nothing: — But now there be three other things that may help a natural man to see the things of the world to be as nothing, and the gains of it to be very poor gain, (I mean one that is not sanctified, that hath no grace.)

The first is, If God do but please to wound his conscience, and terrify him, he will see all things to be poor things indeed.

Or secondly, When God lays his hand upon him in afflicting of him, upon his sick-bed, or upon his death-bed. It is reported of Musculus, that when he lay upon his death-bed, and his friends coming about him, and seeing what a poor condition he was in, that had been an eminent worthy Instrument of God, and an excellent Preacher in his time, and they mourning for the sad condition they saw him to be in, *O quid sumus*? Say they; as he lay in his bed he over-heard them, Fumus, said he; that is, O what are we? Smoke: Many a carnal man in the time of his sickness, and apprehension of death, will say, that all this world it is as nothing.

A third thing that may make even a carnal heart to see all the things of this world to be as nothing, It is strength of Reason; though there should not be terror of conscience, nor any afflictions, yet strength of reason may discover the gain of this world to be as nothing, in comparing of it unto the soul; and this strength of reason God is pleased sometimes to sanctify by his Spirit, when it is helped by the Word, by the sanctified reason that there is in the Word; I say, when it is helped by that, then God blesses it so as to work off the heart from the world, to the things that concern the everlasting good of the soul; And it is that that I shall speak to at this time, to convince you what a poor thing the gain of the world is, even by strength of reason, and yet such reason as is founded upon the Scripture. —I have already shewn you the things that may make a spiritual heart see a vanity in all things in the world, as the excellency of God, and of Christ, and the consequences of eternity; Now the other two, terror of conscience, and afflictions, they are God's work, and God, when he pleaseth to show the vanity of the World, doth ordinarily bring them upon the creature; but now for the third way of God to discover to the creature by the sanctified saving work of his Spirit, the vanity of all things; I shall endeavor to show it you by strength of Argument and Reason out of the Word.

As First, Surely though thou shouldest gain the world, and yet be a man that art like to perish at last, thou hast gotten but little; and it appears first in this, that all those that ever came to have true wisdom, and that are in Scripture commended for men of true wisdom, they have looked upon all the things of the world as very poor things: — First, What do you think of him that was the wisest man upon Earth (mere man) even Solomon? That had the greatest experience that ever man had, of what good, the honors, or pleasures, or profits of the world could do; and yet after all his experience,

see his testimony of all, in Eccl. 1:2. Vanity of vanity, saith the Preacher, vanity of vanities, all is vanity. Observe these five things in it: — First, The things of this world are not only vain, but vanity in the abstract: — Secondly, They are an excessive vanity, vanity of vanities, — Thirdly, A heap of vanity, vanity of vanities, — Fourthly, All is vanity, — Fifthly, He adds his name to this, Saith the Preacher; Now the word that is translated here Preacher, in the Hebrew, as those that know the tongue, know, it signifies one gathered, and it is in the feminine gender, and so some think it notes the soul of Solomon, that gathered wisdom after he had been gathering vanity so long: But this is the result of it, that all things in the world are only vanity, and that vanity of vanities, heaps of vanity; or else a soul gathered to God, after all his departure from him, He saith it is so; herein Solomon is like a man that hath gotten to the top of an high hill, such a hill as there are perhaps hundreds of people of a strong conceit, that upon the top of the hill are very rich treasures to be had, and they are all scrambling up the hill, and treading even one upon another that they may get up the hill; Now Solomon had got to the top of the hill before the rest, and he seeing men keeping a stir to get up out of such a conceit, cries out to them, Sirs you are all deceived, you are persuaded that if you could get estates, and honors, and promotions, that then you should have a great deal of content, why, I am got upon this hill, and I find there is nothing but dirt here, there is nothing here that will answer all your toil, and trouble, and expectation, but you will be utterly deceived; this is the meaning of this Scripture: And then next unto Solomon, one of the wisest and holiest men that ever lived upon the earth, St. Paul in the New Testament; mark, as soon as ever God did but work upon his heart, to show unto him better things, Phil. 3:8. He professes that he did account all things but loss for the

excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus, ver. 7. But what things were gain to me, those I counted loss for Christ, yea doubtless, and I account all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord, for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and do count them but dung, but dogs-meat, that I may win Christ. This was the sleight esteem that Paul had of all the things in the world, that men kept such a stir about. — And so when God did but begin to work upon Zacchaeus, when he did but hear of the salvation of his soul, when Christ did but tell him, This day is salvation come to thy house, presently, (being a covetous rich man that had gotten his estate wrongfully) he cries out, The half of my goods I give to the poor, and if I have wronged any man by forged cavillation, I will restore fourfold. And so John the Beloved Disciple of Christ, which lay in his bosom, and therefore knew so much of the mind of Christ, you know what he saith in his first Epist. 2:15. Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world, if any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him: for all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father. The lust of the flesh, that is pleasures and sensuality; the lust of the eyes, that is riches; and the pride of life, that is honors; these are not of the Father, but of the world, saith John; you may think they are great matters, they may be great in your eyes, but they are not of the Father, but of the world; And the world passeth away, and the lust thereof; but he that doth the will of God, abideth forever. It were infinite to show you this both in Scripture, and likewise in the whole course of the story of the Church, how slightly the Martyrs did account all the things of this world, as soon as ever God gave them any true spiritual heavenly wisdom; but because that would cost a great deal of time, therefore we proceed to show by strength of reason, further out of the Scripture; yet this

may convince rational men, that that which the wisest men in the world, that have had from God a testimony of great wisdom, have thought to be a little matter, certainly hath no great matter in it; but they have thought the gain of all the world to be as nothing; therefore certainly there is no great matter in getting the things of the world, however men esteem of them.

Secondly, What if a man doth gain the world, but loses his soul, he is never a whit the better for anything in the world; we say sometimes in our common language, such a man is the best man in the Parish, and I have the hands of the best men in the Parish; the truth is, we mean the richest men in the Parish: but riches and honors make no man one whit better than he was before: The heart of the wicked is little worth. Let a man have never so great an estate, he may have so many houses that are worth so much, but he is worth no more than he was; as a great letter makes no more to the sense of a word, than a little letter doth; so great honors, and great places, make no more to the excellency of a man, than to be without them; these things in the world they have no goodness in them any further than we put goodness upon them; we may indeed make good use of them, and so by our good use we may make ourselves better through God's Grace; but the possessing of them doth not make any soul one whit better than it was before, they make many souls worse; thousands of souls grow worse than they were before, by the enjoyment of the world, but where have you one better? None can be better by the things of the world, no, it must be by some grace of God that a soul grows better, and not by the things of the world: I will give you for this, this demonstration, you never find in Scripture (that I know of) that ever any child of God was worse for afflictions in the conclusion, but you may find, that almost every child of God that was in prosperity, was the worse for their prosperity, there are very few to be excepted: I confess we

read not of Daniel, nor of Nehemiah, and I know not any but those two, but ever were the worse for their prosperity, but not one worse for afflictions, from Genesis to the Revelation; therefore certainly there is no such great matter in the things of the world; That is a remarkable place we have in Dan. 11:21. And in his estate shall stand up a vile person, and he shall obtain the Kingdom by flatteries. — A vile person, and yet have the honor of the Kingdom, how can this stand? Yes, it is by interpreters thought to be Antiochus Epiphanes, he was advanced to that mighty height, that I remember Josephus saith, that the Samaritans in their letter to him give him the Title of the mighty God; he had that title given to him by those that were under him, and Antiochus Epiphanes, which signifies illustrious; Illustrious Epiphanes, the Mighty God, and yet the Holy Ghost gives him this title, a vile person; what good do a few herbs that are strewn upon a Carrion do? Do they make the Carrion to be less corrupt and putrefied than it was? Truly all the bravery that wicked men have, it is at the best but a few herbs and flowers strewn upon a filthy carrion, which makes them not to be the better: The things of this world therefore in Scripture are called the things of another man's, in Luk. 16:12. And if you have not been faithful in that which is another man's, who shall give you that which is your own? You may know the meaning of it by the verse before: If therefore ye have not been faithful in the unrighteous Mammon, who will commit to your trust the true riches? The riches of this world are called unrighteous Mammon; now these are opposite to the true riches, as if these were not True riches, and then in ver. 12. If you have not been faithful in that which is another man's, that is, in these riches of the world, who shall give you that which is your own? So that nothing is a man's own, to make him better, but grace; the good things of the soul, they are a man's own, but the other things they

are the worlds things, they are not a man's own; therefore what doth it profit a man that he hath gained the world? For he is never a whit the better man.

Thirdly, All these things, they are things beneath the soul, things of an inferior nature; what good is it for a man that hath gotten never so much food, that he hath laid up for his horses and dogs, but he hath nothing for his children or for himself? So if a man hath gotten the world, he hath gotten somewhat for his body, his inferior part; I but he hath gotten nothing for his soul that is above it: These are things beneath and under the soul: what good would it be for a soldier, if he have gilt his scabbard, but he hath a broken rusty sword within, or but a wooden sword within? Therefore I find in Scripture that the bodies of men and women are called the sheath of their souls, Dan. 7:15. I Daniel was grieved in my spirit, in the midst of my body. So it is in your books translated, but those that understand the Original Text, they know it is a word that signifies a sheath, and so Arius Montanus turns it, and likewise in your Margents, in the midst of his sheath; and by comparing this Scripture with another, it is plain, that that is the propriety of the word, 1 Chron. 21:27. Where the Text saith, The Lord commanded the Angel, and he put up his sword again into the sheath thereof. Now the word that is here translated sheath, I find by comparing of them together, that it is the very same word in the Original that Daniel translates body; for the body is but as the sheath unto the soul, and what will it gain a soldier to have a brave sheath, and in the meantime have nothing within it, or that that is of no use at all? Thus it is with many, they seek great things for their bodies, but their souls are left in the mean time without any succor or help, and in a most miserable condition; all things that are in the world should be servants to thy soul, for they are all inferior to it. We account it a great dishonor to a man to marry his servant; a man of

estate in the world, if we hear he hath married his servant, which is very mean, we account it a dishonor: Now for thy heart to mingle itself with the things of this world, as its chiefest good, what dost thou but marry thy soul to that which should be thy servant? For all these things are but as servants to the soul; and for the heart of a man to be set upon the things of this world, it is to have the curse of Cham to be upon him; A servant of servants shalt thou be; for the things of the world they should be thy servants, and thou art their servant, and so a servant of servants; the curse of Cham is upon thee, when thou art a slave to thy estate, or thy honors, or to thy brutish lusts, a servant of servants art thou.

Fourthly, They are such things as God in his ordinary administration of providence hath denied to the choicest of his servants, specially in the times of the Gospel: Many of the choice of his servants in former times were in very low and mean conditions; but for the times of the Gospel, how did Christ himself, who was the Son of God, live? He had not a hole to hide his head in; The fowls of the air had nests, and the Foxes had holes, but the son of man, not whereon to lay his head. Jesus Christ, that was infinitely beloved of the Father; and all the Apostles, they were in a poor mean condition, every one of them died a violent death, but only John; we have records of their several sorts of death, some crucified, some stoned, and some other kinds of death, but all put to death, save John, and read but the latter end of the eleventh of the Hebrews, Those that the world was not worthy of, how they wandered up and down, In sheep-skins, and goat-skins, and dens, and caves of the earth. That was a little before Christ's time, he speaks of those in the time of the Maccabees: Now certainly, if God hath so ordered things in his general administrations, towards such as are most dear in his eyes, as to deny them these things, that they shall have but little of

them, there is no great matter in them, surely if there were any great matter in them, God would not deny them to his servants; when a wicked rich man shall look upon a poor man that walks humbly before God, and would not commit the least sin willingly for a world, methinks such a man should think thus, Oh Lord! What a difference is there between such a poor man and I, and yet my conscience tells me, that God hath more honor from him in one day, than he hath from me in all my life; surely there is no such great matter in the things of the world, that God hath denied them him: If there were any great matter in them, certainly such as walk most humbly with God, and most close with God, should have them if they were absolutely good. — And indeed, this is one great reason that God's own dear servants should have so little of the world, and others so much, it is, that he might hold this forth to all the world, that the things of this world have but little in them.

Fifthly, And consider but the next Argument which follows upon this, and is of a near kin to it, That all the things of this world, the pleasures, profits, honors, they surely have no great matter in them, for they are no more than may stand with God's eternal hatred of his creature. Now certainly, those things that have no higher excellency in them than may stand with the eternal hatred of the Infinite God, certainly they have no great excellency in them; those things that Reprobates may have, surely have no great matters in them, that that you give to your Swine, you make no great matter of it; take all the things of the world, they are no more than God gives to Swine, than God gives to Reprobates, than God gives to such as he doth eternally hate; I remember that Luther hath such an expression as this of the Turkish Empire, It is but a crumb that the great Master of the family casts to his Dog: Now if all the Turkish Empire be no more than a bit of bread that you

would cast to your Dog, then what is your estate? The Lord who is so infinitely rich in mercy, he can afford such bones for Dogs as these are, surely there is no great matters in these things that Reprobates may have as well as children; therefore you that are poor people (and yet godly) that want these things, do you quiet your hearts, what though you have not such an estate as others? Oh do not murmur! Why, it is no great matter you want, you want but that that God gives to Reprobates; Suppose a man gains the world, if he lose his soul, what gets he? He gets a bone that Dogs have, for the loss of his soul.

Sixthly, Take this Argument, That the things of this world, they have no reality in them at all, no real good in them, according to the language of Scripture, what are the things of the world divided into? Take the division that you had before of St. John, The lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life. Take pleasures, and riches, and honors, do but see what the Scripture speaks of them all.

First, For sensual pleasures, you think they have a great deal of reality in them, why in the Scripture phrase they are nothing, in Amos 6, compare the former part of the chapter with ver. 13, ver. 4. That lie upon beds of Ivory, and stretch themselves upon their Couches, and eat the Lambs out of the flock, and the Calves out of the midst of the stall, that chaunt to the sound of the Viol, and invent to themselves instruments like David, that drink Wine in bowls, and anoint themselves with the chief ointments, but they are not grieved for the afflictions of Joseph. Here is the pleasures that these men lived in, described; but mark what he saith, in ver. 13. Ye which rejoice in a thing of naught: You do rejoice in that which is nothing; all these pleasures, these brave merriments, when you get into a Tavern, there you drink, and vaunt, and have pleasure and music, and what a brave life is this?

I but, ye that rejoice, saith the Holy Ghost, in a thing of naught, it may be a great matter in your eyes, I but the truth is, it is nothing; that is for Pleasure.

Secondly, For Riches, see the testimony of the Holy Ghost concerning them, in Prov. 23:5. Wilt thou set thine eyes upon that which is not? That which hath no being at all; no, it is only grace and godliness, that is that that hath a being, Prov. 8:21. That I may cause those that love me to inherit substance, Junius turns it, to inherit that which is; you think that the things of grace are but imaginations, and only worldly things are real, no, the things of the world are but fancies, and the things of grace are real.

Thirdly, And then the third is for Honors, Act. 25:23. And on the morrow when Agrippa was come and Bernice with great Pomp; With much fancy, it was but all a fancy, and the truth is, the excellency that these things of the world have, it is an excellency that our fancy puts upon them; as a piece of gold that heretofore was but twenty shillings, it is raised up to two and twenty shillings; I but though men may raise it up in their fancies to be worth more, the gold is the same: So the things of this world, we may raise them up very high by our fancies, but there is no more real good in them than there was before they are but shadows, and though a man's shadow be longer or shorter, yet a man grows not longer and shorter with his shadow; so though a man's estate be more or less, yet his happiness doth not grow more or less according to his estate; therefore still, what doth it profit a man if he gains the world? Why he gains a shadow, he gains that that hath nothing in it, he gains a fancy, a dream, and he loses his soul for all this.

Seventhly, Further, suppose there were some reality, yet there is nothing that can satisfy the heart, Isa. 55. Why do you lay out your money for that that is not bread and for that that satisfies not? Only Grace is that that satisfies the soul; these things have so much mud at the bottom, that you

cannot have a full draught of them. — And besides, there is a curse of God upon them, that they should not satisfy; yea God hath so fashioned the hearts of the children of men, that they shall never be satisfied with these things: And the eager desire after these things, comes from a great distemper; just as Maids and Women that have green-sicknesses, or that long; you shall have them long for coals, it may be, and dirt, and so green fruit, but though they long for it, yet this cannot satisfy them, why, because it is but trash: So the heart of a man or woman that longs for the things of this world, why it is in a distemper, as one that longs to feed upon dirt, they may feed upon them, but never be satisfied with them.

Eighthly, Yet further; how can the gain of the world make up the loss of any spiritual good? For one that goes on in ways of looseness, that soul, whatever he gets in the world, he hath it without God, God in his ordinary providence may cast it in, but he hath it without the blessing of God with it: What if a man had never such fine flowers in a Garden, if the Sun should never shine upon them? Truly so it is with many wicked men, they have brave and fine estates, but they never have the Sun-shine of the blessing of God upon anything they have; yea that that they have in a way of sin, they have it with a curse of God together with it: That that wicked men feed upon, it is but swill, and like Hoggs-meat that is wrapped up in the dirt; their meat is filthy and stinking itself, but when it is wrapped up in dirt, then it is worse, and so their estates; the Scripture calls all in the world but as dogs-meat, and it is wrapped up in their sin, and the curse of God is upon it. Suppose that that thou doest feed upon had no curse of God upon it, yet it is but as a piece of carrion, but now it is wrapped up in thy sin, and so long as thou goest on in thy sin, the curse of God is upon it: But now, the good of all the things in the world consists in this, the communication of God's

goodness towards me in them, and Christ's blessing of them to draw my heart nearer to God, and to be instrumental for me the better to serve God; but Oh how few men do know wherein the true chief good of these things doth consist: I have more of the things of the world than others have, I, but wherein am I more happy? Wherein? Oh! I see God letting out of himself to me in the way of his goodness, and he gives me this to do him more service than others that are poor; Oh, if thou couldest say thus, this were a sign of a gracious heart indeed. A man that loses his soul, and gets the world, he gets dogs-meat wrapped up in dirt and filth. Oh poor price for an immortal soul!

Ninthly, And then besides, we must show you somewhat about the uncertainty of all these things. Charge those that are rich in the world, that they trust not in uncertain riches. The whole world is as it were upon a wheel; the Scripture saith, that the tongue sets on fire the whole course of nature, it is in the Original, the wheel of nature; all these things are turning up and down, as it were in a wheel you have heard of the wheel of him who was a great King, and having overcome others set them to draw his Chariot, but he observing of them as they drew his Chariot, took notice how they continually looked back unto the wheel, and asking them what the reason was, why say they, we by this see the turning of the things of this world, the nail that is now on the top, is by and by on the bottom, we were high enough within a while, but now are low enough; and the consideration of this did abate the pride of that great Prince that made four Kings to draw his Chariot: So it is but a wheel of nature, and wilt thou venture thy soul for these things that have no certainty in them? I remember Philip de Commines reports of a Duke of Exeter, which married one of the Kings of England's Sisters, and yet he saith, that he was seen in the Low-Countries begging his bread bare-foot; Oh therefore would a man venture the loss of

his soul for the gaining of these things that are so fading and passing away! All flesh is grass, and as the flower of the field, it passes away, and comes to nothing; yea at those times when we have most use of the things of the world, then they are gone from us, as Absalom when he was caught by the tree, and had the most use of his Mule, then his Mule left him, and leaves him hanging by the hair of the head; so worldly things are most out of the way, when you have the most need of them; and will a man venture the loss of his soul for the gaining of these things that will leave you when you have the most need of them; when you lie upon your sick-bed and death-bed, what good will it do you to think that I wore fine clothes, and I had so much riches coming in yearly: Riches avail not in the day of wrath; but Righteousness, that delivers from death. All these things are but fading, and will fail a man when he hath the most need of them. I remember our Chronicles tell a strange story of Richard the third King of England, and you that have them, it is worth your reading; I do not know that ever I read of a more magnificent Coronation for a King, than of his, set out in abundance of glory, he had one Earl that bare before him his Crown, and four Earls carrying four swords before him, one a sword of state; and another without a point, to betoken mercy, and two glittering swords, one in respect of the Temporalty, and the other in respect of the Clergy, and four Barons bearing a Canopy over his head, and himself in a long Purple Velvet Robe, and his Queen in all her Pomp and State; himself had a Duke to bear up his Train, and his Queen she had a Countess to bear up hers, and divers other particulars that might be shewn to set out the greatest pomp and glory almost that could bet conceived for a man to be in; but behold the revolution of things, within some two years and a little more after this, this glorious Prince was slain, and his body lying naked to the view of all, and

carried on a Horse with his hands and head hanging down on the one side, and his heels on the other, as Butchers carry Swine or Calves, and so he was carried to Leicester, and there lay divers days above ground naked and contemptible, and the very stone in which his body was laid, was afterwards made use of to be a Trough for Horses to drink at, at a common Inn; such hatred did they show to him, which a while before was in such a glorious condition: Thus we see that these things which are here, will not hold long, and for one to seek to make his rest in these things, is, as if a bird should build her nest in a little bush, that is floating up and down in the Sea; these things will carry you a little way, but not far; we have all to provide for eternity. If a man had a Voyage to the Indies, and he should provide a little Boat that should carry him from Westminster to the Bridge, it were a poor provision; so when we provide for outward comforts, and no more, we little think of the great Voyage that we have to go; we have all of us to sail to eternity, and what is a Boat of these outward comforts to carry us that long Voyage? The things of this world may well be compared to a Tree in the time of a storm; when you are travelling in the way it begins to rain, and you ride under an Oak or an Elm-Tree; Now if there falls but a little Rain, it may keep you dry, but if it rains much, the longer you stand under the Tree, the worse you will be: So the things of this world may comfort and quiet us against a little trouble, but Riches, as I said, Avail not in the day of wrath. They will not keep off the dreadful storm of God's wrath; all these things are uncertain, and will disappoint us.

Now these and divers other Considerations that might be added, are the strength of Reason grounded upon the Scripture, to convince a man of the vanity of all the things of the world. Now put all these Considerations together, and well may we say, as it was said of the price that was given for

Christ, that Zechariah prophesies of, those thirty pieces, a goodly price that was given for him. You hear sometimes of Judas ‘s sin, that he betrayed Christ for thirty pieces, a goodly price; I may well apply this to your souls, you that venture the loss of your souls for getting the world, though you could possibly get all the world, considering what hath been said, it is a goodly price; do you not see what a goodly price is given for your soul? If these things be but made real to you, it would be of marvelous use to help against any temptation to anything of this world. Now you have seen what darkness is upon all things, how they are all but glittering vanities, and not worth the venturing of the soul for, take heed of hazarding your souls upon any of these things, you will curse yourselves hereafter when it is too late; Oh cursed wretch that I was, that I should yet venture upon sinful ways that I was told would in-danger the eternal destruction of my soul! And notwithstanding I heard what a vanity was in all these things, yet for such a vanity I was drawn aside to lose mine own soul; well, you see the upshot of all, that to venture your souls for the gain of the world, it is to venture the loss of pearls for pebble stones, to venture Gold for dirt, yea for dirt that hath a great deal of poison in it, for so it hath; all these things in the world being separated from God, they are not only dirt, but there is poison in them. Now then, these things being laid together, you see the point cleared, and all that doth remain it is but to bind up this in several Uses and Applications; If all these things be so poor and mean, what use are we to make of all these Meditations and Considerations?

Use.

Then for Use, If these things be so, in the first place we learn, not to envy at the prosperity of ungodly men, whatever it be, let them ruffle it out for a while here in this world, and carry all before them; let man have his day

here in this world, there is no great cause to envy him, if he be going on in such a way as he is like to lose his soul; poor miserable wretched creature that he is, better ten thousand times he had never been born: Poor people that are wicked, (as many are) they have the curse of God mingled in water, and rich men that are wicked, they have the curse of God like poison in their Wine; now we know, of the twain, the poison will work more strongly in Wine, than in Water, and so of both, certainly ungodly rich men, that have most of the world, are the most miserable creatures, for they have more to answer for than others have, and their estates are usually fuel for their lusts, and so their condition is worse than the condition of any beggar that begs his bread from door to door; And certainly there is no wicked rich man upon the earth, but if so be that he die so, he will hereafter curse the time that ever he had an estate, and wish he had been a beggar, and gone begging up and down in his rags, for then he had not had so much to answer for before God. O he is not a man to be envied at! What man is there that would envy at a malefactor condemned to die, though he have on brave clothes? Would not any one of you rather save your Russet plain suit, or a Leather suit, than a suit of Velvet, and go to be executed in it. I have read of Chrysostom, who being invited to a feast, as he was a going, he met with one a going to execution, and it fell out that the way to execution was a very fair way, but the way that lead him to his friends house, it was a dirty Lane, and he makes this meditation of it, Oh how much better is it to go in this dirty Lane, to go and rejoice with my friend, than in a fair plain way, and go as the other doth to execution! He was not willing to go his way, though it were a fair and plain way, but rather to go his own, though a foul and dirty, he considered that the end of the way was different: So do not look much upon men and women, what their present condition is, but look what their

end is like to be, and do not envy them. I suppose you cannot but have heard the story of a poor soldier, that having a command from his General not to touch anything upon pain of death, yet coming by a Vine, takes a bunch of Grapes; the General being very strict, he condemns him to die, because of his disobedience, and as he was going to execution, he went eating the bunch of Grapes; his fellow-soldier rebuked him, but he gives him this answer, I pray ye do not envy my Grapes to me, for they cost me dear: So truly we have little cause to envy the men of the world their Grapes, that they have their mirth, their merry-meetings, whatsoever they have, for it is like to cost them dear, it is like to cost them their souls, they endanger their eternal perishing; and therefore there is no cause at all to envy such. David indeed was troubled a while when he saw the prosperity of the ungodly, but when he went into the Sanctuary, there he understood their end; Oh my Brethren, you are come into the Sanctuary, you are come now in the exercise of the Word thus to hear what is like to become of ungodly men, that enjoy all the world for their portion, their end is like to be the loss of their souls eternally; do not envy them; Thou dost envy them, and suppose that God should say to thee, well, it shall be with thee, as with them, that is, you shall have as much as they, and there is all the good you are like ever to have from me; would you not see cause to give a dreadful screak, if such a message should come from Heaven to you? What a foolish thing were it for a child that hath a loving Father, and a great Inheritance that he expects from him, because he sees a stranger that comes and sits at the Table, and have better provision than he hath, to grumble and grouch, because he hath not such provision made for him every day? Oh he hath no cause to do so, for the Inheritance is reserved for him. God, he is a rich Housholder, and he can give such things as these are to his enemies, as we

speak of, but the Inheritance is reserved for thee; envy not the ungodly in the enjoyment of the world, for the truth is, their portion it is but very little, it is but a poor pittance for an immortal soul to have, though he should have all the world. It is true, we should be sensible of our unworthiness of the least crumb of any good thing, yet though we should be sensible of our unworthiness, yet we should not be satisfied with having all the world for our portion. It was a most admirable speech of Luther, when divers of the Princes of Germany made much of him, he began to be afraid lest he should have his portion in these outward things, and here should be all, he breaks forth in this expression, fearing lest God should give him his portion here; I did, saith he, protest to God with all my power and strength that he should not put me off so with these things, he would not be content with them; that is the first Use; Little cause to envy at the men of the world; for the truth is, it is but a poor pittance they have, and they have made a most miserable bargain: If you should see one that professes himself to be a Merchant, and he should venture many thousand pounds, but bring home nothing but a fair painted bauble for children to play with, would you envy it to him? Just thus it is with the men of the world, they flatter and please themselves with their baubles, but their souls are gone in the meantime.

Secondly, Wherefore in the second place, let all those that do seek to get the world in those ways wherein they are like to lose their souls, let them lay this Scripture to heart, and O that God would settle it upon their spirits, that you might when you awake in the night season think of it; when you walk up and down, when you are in your shops, in your business, think but of this Text; I remember I told you in the beginning, of one that counseled one of the Kings of Portugal to think of this Text a quarter of an hour every day, O that you would every time you awake, especially you that have been

seeking after much of the world, think seriously of this Scripture, Am not I the man or woman that have hazarded my soul for seeking after somewhat of the world? Hast thou never sought to gain anything of the world in a way of sin, and to this day thy heart not thoroughly humbled for it, nor repented? It may be not to this day made restitution? Hath not the eager pursuit after the things of this world taken thy heart up so much, that thou hast not favored the things of God and eternal life? Thou lookest upon the things of the world, as if they were the only realities, but for spiritual things, they are imaginations; have not the things of this world so taken up thy spirit, as made thee to have sleight thoughts of spiritual and heavenly things? Hast not thou blest thyself in the enjoyment of these things, though in the meantime God hath not made known to thee the riches of his Kingdom? Yet thou hast thought thyself to have enough in the enjoyment of what thou hast; hast not thou often, when thou hast been at the Word, had thy thoughts and spirits about the things of the world, as the things suitable to thee, but the things of the Word thou hast not relished? Yea and anything in the Word that hath come close to that covetous corruption of thine, thy heart hath secretly derided it; there are no men in the world that do more secretly condemn and deride the things of God, spiritual things, than worldly-minded men. In Luk. 16:14, we read that Christ preaching to the Pharisees against their covetousness, and telling them That no man could serve two Masters, but either he will hate the one, and love the other, or else he will hold to the one, and despise the other, ye cannot serve God and Mammon, saith Christ: You cannot think to have your hearts set upon the world, and your gain, and yet serve the Lord; but if your hearts be set so upon your estates, you will make bold with God, you will venture upon the ways of sin, for the gaining of the things of this world; but mark, The Pharisees also

who were covetous, heard all these things, and they derided him; the word in the Greek is, They blew their noses at him; as a man when he scorns and derides another, he will show it by his nose; so they in a kind of speaking in their nose, in a jeering, scorning way, they derided Jesus Christ, that talked after this fashion, What, that a man cannot serve God and Mammon too, that a man cannot look after the things of the world, and the things of God too: Carnal hearts, they do hear things in Religion, as unsavory things, whose hearts are after the things of the world. And so not only for Riches, but for thy Credit: Hast thou not often ventured to lie, to save thy credit in something, and hast been more troubled when thou hast been discovered in anything that makes against thy credit, and esteem, than in the sin that thou hast committed against God? Now by such kind of evidences it is clear, that men enjoy the world in such a way, as wherein they are like to lose their souls to all eternity; and now, Oh do but look upon your estates that you have, and do but think what they cost you, and little comfort you will have in them. It is observed of David, when he did long for the waters of the Well of Bethlehem, and there were men ventured their lives to get him the water; when it came to him, he would not drink of it, Oh it is the price of blood!

So when thou lookest upon thy estate, and fittest at thy table, and seest that thou hast more there than other men, and lookest into thy Chest, and there thou hast plenty of Garments, and thy children are fine and brave, and the like; these are pretty things for a while to please the fancy with, I but what do they cost? As he that would reckon his clothe, he reckons that the dying and the spinning it cost him so much, I but what cost the wool? Why, that was his own, and he accounted nothing of that: So, such and such things that thou hast, what do they cost? They cost thus much, and thus much, I but hath not thy soul gone into the bargain? And canst thou have

pleasure in it, when it cost thee so dear as it hath? Psal. 31:6, the spirit of holy David rises up in indignation against such men as these are, I have hated them that regard lying vanities; My spirit cannot but with indignation and abomination rise up against them; what? That men should follow after vanity, when there are such glorious things to be followed after? When there is the blessed God, and the glorious Riches of Grace and Salvation that are revealed in his Word that may take the hearts of the children of men, and yet they follow after vain things; men that have immortal souls, capable of eternal communion with the Lord in the highest Heavens, for them to follow after vanity, and satisfy themselves in such things, I hate them, saith David; certainly it is the curse of God that is upon the hearts of men, that suffers them to follow after such things, and especially in the times of the Gospel, when such glorious things are revealed to their souls, I say the curse of God is upon them, Isa. 44:20. He feedeth on Ashes, a deceived heart hath turned him aside, that he cannot deliver his soul, nor say, is there not a lie in my right hand: He feedeth of Ashes; A deceived heart hath turned him aside, that he cannot deliver his soul, there lies the sore evil of it; A deceived heart, he needs not cast it upon the Devil, but it is his own bare filthy corrupt heart that dares not trust God for his soul for eternity, he will have present things, come of it what will come; he knows what the meaning of present things are, but what those are that are to come, he knows not; a deceived heart hath seduced him, and he cannot deliver his soul, nor say, Is there not a lie in my right hand? That is, is not the strength of my endeavor set upon falsehoods? The chief of my strength and endeavors, is it not set upon a lie? Chrysostom saith, If he were to preach to all the world, he would choose that Text as soon as any; Oh ye children of men, why do ye love vanity, and follow after leasing? And it were happy, if

it were always sounding in the ears of everyone, whose hearts are after present things, so that such a one may hear a voice behind him, saying, This is not the way, but this is the way, walk in it: Thou hast deceived thy soul all this while, and wearied thyself, and that through the curse of God upon thy heart; as Hab. 2:13. Behold, is it not of the Lord of Hosts, that the people shall labor in the very fire, and the people shall weary themselves for very vanity? Is not this of the Lord of Hosts? So when we see men and women, why they have understanding in the things of the world, yet for the matter of God, they have none at all; They are very industrious and laborious to get outward things, and outward comforts of this world, and tire themselves; can sit up late, and rise early; Oh is it not of the Lord of Hosts that people should thus weary and tire themselves? By way of similitude we may apply it to the spirits of men, that are wearying and tiring of themselves after vanity; it is the Lord's curse that is upon their hearts.

It is said, I remember, of Dionysius, that when he was upon his sick-bed, he hears Thales the Philosopher discoursing excellently about diverse excellent moralities, and he curses those pleasures and delights that had taken off his heart from attending to such things: When thou comest upon thy sick-bed, what will comfort thee then? It cannot be thy silver nor gold; therefore oh that the Lord would make thee now for the present to see thy vanity and folly before it be too late, and thou curse thyself, and there be no hopes for thee! But it is this point shows the folly and madness of those that seek after never such great things in the world with the hazard of their souls, but then, what shall we say to those that will hazard their souls for every trifle? We spoke of that in the aggravation of the dreadfulness of the loss of the soul, only a word or two more of it here. In Amos 2:6. God complains there, that the righteous were sold for silver, and the poor for a

pair of shoes: That they put such a poor price upon righteous men, and upon poor men; as if God should say, Know, I put a greater price upon my righteous servants, than all the silver in the world; Oh now! The complaint may be against many people, that sell their souls for silver, yea even for a pair of shoes, for a trifle, for a toy, for nothing; not for all the world, but for every little pittance; what is that that thou hast, or art like to have? Why very poor things in comparison of the world. I remember it is reported of Alcibiades a young Gallant, that Socrates comes in a jeering way unto him for his pride, and brings him a Map of the world, and saith he to him, Shew me, I pray thee, where lies thy Land here: Now, if I were to speak to Princes and Emperors, yet this Text would speak dreadfully to them, that they should venture their souls for Kingdoms and Empires; but now for you that are never like to have any such things, for you to set your hearts upon such trifles, and so to damn your souls, what can you get? Look upon a Map, and see what all England is: Europe is but a fourth part of the world that is known, I but then what is England to Europe, and then to all the world? And then what is one County in England, and one City, or one House? I have a great many Tenements, saith one, in a Parish, but what is all this to the world, and all this world unto Heaven, and Heaven and the world unto God? But now to think that thou art blessed, because thou hast but a few rotten Tenements, Oh what a seduced heart hath deceived thee, that thou canst be satisfied with such things as these are? This one meditation me thinks might sink into the hearts of those that will venture their souls for every trifle: If ever thy soul be saved, God must set such a price upon it, that he must give more than a thousand worlds are worth to save it, he must give no less than the blood of his Son; and canst thou think that the infinite God should prize thy soul at such a high rate, when thou thyself dost prize it

at such a low rate? If so be that a man had lost anything of his estate, and it could not be redeemed without some great sum of money, If his friends come to know that he doth not prize what he hath lost, will any friend be so mad as to lay down five hundred pound to redeem that for his friend which he knows aforehand that he doth not prize at twelve pence? So, canst thou think that that soul of thine that thou prizest at nothing, that the Infinite God should lay down such a price to redeem it?

Thirdly, From the consideration of the comparison of the gain of the world, to the loss of the soul; It is a Use of exhortation, To teach us to answer all temptations, or to work this upon our hearts, the answering of all temptations to any way of sin, To answer all with this, you offer me too little, whatsoever you can offer me, to draw me to think well of sin, certainly it is too little, for it endangers my soul; the thorough understanding of this point, and the working of it upon the heart, is a very great help against whatsoever temptation should come to draw thee to sin.

Surely, If these things be so, then this can be no Argument for me to neglect any duty that God calls for at my hands, or to venture upon any way that my conscience tells me is sin: Oh but if I do thus, it will endanger my estate, but if I do such a thing I shall get so much by it: Certainly there can be no strength in this, if what hath been spoken out of this Text be true. But now when there comes a temptation and prevails over thee, thou dost deny this Scripture to be the Word of God, and thou settest thy judgment against the truth of God; but now consider with thyself which is like to stand, know, that God will make his Word stand, he will make it good, when thou and a thousand thousand such as thou art shall perish forever; and therefore, as you that are chapmen, when men offer you less than your ware is worth, you scorn and contemn them; so you should do when temptation offers you

less than your soul is worth. We read of Saul, when he saw the people following David, saith he, What can the son of Jesse do for you? Can he give you Olive-yards and Vine-yards, and the like? So when temptation to sin comes, ask it, what can you do for me? Can you save my soul in the time of distress? You would draw me to such and such courses, such and such companions would draw me to such and such ways, I but you may put them off with this, Is this the way to save my soul? If it be, then I will do it, but if it will not do that, God forbid that I should meddle; Oh therefore remember, remember, that the fashion of this world passeth away, 1 Cor. 7:30,31. The Apostle would take off the hearts of men from the things of this world, and bring this Argument, saith he, The fashion of this world it passeth away; Therefore use the world, as not abusing it. That that you have in your English book, passes away, it is παράγει and I find two very learned Writers translate it by a word that signifies to deceive; The fashion of the world will deceive you at last, and another by a word that signifies, To go quite cross; These two significations it hath, it doth deceive, or it goes quite cross; the outward show of the world, oh it doth deceive thousand thousands of souls to their eternal perdition, and it goes quite cross; it seems to promise thee thus and thus much, but it will go quite cross in the conclusion, and will be thy undoing, if thou dost not take heed; and therefore let not anything in the world be a temptation to thee, for the least sin that possibly may be. I remember Austin in his book about an officious lie, hath this passage; saith he, A man must not tell an officious lie (that is, a lie without an intention to do anybody hurt) for the gaining of the world, nay, for the gaining of all the souls in the world, the least sin is a greater evil, than the gain of all the world is a good, because that it is dangerous to the soul, upon that very ground; and therefore it is said of Basil, when the

persecutors terrified him with the loss of all that he had, but that did not prevail, then they made him fair proffers, and great advantages that he should have, I but Basil laughed at them, and bid them go and proffer such things to children: So the story of the Martyrs tells us of Austinius, that godly man, that having been a means to demolish a place for Idol worship, The Idolaters afterwards came upon him, and put him to extremity of torments, and set children upon him to rake his flesh with their knives, but at length they would be content if he would but give never so little for the building up of the Idol Temple again, to let him go free, No, saith he, not one half-penny. Certainly this point will be enough to justify any that shall lose estate, or endure anything in the world, rather than do anything that may in the least degree hazard their souls: And so that Martyress Juletta, when one accused her, and said, that she was a Christian, nay, then saith the Judge, you must not have liberty of the Law, No, saith she, then farewell riches, and life, and all; she would be sure to keep her soul safe, whatsoever became of all other things.

The last Use is an Use of Encouragement to those that will rather venture all in the ways of God, than to hazard their souls; thou art the wise Merchant, that art willing to sell all for the Pearl, and bless thyself in God for this, that ever God hath put this into thy heart, to look to that which is the main chance, as we use to say: If God had left thee to thyself, thou mightest have gone on in such ways as others do, but canst thou say, the Lord hath caused the fear of himself, and the fear of eternity to fall upon my soul, and I can appeal to him, that whatever comes of me in regard of outwards, me thinks I can be satisfied, so be it all things be well with my soul; I say, bless thyself in God; a man is not to praise himself, but in God, that is thus, When thou dost consider how God hath drawn thy heart to him,

and thy interest in God, thou mayest bless thyself in God, in the grace of God, that hath given thee a heart, taken off from creature-comforts, disengaged from them, and set upon the things that concern the eternal salvation of thy soul; bless thyself in God, and be not troubled though thou beest cut short in the things of this world. One would think that that which hath been said about the vanity of the things of this world, should make people that are crossed in them (if they be godly) to be satisfied. What if thou art plundered of all, and hast little provision for thy family, and hast bread for one day, and knowest not where to get bread for the next? I but is thy soul safe? I remember we read in Genesis of the King of Sodom; he could say to Abraham, Give me the souls, and take the goods to thyself; though he were but a Heathen King, he spake of their natural lives: So do you whose hearts God hath inclined to soul-saving ways; say to the men of the world, Do you take the riches, but let me have the safety and welfare of the soul: Oh if God have assured thee upon good grounds that thy soul is safe, thy sin pardoned, what great matter though thou hast not some of the lumber of this world? If a malefactor that were in danger to die, should go to seek for a pardon for his life, well, when he hath gotten it, and is coming from the presence of the King, perhaps he loses his glove or handkerchief upon the stairs, were it not an unseemly thing for such a man to fall a crying, and wringing of his hands, because he had lost his glove? Just thus, for all the world, is the madness and folly of people that say, they have some comfortable hope that God will have mercy upon their souls, and will save them forever, yet when they are crossed and wronged, they cry out, they are undone; man and woman thou art not undone, for thy soul is safe. Lord strike (saith Luther, strike, only pardon my sin; And my Brethren, well may you be encouraged to undergo any difficulties, and to bear the loss of

the comforts of this world, for the saving of your souls) for indeed the Lord hath granted to us the way of salvation of souls at an easier rate than our Forefathers had; If I should but tell you the way that many of our Forefathers had for the saving of their souls, and many of the Saints of God in former times, you would have said then that it was a difficult way to save souls, and go to Heaven: As I will but give you an instance of one man, and another woman, how hardly they came to salvation. That blessed Martyr Bensesius, see but what a way he had to Heaven for profession of Christian Religion; The Persecutors came to him, and because he would not deny the Truth, they strike his body in all his members out of joint, and when they had done that, they make wounds in all parts of his body, then thirdly, they bring Iron combs sharpened, and so rake upon his body thus wounded, and when they had done that, they laid him upon an Iron grate, and with instruments of Iron open those wounds, and after that they melt hot burning salt, and strew it upon those wounds being opened, and then they come with hot Irons; and fear him with those hot Irons, and after that drag him by the heels into a dungeon, where they had prepared sharp shells, and there he lay and perished; here is one that went to Heaven upon hard terms, you will say; but God calls not you to do so, but to deny yourselves in some base lust, in some sinful and ungodly way, in something that you may spare, that you may spare as well as the water out of your shoes, as we use to say.

And then of a woman, that was of Noble birth, and yet she being convented for Religion, and answering boldly and resolutely, and would not yield, after many temptations and fair speeches, they dragged her by the hair of the head from the seat of Judicature, and having dragged her, they pull off one joint from another, and having done that, get the teeth and claws of wild beasts, and rake her flesh from the bones, and having

afterwards done that, then they came with hot Irons and Torches, and burning flames, one of one side, and another of another side, and scorch and burn her to death in such a way as that was, and yet she goes on constantly; so be it she might save her soul, she was willing to endure all this misery; we do not know what God may call you to before you die; many of our Brethren have suffered very hard things, and God may call you to hard things, Oh that this Text might prepare you! And now my Brethren, as it hath been a means to carry others thorough temptations, and many difficulties in this world, so if you would lay but these truths to your hearts, and if you cannot think of every particular passage, yet do but think of the Text, and take but this one Note, and that is, that whereas God calls others to spend their strength in suffering so great evils, to save their souls; be you willing to spend the strength that God spares you, in doing, in serving; spend your strength in active obedience so much the more, by how much the less you are called to spend it in the way of passive obedience, that so you may have cause to bless God forever in Heaven, when you shall come to see soul and body to be blessed and saved eternally; you may bless God forever in Heaven for revealing such a truth, and setting home such a Text; What shall it profit a man, though he gain the whole world, and lose his soul? And what shall a man give in exchange for his soul?

FINIS.